Assessing the impact of an international conference on a city is a rather complex issue, because any objective dataset (or, at least, those data that some institutions have tried to objectify) also needs to be defined by various intangible elements, often of an individual nature, that affect or can affect every participant in many different ways.

Let us start with what is objective. The figures in the attached table admit little controversy and provide a clear idea of the global interest aroused by Girona’s call: almost a thousand archivists from 90 countries were attracted by a proposal that drew the attention of professionals from places as far afield as Korea, Mexico, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Australia, New Zealand, Armenia, Bangladesh, Barbados, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Colombia, Congo, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Georgia, Haiti, India, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Peru, Senegal, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam or Zimbabwe; without forgetting, of course, dozens of countries from the European and Western bloc.

These figures show the number of papers received and accepted, which constitute more than 1600 pages of scientific content generated by our colleagues in a generous attempt to share their knowledge. The numbers also tell us about six keynote speakers; nevertheless, behind this cold statistic, those of us who were there feel very fortunate to have witnessed their contribution. Allow us to focus on the first and last speakers: Joan Roca and Jordi Savall. It is truly stimulating, and makes us live our profession with pride, to see how the archive (in the broadest sense of the word) has become a key element in the creative process of people who have reached such a degree of excellence in their fields. (Continued on page 2)
Some more figures: full hotels with 100% occupancy rate. The Spanish Convention Bureau, an organization dedicated to studies of the business tourism sector in Spain, states in its last study published in 2012 that the average daily expenditure per participant, in a city with Girona’s characteristics, is 230 €. If we multiply this by an average five-day stay, the direct economic impact of the Conference, Archives and Cultural Industries in Girona, has been of the order of a million euros. And, without any doubt, the discovery of the town by many participants in the Conference will have a multiplying effect on the city’s economy when they come back again with their family or friends (destination experience, as technically known in the sector).

However, as we mentioned earlier, this Conference has left an intangible trace, personal, intimate, hardly quantifiable. Girona’s archivists have been able to work together and show exhibitions, communications, projections and publications to the entire citizenship. Both visitors and locals have had the opportunity to understand their documentary heritage in greater depth and we archivists have had the opportunity to explain the foundations of our profession and the role that we aim to play in a fast-changing environment such as the present.

For us, it has undoubtedly been a privilege to organize this event; as it was to realize the thrust, vitality, professional ambition and solidarity of archivists from all around the world. This is the great strength of the International Council on Archives (ICA) and it is one of the main reasons why we all must contribute to its continuous development.

ICA Annual Conference 2015
Reykjavik, Iceland, 27-29 September

Under the general title of “Archives: Evidence, Security and Civil Rights: Ensuring trustworthy information”, this conference will explore how the concerns, research and work of archivists and records managers contribute to the fundamental societal goals of information security and protection and the support of civil rights, particularly in the modern world of open data. It also aims to demonstrate the enduring value and relevance of ICA and its work. The premise that the ICA network, its members, partners and the wider profession and workforce are of vital importance to modern society will give a clear focus to workshops, lectures and debates ranging from the principles to the functional requirements.
### The Conference in figures

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Conference overview: Creative partnerships a response to new challenges

Clearly a conference entitled “Archives and the Cultural Industries”, would be a different sort of conference. The venue was particularly appropriate: Girona teems with creativity, from cuisine to the beautiful crafts in the shops, from architecture to pavement art features. The question was how the theme would be translated into practical sessions.

From the first of the keynote sessions it was clear how the vision would be reflected. Speakers from the worlds of cuisine, the arts (music and fine art), history, journalism and broadcasting explained how they have used archives. They broadened our perception of ourselves and our roles, helped us to understand better their needs and to see how co-operation is not just a matter of us providing them with an archive service, but working together to understand and interpret the archives themselves. We are used to defining archives in terms of heritage and memory but it is clear that we are now also part of the cultural industries. The musician Jordi Savall, in his address, used familiar terminology such as ‘selection criteria’ and spoke of the difficulties of interpreting the material selected: a perfect illustration of the close links between archives and the cultural industries.

The programme was varied and the dilemma was: what on earth to choose? A familiar topic such as Access, to learn about developments? A session on open data? Sessions on photographic archives? Most delegates probably tried to do a bit of all three.

On Access, there were sessions on new methods of outreach. Laurence Ward from London Metropolitan Archives spoke about the partnerships with commercial (with Ancestry, for example), or with local community groups which have enabled LMA to make much of their material available online. In his view, the digital world offers great opportunities for the archives sector. New generations of family historians are working online and user requirements are changing. The future, he argued, lies in further innovation and collaboration.

Harald Stockert from the Stadtarchiv in Mannheim believed that archivists needed to be more entrepreneurial and more open to new ways of service delivery: digitization offered new chances for public archives and might even provide the answer to budget reductions. Specific projects were described: The Invisible City project from the city of Dornbin in Austria described collaboration between archivists, artists and architects; the Girona 2014: a truly rewarding experience

In Girona last October, a municipality rather than a national archive hosted ICA’s main annual event for the first time. It comprised three strands: the 2nd ICA Annual Conference; the 9th European Archival Conference (following on from Geneva in 2010); and the 13th Image and Research Seminar on photographic archives held in Girona for many years. I had the chance of visiting Girona twice before the start of the conference, and I was quietly confident that it would go well. All the ingredients for success were in place: a city of manageable proportions with fascinating history and architecture; first class transport connections; a state of the art conference centre; strong financial commitment from the relevant public authorities; and excellent local organization. I must confess that my expectations, as I alighted in Girona on Friday 10 October from the high-speed train that had whisked me from Paris in less than six hours, were quite high. As the conference proceeded, I found that it constantly exceeded all my high expectations. The content of the professional programme was richer than that of some past Congresses; the keynote speakers brought a fresh and original perspective to the subject; there were marvelous opportunities for informal networking; the professional conference organizers and managers of the conference building were invariably attentive, resourceful and flexible; and the catering and cuisine were of an exceptionally high standard. It was also possible, once the immediate excitement of the conference
The city of Vienna has created a semantic Mediawiki based on a printed encyclopaedia of Vienna’s history; Empona State University (USA) has developed a strategy to interest students in archives and archival exhibitions using augmented reality. These are only three examples but all demonstrate that there is a role for archives within the cultural industries. It is obvious that archivists need to:

- Establish good partnerships within a variety of organisations both outside the archives profession and cross-professional;
- Consider who our audiences now are and empower them;
- Be aware that success generates success;
- Remember that technology allows us to embrace new methods of outreach which we should use and exploit as it develops.

The sessions on open data helped de-mystify the subject. A major issue is that there is, as yet, no common terminology: administrative data, big data, open data, linked data, official statistics, public records are all used and they are not necessarily linked. A useful definition was that ‘big data is high volume, high velocity and/or high variety information’. This is clearly the underlying issue for good governance and recordkeeping, and there are still some unresolved issues for our profession:

- the terminology;
- the lack of technical skills in the profession;
- the lack of a proper mindset in the profession.

We should ask: are we educating people with the right roles and skills in the educational programmes we provide? How do we raise our skills and knowledge of records to deal with the challenges of the open government data environment?

