A new format for “Flash” online
A world tour of ICA
A Challenge to the Archives
Profession: Crisis or Opportunity?
Reflections on CARBICA X
Staff changes at the ICA Secretariat
ICA Africa Strategy to be finalised at Reykjavík
Expert Group on Emergency Management and Disaster Preparedness
UNESCO PERSIST project
First steps towards a better Website
Introducing Redmine: ICA’s new collaborative workspace
ICA and social media
Working with volunteers in ICA
Technical and field related problems of traditional and electronic archiving
International Archives Day 2015
Welcome to Reykjavík!
“Comma” Editorial Board

Welcome to Reykjavík!
3rd ICA annual conference, Iceland, 28-29 September 2015
A new format for “Flash” online

Welcome to the second online-only edition of Flash. In this issue you will see some changes following the decision to discontinue the print version, most notably replacing the familiar portrait orientation by landscape, which are intended to allow members to access Flash across different media.

Why was the decision made to introduce these changes? While members have always valued printed publications as a benefit of ICA membership, increasingly people now receive their information as a matter of course on new platforms, not just personal computers, but smartphones, tablets and even wristwatches, and these platforms are likely to proliferate in the years to come. In this context of technological change the primary version of a publication like Flash should be electronic. Elsewhere in this issue, Céline Fernandez reports on ICA’s presence on social media, and how enthusiastically this has been taken up. The old format of the online version of Flash, which was simply an electronic version of the printed copy, does not fit easily with these new communication tools and the way that information is both accessed and shared.

Print is also expensive, and the publications budget line for 2014 outstripped that of the Website by a large margin, amounting to very nearly 8.5% of ICA’s annual budget. While this may prove to be value for money in the world of paper publications, it nevertheless becomes more difficult to justify when economies have to be made elsewhere, and the content of Flash lends itself more naturally to an online format than that of Comma, which as ICA’s professional journal will continue to be produced in hard copy.

Thirdly online publication allows more immediate access. While current news items are broadcast in the monthly e-newsletter, Flash still retains a role as a medium for news, reporting at some length on events, including the annual conferences and four-yearly international congress, and it makes sense to distribute these reports more directly.

We hope that you will enjoy the new look, which we intend to enhance still further. And of course, as always, we would be very pleased to receive your comments and suggestions for improvement.

Stephen O’Connor
Senior Publications Officer
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Milan, Italy SBA Conference “Creating the best business archive”, June 2015

Shanghai, China SLMT decided the creation of a Website for the International Archives Day, 2011

A WORLD TOUR OF ICA

Quito, Ecuador International Seminar of Archives of Iberian Tradition, July 2015

Radenci, Slovenia Conference "Technical and field related problems of traditional and electronic archiving", April 2015

Bali, Indonesia ICA Governance meetings, April 2015
The EASTICA seminar in December 2014, aimed to address its theme from three perspectives, technological, legal and operational. Speakers included Nathan Moles, PhD candidate at the University of Toronto, Lyu Heshun, Director-General of the Beijing Municipal Archives, Kwak Kun-Hong, Professor at Hannam University (Korea), Simon Chu, Secretary-General of EASTICA, Margaret Turner, Publications and Translations Adviser of ICA, and myself.

It is not possible to provide a detailed account of the presentations and discussions, but the issues covered show much synergy between Branch members’ concerns and achievements and the priorities of ICA’s professional programme. The challenge of technological advance and its impact on archival work has been around for a while now. Nathan Moles’ presentation addressed this, outlining some of the issues such as the absence of a comprehensive solution, limited knowledge-sharing and the paradigm-changing nature of technological developments. Moreover, the archival function of managing and preserving digital archives, unlike more traditional functions, is not the sole preserve of archivists and this cross-disciplinary working means that it is difficult to voice and address archival concerns. More significant is the fact that there is a huge need for working archivists to get involved, but unlike most archival areas, the field is dominated by academics which results in too big a gap between theory and practice. The message I have brought away is that practising archivists need to be more involved in meeting the technological challenge by writing up their experiences, and engaging with the other disciplines using our own concepts and terminology (explaining them of course).

From the legal perspective the speakers outlined the value of good archival legislation. National archives should operate as independent agencies, preferably independent of government. Moreover legislation should ideally apply to the government, require records to be created and then kept and managed by professionals, going to the archival authority for appraisal when the administrative use has passed and once in archival custody they should be preserved and released for access. The need for two pieces of legislation – an Archives Act and a Records Management Act was also discussed. Clearly this is an important topic for EASTICA members as well as for the wider ICA membership, whose call for an expert group is being met as PCOM plans to form a group to work on developing guidance and tools. We also suggested that whilst they impose change on our work, the technological, legal and operational challenges can be analysed and reveal opportunities and strengths which we can take advantage of to improve our position.

