The International Council on Archives

Serving

Shared Memory

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Presentation of ICA

• NGO created under the auspices of UNESCO in 1948
• Mission: To promote Preservation of and access to records/archives through international cooperation
• 1700 members: institutions & associations in 180 countries
• Regional Branches & Professional Sections
• Present in Public & Private Sectors
• Limited Means: a Network & Meeting Possibilities (CITRA, Congress, Sections/branches)
ICA 1948-1989

- Context Post War & Cold War
- Archives serving mainly Historical Research
- Decolonization in the 1960s
- Priority: Development of Archives in the new independent countries
A Major Concern: Archival Claims

- Sources interesting two or more parties (Predecessor State and successor, Colonizer/Colonized, Allies/Enemies)
- Newly independent countries but no Convention about archives. A gap in the Law.
- Aftermath of 2\textsuperscript{nd} World War
Two ICA approaches:

- Development of Juridical Principles (see Reference dossier on archival claims published by the Council of Europe in 1997)

- Technical Solutions: Encouraging Microfilm to reconstitute the archival heritage of the countries
A Policy of Finding Aids and Identification of Sources: the Programme ICA-UNESCO

Guides to the Sources of the History of Nations published from 1960 to 1992

3 Series

- Latin America 12 volumes
- Sub Sahara Africa 17 volumes
- North Africa, Asia & Oceania 25 volumes
The concept of Joint Heritage

Archives, that are created by a common history, must be treated as a joint heritage

- First mention in RAMP Study 1977 on archival claims
- Used by DG UNESCO at the General Conference 1978
A New International Context: the Political Upheavals of years 1990

- End of Cold War
- Fall of authoritarian regimes in Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia
- Continuation of European Integration
A Technological Revolution

- Emergence & Generalisation of ICT
- Appearance of Internet & Websites
- Generalisation of Digital Media
- Open source Softwares
- New Collaborative Philosophy
- Globalization
Professional Consequences

- Standardization: ICA/ISAD(G), ISAAR CPF, ISIAH, ISAF
- Exchanges Formats & interoperability: EAD/XML
- Convergence of Carriers
- End of Isolation & Links with other Professions
The notion of Shared Memory

- Comes from informatics world
- Applicable to Cultural Institutions with Complementary Collections/Holdings
- Idea of Combining Respective Resources
Council of Europe

- INCOMKA Project [http://www.comintern-online.com/](http://www.comintern-online.com/)
- Reconstitution of the Memory of Poland [http://rmp.icm.edu.pl/](http://rmp.icm.edu.pl/)
CITRA 2006-2007

- The International Conference of the Round Table on Archives (CITRA) is the annual meeting of the heads of National Archives and National Associations & of the chairs of ICA Sections

- It meets every year except on the year of International Congress.

- A Strategic Meeting of the Leaders of the Profession
CITRA Curaçao 2006
Sharing Memory through Globalization

Three sessions on subjects which have particularly affected most countries:

- Slavery
- Migrations
- (De)colonization

three phenomena that have left traces in the archives and of which history cannot be written objectively without consulting multiple sources both national and international, public and private
Each session featured examples of successful collaborations: finding aids, such as the French Guide to Sources for the History of Slavery, and programmes for the sharing of sources and resources, such as the Dutch project The Atlantic World and the Dutch (AWAD), or those developed in the Portuguese-speaking world (Resgate, Reencontro and Aluka).

The success of these initiatives indicates that the interest of a country’s archives extends far beyond national boundaries and that the enlightened use of new technologies can help to overcome divisions and to fill gaps.
CITRA Outcomes & Resolutions

- Two resolutions ask UNESCO to extend the Slave Trade project to all countries concerned and to encourage the pooling of the archival heritage relating to several countries, as is the case for the formerly colonising and colonised countries.

- A plan for multi-lateral co-operation is proposed to facilitate access to archives and the organisations and states concerned are invited to support it.
CITRA Follow up

• Let us wish that these resolutions are put into effect quickly. It’s up to the ICA members to implement them.

• While, there are still tense debates about these often painful periods of our common past, the participants proved that it was possible to treat this question in a dispassionate and professional manner.

• By deciding to combine their efforts to put archives at the service of their contemporaries, they have demonstrated their will to advance historical knowledge and to promote a culture of sharing.
CITRA Québec 2007
Theme: Cooperate to Preserve Diversity

- 1st session: On the basis of the Canadian experience of merging National Library & Archives, the conditions for success of cooperation between Archives, Libraries & Museums will be discussed.

- NB: Canadian experience is an example and not a model.
2nd & 3rd Sessions

- 2nd: The specificity of Archives will be outlined with the examples of necessary cooperation between archivists & records creating agencies for preserving electronic records.

- 3rd: Prospects of international cooperation between Archives, Libraries & Museums will be presented with the global projects developing in the world:
  - The World Digital Library led by the Library of Congress. See: [www.worlddigitallibrary.org](http://www.worlddigitallibrary.org)
  - The European Digital Library a Project funded by the European Commission under the eContentplus Programme and coordinated by the German National Library. See: [www.edlproject.eu](http://www.edlproject.eu/)
An Opportunity for Sharing Experiences

The International Congress on Archives
Kuala Lumpur 21-27 July 2008:
Archives, Governance & Development:
Mapping Future Society

- Same format as Vienna 2006: 3 days of parallel sessions proposed by the ICA members
- Proposal Form for session available on the ICA website at www.ica.org