Two case studies – from Brazil and from Switzerland– made it perfectly clear that the political move towards open data is a great opportunity for our profession. We need to speak for ourselves in this new environment to enable us to take best advantage of political and economic changes.

The conference also covered a very specific type of archival document: photographs. Juan Alonso Fernández spoke about Fascist photography during the Civil War and dealt with the question of interpreting archival material. Many of the photographs he described were reconstructing reality, not representing it. How do we deal with the dilemma of authenticity versus reliability? While electronic records are a serious issue which needs to be dealt with – as evidenced by large international projects such as the UNESCO Persist project– it is equally clear that the content continues to be the important issue, regardless of the format.

This is a wonderful time to be involved in the profession. The exciting technological changes and political challenges being thrown at us almost constantly are forcing us to reconsider our roles and redevelop our skill sets while at the same time dealing with ever decreasing budgets. How we manage this is indeed a challenge but, if the energy and enthusiasm generated by this conference is anything to go by, it is one which we are ready and willing to rise to.

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Ryder Kouba, Margaret Turner, Henri Zuber, Brenda Mamvura, Roman Lescano.

had died down, to explore some of Girona’s many impressive museums. Many people contributed to the outstanding success of the Girona Conference, but there is one person who deserves special mention. Joan Boadas had the vision and the determination to make the Annual Conference happen in his home city. His highly motivated staff at Girona Municipal Archives gave him very solid support throughout. As ever, my colleagues in the Secretariat worked tirelessly during the event, but they will surely agree with me that the main credit for this splendid achievement rightfully belongs to Joan. He is of course far too modest to claim any public credit for himself, and so it is my pleasant duty to do this on his behalf. We are truly fortunate in ICA to have such energetic engagement from such a talented individual. The moment that gave me the greatest pleasure was the appearance of the three young professionals, all of them highly articulate in their different ways, on stage at the concluding session. It was a great privilege for me to have been part of the team at Girona last October, and I will always remember the 2104 Annual Conference fondly as a truly rewarding experience and one of the great highlights of my time in the service of ICA.

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The Girona conference had no fewer than six keynote speakers representing different creative industries. We asked some of our volunteers to report on these sessions for Flash, and here are their personal responses to these presentations.

Joan Roca: Archives, creation and excellence

The first keynote speaker, following the opening speeches of the conference, was Joan Roca, who gave a presentation which proved to be a genuine appetizer.

Joan Roca i Fontané, born in Girona in 1964, is a celebrated Catalan chef. El Celler de Can Roca, the restaurant which he runs with his brothers, Jordi (pastry chef) and Josep (sommelier), achieved first place in the 2013 list of the world’s top 50 restaurants. His presentation was entitled “Archives, Creation and Excellence” or the importance of archives and memory in culinary creations.

He began working with his parents and grandparents in the family restaurant (where he and his brothers still go for lunch) and this knowledge of the past forms the basis for his creations: the harmonious balance of his dishes, a blend of traditional flavours and modern techniques, is the fruit of constant research for innovation and creativity.

His team, comprising 35 personnel and 17 nationalities, offers a wide range of possibilities thanks to their collective global influence. Their objective is to please customers who come from 57 different countries.

The restaurant is currently being fitted with a library, where thousands of books on the culinary arts will be kept as reference works for the chefs. The Rocas also possess a huge gastronomic archive – they have been working for 28 years and constantly have new ideas. In particular, they draw on their own experiences and traditions to evoke an emotional response in the customer that will remind him or her of a place, a particular moment, a feeling. Memory has a very important place in their work.

Recipes, photographs, complementary information (which wine goes with which dish), to mention just a few examples, are archived along with tributes and recommendations, especially those that have appeared in the press, together with all the collaborations they have made, which for them are essential. Just as co-operation between archivists and other professionals (computer scientists, legislators, political decision-makers) is key to their work, so chefs collaborate with specialists in many fields (artistic, industrial, scientific) who bring with them a fresh, and a different, outlook, and so encourage innovation.

For example, a recent collaboration with a botanist to catalogue the flora of the local environment has resulted in the discovery of certain edible plants in the Girona region which they didn’t know existed, and so they have managed to broaden the base of their produce and at the same time further increase their creativity, continuing to ‘make new things with old ingredients’. This new collection has been studied, analysed and classified – genuine archival work in fact!

“Use memory to create new dishes” is the Roca bothers’ motto. To conclude his quite delectable presentation, for which the audience showed their enthusiastic appreciation, Joan stressed the vital importance of archives for professionals in the field of gastronomy, and how archives have enabled them to achieve excellence in what they have created.
One of the three keynote speeches on the first day of the Conference was made by Yael Hersonski. A young film director and editor from Israel, she graduated with honours from the Sam Spiegel Film & Television School of Jerusalem. Her debut is a documentary film called ‘A film unfinished’, and it was presented before a large audience at the Casa de la Cultura. Hersonski began her presentation with a very interesting phrase: “Archives are where Power lives”. Her work focuses on the events related to the Holocaust and, in particular, on the role and meaning of Nazi propaganda over the years during which the attempt to exterminate the Jewish people was developed and systematically carried out. She shared her own family’s experience, using part of the oral account given by her grandmother, who was in the Auschwitz concentration camp, which became the reason why she has worked on this topic for much of her professional career. She spoke of the challenge of trying to get information and stories from her grandmother, because her grandmother was not willing or able to talk about what for her was an event “beyond conception”, and this is why “her silence was her way of surviving”, which inevitably took Hersonsky back to the famous graphic novel *Maus: A survivor’s tale*, made by the North American cartoonist Art Spiegelman, who tries to deal with what cannot be dealt with owing to the enormity of the event. She also talked about the challenge of using film materials in an attempt not to promote the view of Nazi propaganda, but to go beyond and give another perspective, that of the people involved. She then returned to the idea of the parallels between Archives and Memory, relating another personal experience that occurred after the death of her grandmother. The filmmaker shared with the audience that she had approached one of those institutions that collect oral stories and written records from interviews with people who had suffered the disaster of the Holocaust, with the principal aim of recovering the testimony of her grandmother. But on arrival, she discovered that surprisingly there were almost no records. What she found was a note which particularly attracted her attention: “I feel that the witness has difficulties in expressing herself or talking about this topic”. That was a further motivation to start searching for film records, precisely because of the degree of expression that they provide, in an attempt to give a voice to all those who in one way or another had been robbed of their own, and to try to contribute to the consolidation of a social memory that ensures that such an event will never happen again. For this purpose, she used film materials produced by the Nazi propaganda bodies, but giving a different perspective to their narrative technique. The director focused on the totality of the film, as much on what was happening behind the scenes, including cameramen, film technicians, crew, as on what was happening in front of the cameras, interviewing and inviting the people involved in making these “Nazi documentaries” to view these films. In conclusion, Hersonski stated that the intention of her film is to invert the Nazi point of view and to transform it into something more: “we need to interpret the frames, taking into account not only what we see but also what we don’t see” and concluded this observation by recalling how in an audiovisual exhibition which she had attended, two images with a particular frame caught her attention. In these images were documented piles of dead bodies ready for incineration, “but in fact the original frame showed another perspective, a window”. The picture was taken from a gas chamber by the Jewish prisoners tasked with cleaning it. “They wanted to document that moment and they achieved their goal… the picture came out of the ghetto and someone risked his life on behalf of these records and the release of these testimonies to the public.”