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Reflections on CARBICA X

My rapid acceptance of the invitation to attend the tenth conference of the Caribbean Branch (CARBICA) in Martinique in December 2014 is not entirely explained by a desire to escape the rigours of the European winter. My first experience, as a member of the Secretariat, of the global ICA network had been at the highly successful CITRA conference in Curaçao in November 2006, but I had not returned to the region since then.

Before travelling to Fort de France, I had established that CARBICA is clearly a well-organized regional branch, with a constitution under the French law of 1901 (which also regulates the constitution of ICA itself). In addition, it has a good track record in taking major initiatives, notably the Task Force for Disaster Protection (CARTAS) and MIGAN (Memory of the Islands: Gateway for Archival Networking). So I looked forward to seeing how the branch would tackle the topical theme of “Addressing the challenges of access to records and public data”.

I was not disappointed either by the formal proceedings or the many informal opportunities for networking. The plenary sessions on the first day benefited from the participation of a wide range of experts, some of them from outside the region, including the ubiquitous Trudy Peterson (US), Silvia Ninita de Moura Estevao (Brazil) and colleagues from France. The workshops on the following days were aimed primarily either at French- or English-speaking audiences, and at this point I had a sense that the conference had split into two distinct streams. However, voting members of the branch came together for the General Assembly, at which I was able to give an update on the activities of ICA in general. I was also asked to act as a voting scrutineer during the election of the office-bearers just minutes before catching my taxi to the airport!

My conclusion about the conference theme was that the challenges to our profession of managing access responsibly have similarities in different parts of the world, and that those archivists who have to handle this issue inside the European Union are not necessarily at an advantage. I was not surprised to find that the branch is very dynamic and forward-thinking. However, I had not fully appreciated the difficulties of travelling from one Caribbean island to another, meaning that CARBICA members as a group cannot get together very often. Also, linguistic barriers can be an impediment to cooperation, although this is usually overcome by the excellent English of mother-tongue French speakers. Indeed, while Martinique and Guadeloupe are French départements whose archives are subject to the technical control of the Archives of France, I detected a feeling among archivists in the English-speaking parts of the Caribbean that they feel somewhat deprived of support. It was politely but firmly impressed upon me that, while ICA’s decision to pursue an Africa Strategy is understandable, the needs of the Caribbean are also considerable and should not be overlooked.

The above are my own somewhat sketchy impressions of a thoroughly enjoyable conference. An official account can be found on the CARBICA Website.

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“Addressing the challenges of access to records and public data”
For many years ICA has been fortunate enough to be able to count on Annick Carteret and Nathalie Florent to provide much needed continuity and stability in the Secretariat. At the end of April Annick left to enjoy a well-deserved retirement, while Nathalie has decided that now is the time to move on. We wish them both all the very best in their future endeavours, and hope that they remain in touch from time to time with the organization that owes them so much.

The task of renewing the Secretariat team is so far proceeding on schedule. Claire Prochasson joined us on 10 June as Corporate Business Manager, with the responsibility of supporting the Secretary General in the areas of finance, human resources and governance. Marianne Deraze started as Website Project Manager (part-time) on 29 June: she will also have responsibility for keeping content on the current Website up to date and for helping out with the Redmine workspaces. Both new colleagues have absorbed a large amount of information about ICA with amazing speed and are settling in well. You can read more about Claire and Marianne in this issue. We shall also be recruiting a new Marketing and Communications Manager in the near future.

Finally, the ICA professional programme will receive much needed reinforcements when Monique Nielsen arrives in September, on a year’s secondment from the National Archives of Australia. You will be able to read more about Monique in the next issue.

I am sure that ICA members will appreciate that the double departure of Annick and Nathalie within a three month period presents particular challenges for the ICA Secretariat in terms of preserving corporate memory and ensuring business continuity. In the short term, there will inevitably be some glitches which we will try and keep to an absolute minimum. By the beginning of next year, however, ICA should begin to reap the benefits of a stronger programme, a more sophisticated approach to marketing, and a modernized administration.