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Yael Hersonski with Roman Lescano.
Miguel-Anxo Murado: The future of the past

Miguel-Anxo Murado was the speaker charged with opening the second day of the Conference. This well-known writer is the author of more than twenty books of fiction and essays on topics related to Cultural History. One of his last works is an essay on historiography entitled La invención del pasado: La verdad y ficción en la Historia de España (“The invention of the Past: Truth and Fiction in the History of Spain”).

Among some of the issues covered in his speech, Murado called to mind the destruction of records that has occurred throughout History. One example that he gave was the case of Televisión Española, where the content of many tapes has been wiped through being re-used, thereby losing much of the national television channel’s archival heritage. He also drew attention to the loss of entire historical periods worldwide, such as what happened in pre-Columbian America, and the case of Oceania, and of Africa. He made an interesting comment about the historical contexts in which such events occur, saying that “without texts (in its broadest sense) the Past can be anything” and this is because serious historiographical gaps “are necessarily filled by historians”. The speaker alluded to two factors that help to create these gaps. The first is Time, which is responsible for making a natural selection of records – destroying records, if they existed. The other is the Human Race, which does the same thing, but in a different way. A clear example is the large number of chronicles that relate to Queen Isabella the Catholic, but only those favourable to her were allowed to survive, not those which gave a contrary view. The same thing happened with the pre-Columbian codices. There are only a small handful of them, and the rest were systematically destroyed. According to Murado, quoting Foucault, “We have always lived in the Information Society”. Murado ended his speech by making an analogy with prisons and hospitals, which nowadays are being completely restored and converted into cultural centres, almost as though trying to erase their own history by giving these buildings a significance that they never really had. “Architecture too is one text written over another”. The further we advance in time, the more we distort History. That is why Archives and Archival Science are so important, because they are responsible for preserving documents but also because they are important participants in the way History is told and they are responsible for its plurality.

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Joan Fontcuberta: Archives, Ali Baba’s cave

One of the foremost speakers of the third day of the Conference was without doubt Joan Fontcuberta, known for his sizeable cultural output in the world of photography, as creator, teacher, critic and historian. His works include pieces like El Beso de Judas: Fotografía y Verdad (“The Kiss of Judas: Photography and Truth”, 1997), La Cámara de Pandora (“Pandora’s Camera”, 2010) and Trepat (2014).

He began his presentation talking about the role photographic records have, because they allow a moment of reality to be captured and fixed forever. This selection of an extract of reality corresponds to an ideological and artistic construction that aims to communicate something to someone. Specifically, his speech sought to establish a kind of parallel between the history of Spanish industrial photography and various art movements. He focused on his latest book, entitled Trepat, where Joan Fontcuberta explores the photographic archive of the incredible Trepat Collection of Modern Photography. In this book, he documents artistically many of the activities developed by this pinnacle of Spanish industry.

Fontcuberta shared with the audience various pictures included in his book and continued delving into his work at the MACSA (Archaeological Museum of Catalonia for Agricultural Systems), where he discovered the photographic collection created by the Catalan businessman Josep Trepat, pioneer in the construction of agricultural machinery. Like other relevant businessmen of the early twentieth century, Trepat decided to entrust works documenting his businesses to famous artists. Among the artists he invited were personalities and creators of the artistic avant-garde of his time, such as Man Ray, Albert Renger-Patzsch, László Moholy Nagy, Alexander Rodchenko, Charles Sheeler and Walker Evans, who by their contributions enriched Trepat’s photographic fonds in a unique way, turning his collection into something unprecedented, a clear example of the theoretical construction of the artistic avant-garde and “a place where you can play with the ambiguity of language and the viewer’s subjectivity”, referring to the multiple interpretations offered by the photographic records.

He concluded the session with these phrases “Archives are like Ali Baba’s cave, full of treasures that can help us to reconsider their functions. It just takes someone to invoke those words of Ali Baba in front of the doors of an Archive: Open Sesame.”

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Albert García Espuche: Historical knowledge and modern creation

Albert García Espuche has a Doctorate in Architecture and History, the field in which, three decades ago, he wrote his doctoral thesis about the city of Barcelona in the eighteenth century, before spending seven years of his professional career on a detailed study of Barcelona in 1700 from the evidence found at the archaeological site of El Born. This is one of the most important cultural projects in the city of Barcelona. Espuche was the driving force behind a plan that allowed the ruins of earlier times, found under the metal structure of the famous central market of El Born, to be transformed into a cultural centre, where citizens can access and interpret the history of a city destroyed by the Bourbon royal troops in 1714. The speaker shared with the audience step by step the development of this ambitious cultural project and emphasized the role of the Historical Archive of Notarial Protocols of Barcelona and its great collection of records in recreating in detail the appearance of the city and part of the daily life of its residents. The records of this archive also revealed a period of economic and demographic growth in Barcelona, besides offering a new vision of a century that was decisive for the history of Catalonia. Espuche spent around 12 years studying these notarial records. He also emphasized the primary role that Archives played, in this case in particular, as active participants working with other institutions, and in an interdisciplinary way, to develop cultural projects that contribute to the reinforcement and growth of the collective memory of a society by connecting historical contexts with contemporary cultural events.

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Jordi Savall: The ways of recreation, the archival sources

Renowned gamba player, composer, and musicologist Jordi Savall graced the 2014 ICA Annual Conference in Girona with his keynote address “Els camins de la recreació: de les fonts arxivístiques al concer” (The ways of recreation: the archival sources). Mr Savall is one of the leading figures in the music world. As an archivist with limited knowledge of the history of music, I was fascinated to hear one of the stars of the Western music world speak about what role archives have in his work. Mr Savall began with a brief discussion of the history of music: something he brought up that I had never considered was that knowledge of music history is more limited compared to other disciplines. An excellent example he gave was of the Renaissance in Europe and the rediscovery of the ancient world. While we see all around us how the Ancient Greeks and Romans profoundly influenced art, architecture and philosophy, ancient music has not had the same impact on Western culture. I can certainly recognize architecture influenced by the Greeks and Romans, but I have very little conception of what ancient music sounded like, or how it was performed. Even when documentation exists, the lack of audio recordings results in uncertainty about how the music sounded. Particularly interesting was the recreation of the viola de gamba and Mr Savall’s description of the process to understand the instrument. The gamba disappeared from the music world in the 1700s, and very little information about how the instrument was played has survived. When Mr Savall brought the gamba back to the stage, musicians relied on theoretical knowledge of how the instrument was played, until a letter from a composer was found in an archive which provided technical information on how the instrument was played centuries ago. However, while sheet music provides specific information, the task of interpreting the music is a challenge for musicians and their quest to provide historical authenticity. Mr Savall touched on an aspect of his work that is directly tied to our profession: appraisal and selection of records. Mr Savall argued that what gave some musical forms value was the distinction between craftsmanship and a true work of art, and what he looks for is a piece that is ‘immortal’, that is, one that resonates with us as it did with listeners 300 years ago, not necessarily the piece with the highest technical quality. Mr Savall was very open about the subjective nature of selecting works, and this issue is something that we as archivists need to be aware of and acknowledge. I thought the keynote speech was excellent; its brilliance lay in the fact that while many of us may not collect musical materials, Mr Savall’s examples are applicable to a wide variety of collections and users. As a digital archivist I found Mr Savall’s story of recreation particularly important: beyond just preserving files, it is important to understand the context in which they were created or organized. Happily, I think archivists are attempting to face this challenge head on.

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I said yes to taking the job of the national archivist for Singapore in June 2012. I was not the most obvious candidate and wondered how many others had been approached before me. Although surprised, I saw it as a great opportunity. I was then the general counsel for the authority that managed museums and archives so I knew the official mandate of the National Archives of Singapore (NAS) under the law and thought I had a good sense of the scope of work through agreements I had helped with.

I was also armed with a Masters in Information Studies achieved in 2010 as I had ambitions of becoming a law librarian. I am happy to emphasise that an elective Archival Module piqued my interest and I took it up. It was taught by archivists, conservators, audio-visual specialists and oral history specialists who are now my colleagues and a predecessor who championed the art of archiving. Two things stood out. First, we took time to look at the profession itself. I recall thoughtful articles by Ann Pederson, Richard Cox, Sue McKemmish and Terry Cook, among others. Second, all their work processes were grounded on archival principles. Tasks were designed and decisions were aimed at maintaining the enduring value of the archives – both the content and the context. So as I went into the role, I at least knew I had a good team to begin with.

Two and the half years later, I have come to better realise the extent of the challenges that I had underestimated in managing a national archives. Among other things, some facilities have not seen an upgrade for nearly twenty years; staff strength had dwindled over the last ten years even as the public and researchers become increasingly demanding and want more and faster access; new digital challenges threaten to overwhelm with growing costs of digitisation and preservation systems, endless migration to new formats and the shifting sands of what standards to use; so much more yet to be documented, conserved and digitised in our own repositories, especially audio-visuals that are in imminent danger of loss through obsolescence; so many more records to appraise, acquire, organise and conserve in long forgotten cupboards and nondescript boxes at government agencies and in private hands; and the lack of easy local access to professional learning and development. The above “list” will resonate with some or all national archives in one way or another and there are likely many more challenges to add on.

One more realisation should be stated on its own. Sadly, many people do not even know of the NAS. I wondered why when the contents of the archives had long been used in many well-received exhibitions, publications, websites and other events. I found that people focussed on the presenter of the event
or activity and the archivist working painstakingly in the background to make content available for use is unnoticed and under-appreciated. The serious downside of such “archival humility” is that the archives also start to fade from the radar of funding sources and potential advocates.

So what should be done to be seen and heard? Richard Cox provides one perspective in Archival Anxiety and the Vocational Calling (Litwin Books, 2011): “(O)ur mission in administering and protecting records is about far more than just holding a job. It may be that society’s misunderstanding of archives ... is as much the result of us promoting it as little more than just clerical duties and skills. We need to bring passion to our workplaces and make more obvious the pathways into a profession that is committed to societal good.”

In terms of societal good, we often hear how national archives contribute to good governance and the rule of law and such goals remain of the utmost importance. Less heard is our role in the care of the collective and social memory of our countries and the citizenry. Further, beyond a passive role in keeping, how do we partner communities, artists, filmmakers and others in a multi-disciplinary way and become relevant to a new generation? In this respect, I have enjoyed a special issue of Archival Science (June 2013, Volume 13, Issue 2-3) focusing on the role of archivists in the evolution of identity and memory. Especially thought provoking was Terry Cook’s reflection (at pp. 95-120) on shifting archival paradigms over time and the exploration of: “the shared memories that we have as archivists, our identity, our sense of community, as we increasingly interact with external communities in our contemporary society, both real physical communities in our neighbourhoods and cities, and online virtual communities with social media now reshaping our world, its governance, its communications and record-making patterns and its identity formation processes. How do we imagine ourselves?”

For me, one thing I can share after gaining more experience on the job is that it was not so much an “opportunity” for me to be the national archivist but a “privilege”, which I fortunately enjoy.

Serious work will start on the FAN Program of Action for 2015. Presented at the lovely city of Girona on 12 October 2014, it covers model legislation on archives and copyright, digital preservation standards, advocacy (especially the Africa strategy) and ICA-ATOM. In doing this, FAN will concurrently try to be a catalyst for some new frameworks of thinking about national archives. There is also much to share on other common issues faced in the work of a national archivist and indeed success stories to learn from. The FAN Bureau members and I look forward to support and lively discussions.

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Girona 2014: The role of archives in wider society

Archives, being the memory of peoples and nations, are an important resource in our ability to understand how our societies have evolved. The challenges with which archivists are confronted occur at several levels. We must respond to the democratic demands linked to access to information and to culture, but we must also cope with the continuous development of information and communication technologies which have a strong impact on information management.

By addressing the question of archives and the cultural industries, the Girona Conference has allowed an examination of the role and place of archives and archivists in their mutual relations with society, the economy and technology. With the development of digitization, archives have been affected by a fundamental change which is having a profound and long-lasting impact on the archival profession and the way records are produced, collected and made accessible. Archivists, as guardians of the record, are gradually becoming service providers. Several presentations looked at the technical and organizational issues related to technological innovations such as the Cloud, big data and open data. Gabriella Ivacs, archivist of the University of Budapest, noted in her presentation that the impact of the value chain of big data is greater in its industrial application than in its role in conveying information on a social level and archivists are well aware of this fact.

The concept of ‘archives without walls’ is a measure of the paradigm shift that has occurred in making data accessible on line without the need for users to travel to archives buildings. The examples drawn from Australian experience of the “Orphanage in Australia: find and connect” project, presented by Gavan McCarthy, illustrated this point well. The author concluded his presentation by pointing out that the success of archives must from now on be measured by the number of clicks received from virtual visitors. The experience of the European Union through the Europeana project, presented by Marcel Watelet, on the theme of ‘Cultural Heritage and Creative Industries: New Opportunities and New Challenges’ raises the issue of building bridges between heritage, the economy and society in a win-win relationship. This programme has allowed 30 million documents from archives, museums and libraries in Europe to be put on line. Archives must be Society’s concern and Society must be the concern of archives. The experience of relocating the French National Archives in the Paris suburbs is a good example. The strategies that were developed included the planning of the archives’ activities in the context of the local area in which the building has been established. This has involved collaborating more with the agents of local urban culture, putting large quantities of records on line and developing partnerships with artists by setting up a policy of artists in residence.

The issues surrounding audiovisual archives have been largely debated from the point of view of the specific characteristics of the materials, the technical problems in looking after them, having regard to standards, interoperability and management of the rights of owners, but also the different uses to which this heritage can be put. The archives of the Shoa have been analysed and compared with the testimony of the survivors of the concentration camps. The role and contribution of archivists in the development of international law is demonstrated by the international projects on the documentation of penal tribunals and the safeguard of the archives relating to genocide.