David Leitch
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“At the end of April Annick left to enjoy a well-deserved retirement, while Nathalie has decided that now is the time to move on.”
ICA is a wonderful organization with a worldwide network. At the centre of the network is the small Secretariat office in Paris. At the centre of that office, keeping it running, is Annick. Looking after the accounts, managing the contracts, organizing the meetings, she is also a living encyclopaedia of ICA past and present. Her knowledge was of huge value when I worked in the Secretariat in 1995-96 and we were modernising the organization. She was able to explain the background to the current organization and why some aspects which seemed bureaucratic or bizarre to me, had developed to meet particular needs. She also pointed out different structures that had been used in the past and when they had and had not worked. All this helped us avoid the pitfalls of the past and build a stronger and better ICA.

In between times in the office, we taught each other colloquial phrases in our own languages. On one occasion she advised me not to use one I had found on a sign in the lift in my apartment block. It explained that if the lift stopped between floors you should press the red button and help would be on its way “dans les meilleurs délais”. Assuming this meant with all possible speed, I used the phrase in a report on emergency response to the war in Bosnia. Until, that is, Annick pointed out it translates roughly as “in due course”.

The ICA we know today, which is respected round the world, owes a huge debt to the behind the scenes work of Annick and her team. As she now takes well deserved retirement, she also deserves our resounding thanks and very best wishes for the future.

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It’s with great sadness, but taking with us many fond memories, that we say goodbye to Nathalie Florent. Among her many other ICA responsibilities, Nathalie acted as secretary to Comma, a role which called for high-level organisational skills, not least in ensuring that material in all seven ICA languages was available for each issue, and that multiple authors and translators were meeting their required deadlines. Such tasks required Nathalie to exercise her exemplary diplomatic talents: many of us were grateful for the tact of her e-mails, containing “reminders” or “suggestions”. Invariably she managed to make the most complicated tasks appear straightforward, a calm and considered approach allowed her to solve problems with the best possible solution. As a seasoned ICA administrator and traveller to numerous congresses and conferences, she remained unfazed by whatever variants of subterranean office accommodation, peculiar IT configurations, missing delegates and irregular meals presented themselves, though too often, and to her colleagues’ great disappointment, her administrative responsibilities prevented her participation in the social programme.

The Comma Editorial Board has been more fortunate in that respect: though its meetings are intense, they have allowed us all to appreciate at close quarters Nathalie’s thoughtfulness, good humour and many acts of kindness. A senior member of the Editorial Board summed up her approach to her work and colleagues thus: “She would say that it was quite straight-forward: there was no special merit in what she did, she worked as though she were doing a jigsaw puzzle (which is true), she didn't have to take decisions (which is not true), she enjoyed travelling (which is partly true), and she had helpful colleagues... But most importantly, she lightened our load considerably, she thought a lot about us, and we were very glad she was there.”

We all wish her much joy in the future.

Margaret Procter
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Marianne Deraze joined the Paris office team as our new part-time Website manager on 29 June. In the first instance she will be focussing on the ongoing Website redevelopment project. She will be the point of contact for members requesting updates to the Website, which will not be showing any visible signs of change until the redevelopment is completed. She will also be your contact for all issues concerning the Redmine workspace.

Marianne graduated with a master’s degree in audiovisual and digital archives and also holds a master’s degree in the History of International Relations. Her mother tongue is French, but she is continuing to improve her English. Marianne has a broad experience of Web projects: she set up the consultation Website for the audiovisual archives of the history committee of the French Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development, and contributed to the content creation and editorialization of several Websites for the enhancement of the French National Library (BnF) collections, in particular BnF-Archives and Manuscripts, Gallica, the BnF digital library, and Europeana, the European digital library.

Over the coming months, her main task will be to take forward the management of the redevelopment project and to improve the back office Website ergonomics. She will also be happy to listen to members’ requests for enhancements in order to prepare for the second phase of the project which will be to redevelop the public interface of the ICA Website.

Claire Prochasson joined ICA as Corporate Business Manager on 10 June. She brings to ICA proven professional expertise in the administration, management and coordination of small companies in a multicultural environment, in sectors as varied as accountancy, international cooperation and business services. She will play a leading role in the day to day management of ICA’s finances and human resources, and will support the Secretary-General in ICA governance. Her recruitment forms part of a general strengthening of the Secretariat by the Secretary General. You will have the chance to meet the new team during the next ICA annual conference in September.
ICA Africa Strategy to be finalised at Reykjavik

In 2014 the members of the Programme Commission (PCOM) decided to make a concerted effort to meet ICA’s African members’ requests for support in managing records and archives - and that resources, projects and products deployed in Africa should be focused and part of a strategy designed to meet their needs, make the most of ICA’s relatively slender resources, transfer skills and knowledge and be a force for sustainable improvement for both archives and the people that look after them.