The closing session of the conference wholly accepted the idea that archives are an important asset serving to fire the imagination and that archivists must establish lasting co-operation with the cultural agents in the different sectors so as to create new services and new territories for archives.

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Learning and networking: Preservation planning for audio-visual collections

Presentation given by Maria Mata Caravaca, Hilke Arijs and Aparna Tandon.

Being a new professional attending an international conference for the first time in Girona, I got to understand that one can learn and have a platform for networking after listening to presentations made on any given topic by experienced professionals in the field. Following the above-mentioned presentation, I came to appreciate that Information Centres should have collection budgets in place to enable effective information access at any given time, to anyone, in whatever format regardless of the prevailing environment. If preservation planning for audio-visual material is not addressed, information centres will end up losing valuable archival information through technological obsolescence and human negligence amongst other reasons. There is an urgent need worldwide to migrate analogue formats to digital to enable information access in the future. Technology is moving ahead and information professionals have to move with it. Preservation planning informs collection preservation, development and management. In this digital environment, there is need for appropriate preservation planning in order to define approaches for enabling information access. Promotion of preservation planning can be done through learning and networking. This is crucial in laying a networking foundation for sharing experiences, challenges and solutions. At such platforms, a diverse array of professionals and students meet, share experiences and information through intensive and cost-effective learning forums for audio-visual preservation planning. Mata Carvaca, Arijs Hilke and Tandon Aparna in their presentation discussed the implementation of preservation planning for mixed audio-visual collections and outlined how The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) adopted the training of audio-visual professionals through its audio-visual conservation programme SOIMA (Sound and Image Collections Conservation). The professionals who attended their presentation learned a lot about preservation planning based on the two case studies they highlighted, (1) the ICCROM archive and (2) the IRPA (Institut de Recherche Pédagogique Audiovisuel) photographic collection. For example, the National Archives of Zimbabwe still need to move from analogue to digital formats. In order to avoid facing critical challenges in this endeavour, preservation planning strategies which can be gained through learning and networking experiences will be of paramount importance to achieve something meaningful at the end. Audio-visual collections should be safeguarded as they can also form part of teaching material used to impart knowledge to people. The presenters outlined how audio-visual collections are also used in SOIMA courses for professionals who care for audio-visual material. The 22nd-25th of October 2014 also saw the Federation on the International Television Archives holding a conference in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, funded by the FIAT “Save your archives” program, and the conference ran under the theme “On the digital journey”. Various issues applying to the digital journey were explored, addressing challenges in the long-term preservation of audio-visual collections. Common problems and challenges through networking were addressed paving the way for common solutions to discussed problems. Learning and networking platforms, however, keep archivists and records managers abreast of modern trends in the management of audio-visual collections, and allow them to stay relevant and share skills and information. Preservation planning can also be taught at tertiary institutions to equip students with the necessary knowledge of audio-visual preservation which they will in turn use when they are employed as new professionals in the field of information management.

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One of the Programme Commission’s goals in 2014 was to establish a New Professionals Programme which builds on but very much expands the old Flying Reporter scheme associated with previous CITRAs and Congresses. The NP Programme was launched at the Second Annual Conference in Girona in October with the support of three bursary holders to attend and work alongside the ICA Secretariat team of staff and volunteers and a small lunch event to bring all the new professionals at the conference together.

The programme is intended for two kinds of individual, students and trainees from member organisations of ICA and individuals working in archives and records management for less than 5 years, irrespective of age. The NP Programme aims to give new professionals the chance to engage with ICA and ensures that ICA’s membership and professional agenda remain dynamic and relevant. It is intended that this is done in a reciprocal way, enabling them to gain valuable experience at an international level and to establish career-long friendships and networks across the world.

More specifically, between now and 2018, the NP programme will incorporate three elements: bursaries for attendance at Congress and Conferences; translation work; and a research and networking strand. New professionals have always played a strong role in volunteering to do translation work for ICA and since the Publications and Translations Adviser was appointed we now have a more structured framework for identifying, using and recognising translators. This means that volunteer translators may receive a quid-pro-quo such as a waiver on their category D membership fees, and there is also the possibility of this work counting towards their continuing professional development. Research and networking activity might involve participation in social media or carrying out specific pieces of research or administrative support work on behalf of Expert Groups, Branches and Sections.

Over the summer of 2014 a small team of PCOM members worked on the first call for bursary applications. These were intended to be a once in a lifetime opportunity for new professionals to attend an ICA Annual Conference all (reasonable) expenses paid. In return PCOM was expecting that bursary winners would support the Communications Officer by providing copy for the website and other publications, support facilitators at one of the workshops, taking a turn on the ICA stall and presenting at the final conference round-up session. The call yielded 57 applications from 27 countries and the budget allowed for four individuals to be awarded a bursary. Unfortunately, one of them was unable to come. Incidentally the call also resulted in ten new category D members. Many positive responses came from unsuccessful participants, who were all encouraged to keep on the lookout for other ways to get involved in ICA in general and the NP Programme in particular.

The three bursary holders were: Ryder Kouba, Digital Collections Archivist at the American University in Cairo, Rare Books and Special Collections Library; Roman Lescano, a student at the National University of Córdoba - School of Archival Studies; and Brenda Mamvura, Archivist at the National Archives of Zimbabwe. In addition, all new professionals at the conference were asked to identify themselves at registration and were given a green ribbon to wear on their badge. Henri Zuber, Vice-President Programme welcomed them to a special lunch where they could meet each other and subscribe to an initial mailing list. The bursary holders themselves all worked very hard during the conference, attending sessions, writing pieces for the Communications Officer, including social media activity and generally enthusiastically participating and supporting ICA at every turn. In addition they have all contributed articles to this edition of Flash. No one present at the final session could fail to agree that their thought-provoking and entertaining presentations testified to the value of the NP Programme.

If you are interested in participating in the New Professionals Programme, contact Cécile Fabris (cecilefabris@yahoo.fr).

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A global opportunity: some reflections on the ICA annual conference

When deciding whether to join a regional or national professional association, we ask ourselves questions such as, “Will it fully represent my interests?” “What benefits will I have?” “Could it help me to progress in my profession?” In terms of international bodies, there’s a further factor to consider: foreign currency for the annual subscription. Nevertheless, professional associations play an important role in the progress of a profession and we should take part, finding a balance between the arguments for and against.

The International Council on Archives offers publications, establishes working groups on archival themes such as description, digital records, photography; hosts events and offers bursaries to allow members to participate; gives financial support to selected projects. I was one of the individual members who were granted a bursary to participate in the second ICA annual conference in Girona, and now I have the opportunity to tell you a bit about my experience.

What surprised me most was the large number of people who attended from many different countries, and the great diversity of papers at the parallel sessions. What is really exciting in an international conference is the opportunity to share difficulties and successful work experiences because you don’t feel alone: I mean, other professionals are facing similar situations to those you are facing in your home institution/country, so networking is essential to exchange ideas and promote advances in archives around the world, always respecting the legislation and cultural habits of each country.