It was clear from the beginning that there was a need not only for practical projects and training in African archives for the practitioners but also for high-level advocacy with the politicians and decision-makers. ICA’s governance and programme structures that have been moving into place since the Brisbane Congress are proving to be well-positioned to support such a strategy and deliver the necessary work. The necessary expertise should be easily identifiable, for example the Forum for National Archivists (FAN) and the Advocacy Expert Group (already liaising with each other) might be expected to develop a package or template for advocating archives and records management to a government minister. In fact, as the President of FAN sits on PCOM, FAN volunteered early on for this role and established a Task Force. PCOM will lead on projects that either use existing professional programme products or require that they be adapted or developed and to this end set up a working group.

PCOM’s Africa Strategy Working Group has already carried out a preliminary needs assessment which indicates that the main requirements will be advocacy and capacity building. A wider consultation is also taking place, led by one of the Girona New Professional Bursary Holders, in order to get as much input as possible from African colleagues and other stakeholders as to priorities and needs - and for suggestions for projects and ways to implement work in Africa. At the spring governance meetings in Bali, PCOM discussed the Africa plan and there was also a meeting dedicated to African matters which was attended by representatives of all three of the African Branches. It was decided that the strategy should be drafted as a matter of urgency and it was also clear that people are excited and enthusiastic about this initiative. The first step is to draft a strategy and a related workplan and this should be ready for consultation by all stakeholders in early July. The overall deadline for the Africa plan is 2020 but of course the strategy will need to be updated in the course of those five years. Broadly speaking, the aim of ICA’s work in Africa during this time is to build the capacity of African archivists and recordkeepers to manage records and archives effectively, to make the people in power aware of record-keeping issues and to inspire in them the will to make the necessary changes. This is all to be done whilst ensuring ICA’s resources are deployed effectively and efficiently and such that at the end of every project the people on the ground are stronger and better equipped to meet their own particular challenges.
The Expert Group on Emergency Management and Disaster Preparedness (EG-EMDP) held its first planning meeting on April 7, 2015 in Paris at ICA headquarters. As part of the full day meeting, the group established its goals and objectives, a working plan for the next two years, terms of reference, the need for Website presence, social media usage and funding. The group, formerly International Support in Emergency Situations, changed its name to reflect the nature and scope of its mission, goals and objectives.

The main goals of the expert group are to coordinate initiatives and exchange good practices in the field of Emergency Management and Disaster Preparedness (including Mitigation, Planning, Response, Recovery); and to facilitate professional mobilization and archival solidarity when disaster strikes. During the next two years the objectives will include working with colleagues in related fields and other responders, coordinating activities between ICA and other organizations such as Blue Shield; coordinating and collaborating with sections and branches to provide training and workshop materials for archivists and colleagues in preparing for and responding to disasters; and researching and making available existing resources in many different languages. Other objectives include developing a database of lessons learned provided by professional organizations and assisting ICA in its advocacy for the protection of cultural heritage patrimony.

In the event of a disaster, the expert group will contact the affected institution to determine their needs to recover as time and effort permits.

In every geographical area of the world, there are disasters created by man and nature. While each organization plans for evacuating buildings, protecting people and property, the same care and attention to planning should be placed on the records and cultural history. If information is an important asset, the planning for the protection of the records prior to a disaster is paramount. In the age of citizen-reporting, the world is aware of the destruction created by Hurricane Katrina, the Southeast Asia Tsunami, the earthquakes in Haiti, China and Japan, and terrorist attacks on countries throughout the world. These disasters created by nature and man are regional, affecting large areas of land, property and people. The expert group will present a session on Emergency Management and Disaster Preparedness at the 2015 Annual Conference in Reykjavik, Iceland. Two sessions will focus on the lessons learned 10 years after a disaster, and working together to protect cultural resources. These sessions will be followed by a panel discussion with open audience participation to further the efforts of ICA in assisting those in emergency situations.

Since the initial planning meeting, the expert group has established a Web presence utilizing the existing Emergency Management Programme page on the ICA Website, a Facebook page and a Twitter account. For more information or to follow the progress of the group, please visit one of these sites.