The theme “Archives and Cultural Industries” was really clever, because the relationship between the two is intrinsic but not much emphasized in archival science theory and practice. From the conference programme I particularly noted these three presentations: “Archives, creation and excellence” by Joan Roca i Fontané, “What value does records management add to government administrative data?” by Elizabeth Shepherd, and “Building the business case for digital preservation using a capability maturity model” by Charles M. Dollar, Lori Ashley and Milovan Misic.

The presentation by Joan Roca was about the process of creating a recipe. Through the stimulation of the senses, these creations can take a person back to his or her childhood in the company of friends and family – memories are lit up! However the dish arriving at the table is the end product of the restaurant’s work. What about the archives? What are the challenges the records manager faces?

Dr Elizabeth Shepherd in her session drew attention to open government and appraisal of government administrative data for current business use and future research value and the relationship between information and records management. This study is relevant at a time when the open government data initiative is becoming more widely accepted by governments.

The parallel session presented by Charles M. Dollar, Lori Ashley and Milovan Misic put forward the theoretical concept of Digital Preservation Capability Maturity Model® (DPCMM), its application in public archives and the ICA’s initiative to make it available for mobiles: an important instrument for public and private archives.

Thus the importance of archives is known to both the public and private sector. The best way to manage and preserve them is the responsibility of the archives profession and its professional associations. Furthermore, interdisciplinary initiatives have to be taken, especially in a digital environment.

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As ICA members will recall, the result of the election of the ICA President was announced as long ago as April 2014. At that time David Fricker (Director-General of the National Archives of Australia) was elected unopposed to succeed Martin Berendse (National Archivist of the Netherlands, from 1 July 2014 Director of Amsterdam Municipal Libraries).

The formal hand-over from Martin Berendse to David Fricker took place at the General Assembly in Girona on 14 October. Under the constitution approved at Brisbane in 2012, the President and the two Vice-Presidents (collectively known as the Elected Officers) have four-year mandates. David’s four-year term will run up to the General Assembly in 2018. Andreas Kellerhals (Vice-President, Finance) and Henri Zuber (Vice-President, Programme) both formally began their fresh mandates for the same period. As outgoing President, Martin Berendse had been especially concerned to ensure that there was a smooth hand-over to his successor and had invited David Fricker to participate fully in the deliberations of the Elected Officers since July. As Chair of the Forum of National Archivists (FAN), David was also part of a small group of Executive Board members (the Elected Officers, the President of SPA, the Chair of the Section Chairs and the Coordinator of the Regional Branches) charged with thinking afresh about ICA strategy. The Group reviewed carefully the ICA’s Strategic Directions 2008-2018 and in the end determined to replace it with a new Strategic Implementation Plan 2014-18, a recommendation that the full Executive Board approved. The new Plan retains many elements from the previous Strategy rather than adopting an entirely novel approach. Nevertheless, the Plan does incorporate some significant changes, with a strong focus on three objectives (rather than the previous six), and the assignment of clear actions, and deadlines for their completion, to the various ICA bodies. It can be consulted on the ICA website: www.ica.org/17036/reference-documents/ica-strategic-implementation-plan-20142018.html.

Thanks to the foresight of his predecessor, our new President had a fully developed Plan ready for his use on his first day in office. The two Presidents certainly achieved seamless continuity and a smooth transition.

On other matters, the General Assembly understood the regrettable necessity of removing members in considerable arrears from the membership list but requested that the Evaluation Commission should verify that this had happened in an ethical and transparent way. It also noted that for the first time the draft ICA budget for 2015 includes a specific amount (20,000 euros) for the Fund for the International Development of Archives (FIDA).
Emmet Leahy award for Julie McLeod

Julie McLeod, Professor in Records Management at the Northumbria University, United Kingdom, was awarded The Emmett Leahy Award 2014. The award ceremony was held during the ICA’s conference in Girona.

The Emmett Leahy Award recognizes an individual whose contributions and accomplishments have had a major impact on the records and information management profession. The award was established in 1967 to honour the spirit of innovation, dedication, and excellence in records and information management demonstrated by Emmett Leahy, who pioneered the development of the lifecycle approach to managing records and information in the US Government.

Anne Thurston, who presented the award, commented that Julie McLeod’s sustained professional leadership in records and information management has had a major impact on how organizations worldwide manage their information assets.

The selection committee stated that Professor McLeod has created high quality education programmes, providing a range of new opportunities for gaining academic qualifications in the field of records and information management.

Julie McLeod is a widely-read author and presenter and has produced over 60 publications across the range of her research and education interests. As the editor of the Records Management Journal, she has steered its development from a UK based publication to a highly respected peer-reviewed international journal.

The conference dinner participants in Girona learned that over the last 20 years, McLeod’s innovative contributions to education, research and professional leadership have helped change the face of the discipline in the UK and internationally. Her work has been characterized by a consistent commitment to linking good practice principles to real practical challenges.

According to the selection committee, Professor Julie McLeod’s inter-disciplinary research projects have used innovative methods, linking theory and practice to investigate the challenges of contemporary issues. She has attracted over a million dollars from UK Research Councils and other funders to support this work.
The Advocacy Expert Group held its first meeting in Girona on October 13 during the 2nd ICA Annual Conference. Our Group is truly international and includes members from Switzerland, Colombia, Canada, Australia, Spain (Catalonia), South Africa, United Kingdom, Bangladesh, Netherlands and Singapore.

During our first meeting, we approved a business plan including terms of reference, strategic objectives and activities up to 2016. The Universal Declaration on Archives (UDA) which was adopted by ICA in Oslo in 2010 and endorsed by UNESCO in 2011 is a central pillar of all our activities. A large number of ICA members are unaware of the potential of the UDA and we plan to develop a better awareness of its importance.

Our objectives include:
1) Develop a strategy for awareness of archives in general and promotion of the UDA, that can be executed by the Advocacy Expert Group members and other members of the ICA;
2) Develop communications within the ICA about the UDA and advocacy activities;
3) Engage as soon as possible with membership of ICA;
4) Use social media and increase online presence of advocacy activities, including the UDA;
5) Offer advocacy expertise within the ICA and within the international archival community;
6) Develop relationships with ICA partners.

Communications are a large component of the Advocacy Expert Group activities; the Experts will act as sponsors or liaison members for advocacy projects initiated by other parts of the ICA network; in addition, FAN and SPA have representatives attending Advocacy Expert Group meetings to be part of the on-line discussion and work.

Immediate projects consist of:
- Translating important advocacy news in French, English and Spanish and encouraging this news to be made available in as many other languages as possible;
- Updating the UDA training kit as well as making it available in several languages;
- Surveying current advocacy resources and practices, developing and making available a database of advocacy resources;
- Developing cross promotional activities and services which show connection between the UDA and other ICA products, such as the Good Governance toolkit or Access Principles;
- Establishing and managing a stand-alone Facebook page as well as a Twitter account to publicize activities conducted by the Advocacy Expert Group;
- Developing an image gallery of “around the world” advocacy activities;
- Championing projects supported by ICA both within and beyond ICA, such as the Information Culture project.

The Advocacy Experts will act as advocacy advisers when ICA needs expert opinion for its members and partners. However activities will reach several audiences such as associations, governments, professionals, businesses, students and the general public throughout the world.