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UNESCO PERSIST project

On April 20-21, UNESCO, the International Council on Archives, and the Netherlands National Commission to UNESCO jointly organized a meeting of the Platform to Enhance the Sustainability of the Information Society Transglobally (PERSIST) project, with partner organizations ICA and IFLA as well as stakeholders from heritage institutions, government, and the ICT industry. The Paris meeting built upon work done during previous meetings in Vancouver and Girona, and aimed to examine current efforts at digital preservation currently underway, review existing selection policies for digital materials, and discuss the establishment of a Global Repository for Legacy Software, and the necessary partnerships with industry.

The 46 attendees, who hailed from a dozen countries, as well as organizations ranging from ICT industry leaders to national archives and libraries, and universities, were part of three task forces: Policy, Content, and Technology.

The Policy task force started the event with an excellent discussion of the potential of the Global Repository for legacy software and the importance of cooperation with the ICT industry. Representatives from Microsoft, LibreOffice, and Preservica discussed the benefits and costs of a Global Repository for their organizations as well as challenges in the future. The second half of the Policy session focused on the national policies for digital preservation. Speakers from India, the Netherlands, and the United Arab Emirates shared digital preservation work being done at the national level in their respective countries and the potential for UNESCO to support national strategies.

The Content and Technology task forces met the following day; the Content group, chaired by Ingrid Parent, focused on the creation of Guidelines for the selection of digital heritage, which will be written by an international team of authors for UNESCO member states as well as heritage and research institutions. The document will cover a wide range of topics, from metadata, file formats, and legal issues as well as selection methods such as sampling. The first draft will be discussed at the upcoming IFLA World Library and Information Conference in August, and further developed at the ICA Annual Conference in Reykjavik in September.

The Technology task force, chaired by ICA President David Fricker, focused on the Global Repository for legacy software and answering the most pressing questions, such as the scope of the repository and partnerships with industry. The meeting had five terrific presentations which covered a wide range of topics. Dr. Mahadev Satyanarayanan’s demonstration of the Olive Executable Archive was a highlight. Developed at Carnegie Mellon University, Olive enables users to run executable content through virtual machines, which can be hosted on cloud storage. Other presentations focused on the technical challenges of preserving software, as well as legal issues with software licensing, and the Chair of ICA SPA, Mr Fred van Kan, spoke on the role of Archives in digital preservation. A round-table discussion of what the Global Repository should be resulted in the idea that the repository should contain tools that enable heritage institutions to render and interact with digital heritage. Further discussion focused on making the repository sustainable.

Since the productive meetings in Paris, the PERSIST task forces have continued to move forward in helping bring heritage institutions and industry together to preserve our digital heritage.

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First steps towards a better Website

It is generally recognized that the Websites of most organizations need to be modernised every three to five years, simply in order to keep pace with increasingly rapid technological changes. The current ICA Website was built in 2009/10 and is now really showing the signs of its age. While it has some attractive features, it cannot be truthfully said that the current Website has succeeded in meeting all of our members’ legitimate expectations. Its information architecture is unnecessarily elaborate; its search engine does not work as nearly as effectively as it should; there is insufficient flexibility in design; and it is difficult to load material onto the Website from any location outside the Secretariat. All too often searches within the Website to locate material are abandoned in favour of a general Google search which is often more productive. The modernisation of the Website is, therefore, an opportunity to be eagerly seized to put these and other shortcomings right.

Some time ago the contractor for the current Website informed ICA that it wished to move the Websites of all its clients out of their proprietary software into Drupal open source. With the arrival of Marianne Deraze in the ICA Secretariat as Website Project Manager, we can now embrace the prospect of change with confidence. We have commenced the first phase of a two-phase project to improve the Website. In the first phase, the Website will be transferred into Drupal, and simplifications in the information architecture will be made. At the same time, there will be no loss of content whatsoever. To help the Secretariat manage this first phase, a Quality Assurance Group, consisting of Website experts in various national archives, has been set up to offer advice at critical stages of the project. It is expected that the first phase will be completed in early 2016.

The second phase will concentrate on further enhancements to be made to the Website once the transfer into Drupal is finished. It is intended that the new Website should have the flexibility and functionality to meet the requirements of mobile applications and social media, and to enable online payments of membership dues and donations to FIDA. Detailed planning on precisely what the second phase should include will take place in the final quarter of 2015. There will be wide consultation throughout the ICA network about what improvements should have the highest priority. In early 2016 ICA will launch an open invitation to tender so that it can select a technically strong bid that also represents good value for money. We will ensure that the new Website reflects the wishes of the members, rather than what the developer thinks we ought to have.

The Website is the principal communications tool for any organization that wishes to flourish in the early 21st century. Without a highly performing Website, ICA’s efforts to recruit more members and to develop its advocacy role are almost bound to falter. It is to be hoped that before the end of 2016 ICA will finally have the Website that it deserves, probably for the first time in its history.

David Leitch
ICA Secretary General
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“With the arrival of Marianne Deraze in the ICA Secretariat as Website Project Manager, we can now embrace the prospect of change with confidence.”
Introducing Redmine: ICA’s new collaborative workspace

Over the past year ICA’s collaborative workspace, Docuwiki, has been replaced by Redmine, an open source project management Web application, in preparation for the move to a new Website. Details of the work of all ICA bodies will be found under the tab Projects listed under five headings: Governance, Professional Sections, Regional Branches, Secretariat and Working groups and committees. The pages that are likely to be used most by each project group are the Wiki, Documents and the Forum, though some groups might choose to use the other pages as well. The Wiki can be used for sharing and editing documents, while discussions take place on the Forum. The Wiki can also be used to post papers for meetings, agendas etc. Final versions of documents can then be archived on Documents, which is also used for reference documents, eg terms of reference, guidelines, minutes of meetings. Relevant documents can also be put on the Forum pages for comment and discussion. Detailed information on how to use Redmine is available on the Home page. However, if you have any questions about using Redmine, please don’t hesitate to contact Marianne Deraze, our new Website manager.

“Docuwiki, has been replaced by Redmine, an open source project management Web application, in preparation for the move to a new Website.”

Stephen O’Connor
Senior Publications Officer
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Home My page Projects People Administration Help

ICA Workspace / Espace de travail de l’ICA

Hello and welcome to the collaborative workspace of ICA! Bonjour et bienvenue sur l’espace de travail collaboratif de l’ICA!

Here you will find a range of tools to allow you to share information and collaborative work.

- The wiki is the space dedicated to your project where you can edit, make comments, amend and share work documents with other members of your group. / Le wiki est l’espace dédié à votre projet sur lequel vous pourrez rédiger, commenter, modifier et partager des documents de travail avec les autres membres de votre groupe.

- The forum is the place where you can exchange ideas and information on a topic that concerns your project as a whole. / Le forum est l’endroit où vous pourrez échanger des avis et des informations sur un sujet intéressant l’ensemble de votre projet.

- The documents is intended to gather all the final documents that are useful for smooth functioning of your group. It is here that new members will find the essential information they need to integrate them fully into your team. / L’outil « Documents » est destiné à rassembler tous les documents finalisés utiles au bon fonctionnement de votre groupe. Chaque nouveau membre pourra y trouver les informations essentielles nécessaires à son intégration dans votre communauté.
These days many archival institutions and professional associations throughout the world use social media not only to promote archives and the work of archivists, but also to make the public and decision-makers aware of the challenges confronting the profession.

At its meeting in January the ICA Secretariat team decided to use social media to circulate information and share news about its activities and events more widely. A Twitter account and Facebook page have existed since 2013, but use was only really made of them during the first two annual conferences, in Brussels and Girona. In fact it was mainly during the annual conference in Girona in 2014 that the Secretariat, with the help of volunteers funded by the New Professionals programme, began to establish a proper presence on the social networks, tweeting presentations live as they happened and posting articles and photos. Both those attending the conference, and those who weren’t able to be there in person, and were following proceedings at a distance, were greatly appreciative of these efforts. In view of this success, it was clear that ICA should maintain a permanent presence on Facebook and Twitter.

As it happens, the Expert Group on Advocacy has produced a charter on the use of social networks which has been approved by the Secretariat and the Executive Board and which will start to be implemented when the new marketing and communications officer is appointed. In the meantime, the Twitter and Facebook accounts are being managed on a voluntary basis by an archivist who is part of the extended Secretariat team. On 26 January the ICA accordingly announced on its Facebook and Twitter account that it would be appearing more regularly on social networks, and accompanied this announcement by changing its profile and banner images. Success was immediate: in just two days the Twitter account, @ICAric, registered 250 new followers (rising from 125 to 375 followers). Among these were individuals, associations and institutions. By the beginning of February, @ICAric had more than 500 followers, rising to 900 at the beginning of April to 1300 on 15 June, a few days after International Archives Day, which was widely relayed via social media. The growth of the Facebook page has been a little less meteoric, but steady nevertheless: the account has risen from 2051 to 2347 “likes” in six months. If at the start of the operation followers tended to share the news posted on their own accounts, today they increasingly interact with ICA by mentioning it in what they publish on archives. The number of followers or “likes” continues to increase steadily. At the time of writing (15 July), the Facebook account has 2347 “likes” and the Twitter account has 1367 followers.
-working with volunteers in ICA