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Fifteen countries from Africa, India, the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Atlantic regions applied for FIDA grants in the latest round of applications, including two that had resubmitted from the previous funding round.

The Board of Trustees, meeting in Girona on 11 October prior to the Annual Conference, had to make some hard decisions owing to the limited funds at their disposal this year. In the end grants were made to the East African Branch of ICA (ESARBICA) for a training session on digital records management and preservation training to take place during the ESARBICA conference in 2015, and to Ghana for a train-the-trainers workshop on electronic records management, using the PARBICA toolkit. The Trustees decided that they needed additional information from other applicants before committing further funds at this stage.

FIDA’s reliance on donations meant that much of this year’s meeting again focused on the need to establish a sustainable income stream or streams. This is by no means a unique situation for grant-awarding bodies, but there is nevertheless a sense of missed opportunity when solutions to the problems of archives in low-resourced countries exist but a lack of funds to resource them, often relatively small, prevents their being implemented.

The Board has taken a number of initiatives which have resulted in some additional funding. An appeal to the Executive Board has resulted in a grant to FIDA of 20,000 euros annually, which will go some way to establishing a core fund, although it still falls short of the 25,000 euros of grants that FIDA has previously committed annually to projects since its relaunch in 2010. The Trustees also gave a short presentation to the Forum of National Archivists (FAN) at the Girona conference explaining the work of the Fund and asking for their support. FIDA continues to welcome donations from individual and institutional members, which in 2014 netted 3,340 euros, besides ad hoc donations at the Annual Conferences in Brussels and Girona, which brought in just over 1,200 euros, and the Trustees are very grateful to members for their generosity. (Donation forms can be downloaded from the ICA website: www.ica.org/12243/donate-to-fida/donate-to-fida.html)

However, these donations need to be supplemented from other sources and discussions are also ongoing with some external institutions which, it is hoped, will either result in funds made directly to FIDA or in those bodies funding FIDA-style projects under their own auspices. Meanwhile the Trustees are also looking at ways to maximize as much as possible the benefits of the money that they give, for example, by extending participation of projects within particular regions or by creating training packages on common themes that could be ‘re-used’ across regions.

As has become customary the Trustees also gave a report on their work for 2013 in the session devoted to ICA’s programmes, which was well attended by some potential applicants and hopefully by some supporters of the Fund. A PowerPoint presentation can be found in French, English and Spanish on the FIDA webpages: www.ica.org/1790/more-information-on-fida/more-information-on-fida.html. The Trustees always invite those who have been awarded grants for their projects to attend the ICA conference but, given how poorly resourced the awardees are, few can attend. This year we were fortunate in that ICA was able to offer a small travel grant to two awardees. The FIDA session was treated to an excellent presentation on the project executed by the Arab Image Foundation in Beirut, Lebanon, given by Reem Akl, the project officer on the development and implementation of their comprehensive Disaster Plan for all the photographic and other visual collections that they hold, and their dissemination of the Disaster Plan by means of workshops in the region (under the Middle East Photograph Preservation Initiative) which they lead. Financially FIDA’s small award enabled them to get started on this Plan which, for obvious reasons, is particularly critical at this time. So from small FIDA acorns Archival oaks can grow. Please support us to help them.

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UNESCO PERSIST Project

The first day of the second ICA Annual Conference ended with the PERSIST session (Platform to Enhance the Sustainability of the Information Society Transglobally).

This is a collaborative project between ICA, IFLA and UNESCO for the purpose of answering urgent international questions concerning strategies, technical issues, selection, responsibilities and division of labour relating to the preservation of the digital heritage.

PERSIST was launched in The Hague in December 2013 and is divided into three working groups (content, technical and policy). The technical strand is the responsibility of the President of ICA. The PERSIST session at the Annual Conference was devoted to evaluating digital preservation strategies and the role of UNESCO in facing technical challenges. Martin Berendse began by presenting PERSIST, reminding the parties involved that they needed to come together and work in conjunction with each other.

Iskra Panevska (UNESCO Memory of the World Programme) then presented the UNESCO initiatives in the field of digital conservation and documentary heritage. She noted that it is essential to build firm and dependable foundations in order to preserve human knowledge, share resources for the good of humanity and try to bring peace by giving access to information. The great value of digital information has led UNESCO to consider that creating a sustainable environment and establishing international standards are essential.

She emphasized the fact that if we don’t commit ourselves to preserving the digital heritage, we will leave a vacuum at the point when documents are transferred from one format to another and we will have to deal with data corruption, the legal and financial problems caused by such losses, or with obsolete machines or storage equipment, etc. It is important to adopt adequate policies without further delay but also to work closely with professional organizations and with the industrial sector who are able to give advice on sustainable access and preservation in a dynamic digital environment.

Natasa Milic-Frayling (Microsoft Research) said that it was time to think

Expert Group on Archival Buildings and Environments (EGABE)

The group was formally instituted during October 2013 with the invitation and appointment of Jonathan Rhys-Lewis as the Chair.

The first few months (and into 2014) were spent exploring and contacting recommended individuals to invite the Expert Group and nominations and/or recommendations were requested from:

- PCOM members
- ICA Secretariat
- ICA regional branches
- Expert Group members

The next phase focussed on arranging a meeting, to be held in Paris, to bring the newly-formed group/members together. However, the range of logistics and growing costs made this too complex to arrange and so it was decided to postpone this initiative. Consequently, the next focus of the group has been to build a consensus for the appropriate direction for this Expert Group.

The current phase is to concentrate on a proposed programme (this still has to be agreed and ratified by the group at the time of going to publication) using input and ideas submitted by a core of the group members. The Chair will lead on this and is compiling a proposal for the Expert Group members to confirm the initial phase and focus of this Expert Group.

The proposed plan is to carry out a web-based survey questionnaire and invite ICA members to respond to a range of questions designed to explore the current situation regarding archive buildings and their environments; allied and linked to this will be a review of the current literature with specific emphasis on the ICA Bibliography on
in terms of sustainable computing: what to preserve and how, in order to achieve permanent access to digital data. The technologies associated with IT support are highly complex: continuous investment and updating is necessary to maintain IT systems and applications. With a demand that is constantly changing it is difficult to meet the costs of maintenance, which are not economically viable for the ICT industries, to the detriment of long-term data access. Just as you can’t read a book without light, so you can’t read a digitized document without the right programme. It is therefore very important to focus on data preservation and the software needed to read them. It is not enough just to preserve the documents, but a hybrid approach is needed which involves creating a suitable IT environment. According to Natasa, emulation and virtualization can be a response to the issue of preserving information technologies.

She then brought the virtual encyclopaedia Encarta 1998 back to life and showed some old versions of Microsoft Word and Powerpoint working by means of virtual machines based in the cloud. We should now be thinking of new ways of using old programmes. The advent of cloud computing could show us the way insofar as virtualization is a basic element of this new process. UNESCO can play an important role in the development of digital preservation by encouraging content-holders and ICT providers to set up a software repository available for the use of heritage institutions.

Jos van de Oever (Ko GmbH) gave a presentation that had been written by Michiel Leenars. Because of the proliferation and diversification of the use of software and hardware, the origins of records are becoming ever more numerous. Modern softwares are often more complicated than they seem, since they are not necessarily built in a single block, but consist of new layers of codes added to old ones. The developers often only see one part of the application and it is not certain that the composition of a particular programme file is really giving all the information it contains. Moreover, not all file formats are the same. To complicate matters further, when it is known that the application giving access to a document might have been altered, changed or even deleted during the course of that document’s life, certain information is thereby irrevocably lost. This problem is as serious as the case of inks used to print books in the twentieth century; some of these turned out to be acidic, and destroyed paper (irrevocable loss of information due to technological development).

To ensure long-term preservation of content and access, a series of tests will have to be applied and programmes developed to migrate the content of a file so that it can be accessed in an IT environment that is different from the original. Interoperability tests and the construction of converters could be excellent ways for heritage institutions to enhance their control over their digital collections.

The PERSIST project would be ideally placed to implement such a project and UNESCO is a high profile participant which can use its influence to encourage standardization.

Kulder Aas (National Archives of Estonia) presented the Register of file format information TREASURES (Technical Registry Enabling Access to Services Used in Research e-Infrastructures) which will be launched as part of the Horizon 2020 programme. A technical register is an essential part of the development of policies, planning, processing and preservation of the records of an institution. This is a project that PERSIST should collaborate with so that the two initiatives can support each other.

The session, chaired by David Fricker, closed after two intense hours of interesting presentations and questions from the audience. The agents of heritage, government, and ICT industry need to continue to discuss the best solutions for the preservation of the digital heritage.

Archival Buildings – a much appreciated member resource. In addition, the group will review current facility standards and practices and other new and developing guidelines for archival facilities.

To ensure that the work of the new group is understood and acknowledged it is proposed to hold a seminar at the next ICA conference in Reykjavik to present the findings of the survey and to promote current best practice – in addition the literature review will be a further deliverable for members. The new Expert Group presents an opportunity to embed the issue of buildings and the management of the storage environment into ICA programmes and so raise the profile of the new group and provide a direct benefit to ICA members.

The Expert Group members are:

- Jonathan Rhys-Lewis (Chair)
- Saroja Wettasinghe
- Ian Batterham
- Michele Pacifico
- France Saie Belaisch
- Zdenka Semlic Rajh
- Leo van Wijk
- Jiang Li
- Tim Harris

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The title of this book inverts the Latin expression *verba volant, scripta manent* (words fly, writings remain) which dates back more than 2000 years. It also highlights the fact that for 500 years we have been able to read books; what will the situation be in the next 500 years?

The authors offer in this book, which is equally aimed at a non-specialist audience, a summary of the global development of archival science, both analogue and digital, as well as the challenges which archivists have had to face, both in the past and currently, to become proactive in a constantly changing world.

Charles Kecskeméti, Secretary General of the International Council on Archives from 1962 to 1998, and Lajos Körmendy, specialist in information technology and preservation, having worked at the National Archives of Hungary, have produced a well-structured book on the theme of archives and their persistence over time, as each new political, administrative and/or technological era dawns. It is aiming to raise awareness among decision-makers and to reassure those responsible for archives who might not be feeling comfortable in the digital world. The authors show how information technology must play its part in archival continuity to ensure the authenticity of documents and the good governance of an administration or country.

The first part of the book provides a brilliant survey of the history of archival thought and practice of the last three centuries in Europe and the Anglo-Saxon countries, ranging from De *Diplomatica* by the Benedictine Jean Mabillon to Professor Luciana Duranti and her project on current diplomatic, InterPares, while making mention of the creators of the principles which form the basis of the discipline to this day, such as Jenkinson and the principle of provenance. Kecskeméti traces the history of the development of State archives and archival associations, as well as the impact of international cooperation on professional theory and practice.

Préarchivage and records management are put into perspective in relation to the management of the masses of documents which continue to increase. The conflict between access and the protection of private life on the one hand and the integrity of heritage on the other are discussed, topics that inspired a whole body of legislation between 1970 and 1980 and underline the challenges, too numerous to mention, for safeguarding information.

In the second part, Körmendy gives a useful, concise, clear and detailed analysis of the properties of different types of electronic records, of the conditions and stages of their production and the periodic processes that the professional must undertake to ensure their preservation. As the writer of the preface comments, the author places great stress on the fact that “the two basic premises, the volatility of the digital document and the continual changing of access tools, are opposed to the fundamental archival standard of archives, long-term preservation”. If we want to be able to consult digital-born documents in 500 years’ time, we will have to put in place all sorts of processes which relate not only to technology but also to archival science and its work tools (acquisition, appraisal, management, preservation) and to ever-increasing legislation. The object of their permanent preservation is to preserve their real and potential value so that archives can carry out the functions that have been assigned to them.

Density, volatility and vulnerability are words that recur throughout this otherwise very accessible analysis of electronic records. The constituent elements of the archive document, the metadata, the descriptive standards (EAD/XML, OAIS, ISAD-G, MOREQ, etc.) the integrity, authenticity and essential characteristics of digital records, as well as preservation formats are essential data for establishing a functioning strategy for permanent preservation. The author rightly emphasizes, however, that they must be linked to the basic functions of archival science, which are, among others, suitable archival processing of the document and its file with the help of classification schemes and archival hierarchies. A jumble of unclear information is as unreadable in paper format as it is in electronic form.

Although the reader has clearly grasped that the weak point of information technology is preservation, with all its inherent risks, the book ends with a glimmer of hope thanks to the international recognition of the need to find common solutions to ensure the continuity of information management and thereby of heritage memory.

This book will be read to advantage by all archives and records management professionals and should find its place in libraries and all centres of archival education.

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This year, ICA published two issues containing papers first given at the 2012 Brisbane Congress, “A climate of change”.

The first issue (2012:2) brings together articles under the title ‘Trust and sustainability in the digital environment’; the issue encompasses a range of technical and functional developments in archival practice at the start of the 21st century, and articles draw attention to, in particular, new possibilities for creating “value-added” archives.

The second Congress issue (2013:1) brings together a selection of papers which bear on the common theme of identities and communities, whether communities of archivists, or of the users - and potential users - of the archives themselves. In both issues the authors have taken the opportunity to revise and expand their original papers for publication. Our next issue is very different. 2013:2, which will be circulated in spring 2015, is a “Miscellany”, devoted to articles written primarily by individual ICA members. The articles represent a cross-section of current professional concerns, addressed from a wide range of geographical perspectives.

During 2014 the Editorial Board met once, in Girona, where its main business was the editorial programme to 2016 and beyond. Continuing our successful collaborations with ICA sections, the Section on Local, Municipal and Territorial Archives will be contributing an issue during 2015, while currently well into the planning stages are issues on archives and the cinema, and on francophone Africa.

Comma can be accessed with your ICA username and password at: www.ica.org/12718/comma-via-metapress/comma-via-metapress.html. (Non-members can access individual articles on a pay-per-view basis at http://liverpool.metapress.com/content/v178n8251281/ and http://liverpool.metapress.com/content/j5xmj83t2140/).

You can keep up to date with the journal at https://liverpool.metapress.com/content/122452/toc-alert to sign up to new issue alerts.

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