ICA has always needed volunteers to help it develop and deliver its professional programme to the global archival community and to meet the expectations of its membership. Indeed, with the exception of the small number of full and part-time Secretariat staff based in Paris, it could be said that most of those who work for ICA do so on a voluntary basis. Elected officers, members of the Executive Board and the Programme Commission, branch and section personnel all contribute to developing the policies and programme of the ICA and ensure that the voice of the archives and records management profession is heard in the wider information field. ICA is now moving into an era of change within the profession worldwide, opening up to a wider membership and aiming to deliver a more focussed professional programme. As new policies are adopted aimed at making the organization more inclusive, the need for volunteers is becoming ever more vital: as an example, the commitment to providing products in at least (though not exclusively) French, English, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian, requires large numbers of volunteer translators to help in this work. Expanding the role of volunteers will not only allow ICA to deliver what its members want today, but will also, by bringing in younger professionals as part of this team (through the New Professionals programme for example) allow for succession planning for the future. Current volunteers fall into three main groups: those who are semi-permanent and give a regular amount of time to ICA and who form part of the wider Secretariat team; those who provide expertise as and when required; and those who have volunteered for a specific task. Recruitment has, in the past, been done on an ad hoc basis and it is time to move to a more structured approach. If volunteers are to be properly integrated into the ICA organizational structure, mechanisms need to be put in place to allow them to contribute fully to the work of ICA. The first step towards this is the adoption of a volunteer policy, approved at the meeting of the Executive Board in April 2015. This policy considers the motives and benefits for both the volunteer and for ICA as a whole. It is designed to be flexible, accepting that many likely volunteers will have a professional qualification and be in employment. The policy deals with both principles and practice and covers: recruitment and selection, provision of role descriptions, support and supervision, training and development, recognition, expenses and monitoring and evaluation. One of the overall principles guiding this policy is to endeavour to involve volunteers from as wide a range of countries and language groups as possible, to ensure that opportunities are accessible to all ICA members. By adopting a volunteer policy ICA is recognizing and appreciating the benefits volunteers have brought and continue to bring to the organization, to its members and to its paid employees.

Margaret Turner
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“To involve volunteers from as wide a range of countries and language groups as possible, to ensure that opportunities are accessible to all ICA members.”
Technical and field related problems of traditional and electronic archiving

Celebrating a beautiful early Spring in Slovenia, this international conference, organized by the Poktajinski Archiv Maribor, and with the support of the ICA, brought together 270 participants at the Hotel Radenci. It was an honour and a pleasure to represent ICA and to deliver the keynote speech on communicating preservation. The delegates were from right across Slovenia, the Balkan region and other European countries (one speaker came all the way from Brazil). The conference while specifically focussing in on the problems and challenges of archiving both traditional and increasingly digital archival formats was equally strong on finding and presenting solutions. Additionally, the first day included discussion of the preservation of traditional archival formats, especially the risks and significant challenges resulting from mould attacks; these papers discussed not only the impact on access but also the very real health risks to staff from mouldy collections. It was encouraging that this issue that affects so many archives, but is often seen as failure in collection care within the profession, was discussed so openly. These sessions also underlined that the maintenance of the archival building stock is the critical challenge. The theme of poor quality buildings and the need to present convincing cases for action to governments and organizations was strongly underlined by the very welcome presence of the Minister for Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, who attended the opening sessions. The Minister acknowledged this issue in her opening address and assured the audience that the government of Slovenia takes this threat to their archival collections very seriously. The range and depth of the presentations, the commitment of the speakers to the problems they were outlining, and the well-structured programme (covering electronic records, digital preservation, security of our personal information and the significant problems of acid decayed papers) ensured that the conference achieved its aims of informing and disseminating information. The Slovenian archive community is close-knit, the country (in comparison to close neighbours) is quite small, and these factors, alongside the universal reduction in resources, has resulted in an effective and pragmatic approach to the challenges set out by the conference organizers. Another interesting feature of the conference was the close integration of the key suppliers to the region, who both presented formal papers and facilitated some sessions, not only to promote their products, but more importantly to open up a discussion and wider dialogue with their archival users, thus taking the emphasis away from the purely commercial. Alongside this was also a trade fair for the delegates to view and see at close hand the products and systems on offer. The conference presented a display of posters, provided by those unable to give a formal presentation, but additionally included a special evening session for the authors to outline their research for the conference participants. This was typical of the well-managed programme at this event. Finally, it was most impressive that the Maribor Archives staff were fully involved at all levels of the conference including simultaneous translation, AV support and assistance to the conference delegates. It is extremely gratifying to be part of an archival community that is constantly looking forward. I, and my colleagues on the Expert Group for Archive Buildings and Environments, look forward to working with our colleagues in Slovenia and the wider region, to promote standards and underline the critical importance of archive buildings. Without maintaining this resource we will fail in our mission to preserve our archives. I would especially like to thank Professor Ivan Fras, Zdenka Semlic Rajh and Nina Gostencnik for providing such selfless support and efficient arrangements.

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15th-17th April 2015, Radenci, Slovenia
The Section of Local, Municipal and Territorial Archives (SLMT) decided at its board meeting in Shanghai, 2011, that it would be a good initiative to promote International Archives Day among its members by organizing a joint activity. In 2014 this resulted in a special Website where archivists from all over the world could contribute a picture to show the importance of their archive. This first year we received 431 images from archives from as far apart as Patagonia and Mongolia, and the site got nearly 2 million hits in the first month! Following this great success ICA adopted the initiative this year and invitations to participate were sent to all the professional sections, asking them to send on the invitation to their members and individual archives. As soon as the invitation was sent out, images started arriving, peaking in the last week of May (many contributors failed to hit the deadline of 30 May and sent in their contributions up to 9 June and beyond). Among the contributors were a lot of new archives and institutions, but we also received contributions from archives that participated last year. We decided to leave last year’s images online and just add the new contributions to those of last year. The result of this year’s effort is again a very nice overview of treasures that are housed in archives all over the world and an impression of the way International Archives Day is celebrated in very different ways around the world. In total we received 843 contributions, of which 396 were new ones and 151 archives that took part for the second year. On the first day, 9 June, the site received nearly 2 million hits and at the moment I am writing this article, the counter stands on 3.6 million hits from 16 000 visitors! You can find the site at www.internationalarchivesday.org. The initial idea was that archives should send their contribution in their own language, to emphasize the international character of the site. This did not work out quite as planned: most archives that contributed sent their messages in French, English or Spanish. However, we did get e-mails in Hebrew, Japanese, Chinese, Russian and Portuguese, although this in itself caused problems. The Cyrillic script posed a particular problem for the Dutch version of Windows: the script was not recognised and the result was that the files could not be opened. Open source software was the solution to that problem. Another problem, as last year, was the size of some images, and again we had to ask the image to be sent as a zip or by We Transfer. Furthermore these large sized images cause the Website to perform very slowly, so we had to compress them. Another problem is the fact that the Website will not show PDF in the image carrousel, so those contributions had to be migrated to JPEG’s. That is why next year we will again ask contributors to send only JPEG images with a maximum height of 800 pixels.

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Welcome to Reykjavík!

3rd ICA annual conference, Iceland, 28-29 September 2015
“Archives: Evidence, Security & Civil Rights. Ensuring trustworthy information”

Since 2013 the ICA has held annual conferences that are more open in respect of attendance (all members may participate) and theme than the CITRAs of the past. These conferences have been well received and we hope that the third conference, held in Iceland this year, will also be a success.

As many of you know this year’s conference is hosted by the National Archives of Iceland and will take place at the Hilton Reykjavík Nordica Hotel, on September 28 and 29.

Programme
The theme of the conference is Archives: Evidence, Security and Civil Rights. Ensuring trustworthy information. The conference will address themes that are essential for archives in modern society, the role and function of archives and their importance for individuals, governments and businesses. Furthermore the issues of good governance and open data and redress of crime and wrong-doing are very important.

The archival community has responded well to the call for papers that was launched in December 2014. Submissions totalled over 180 from 46 countries, all of which were of good quality. The Programme Committee therefore had the difficult task of reviewing and deciding which sessions should go on the conference programme. Due to the positive reaction to the high quality of the paper submissions it was decided to have up to four parallel sessions, in all 20 sessions with over 60 speakers.

The day before the conference a number of workshops will be offered to members of ICA. The objective is to provide archival professionals with the opportunity not only to attend the conference but also to learn about current trends in archiving and records management from other professionals that have most knowledge in the related field.

Venue
The Hilton Reykjavík Nordica Hotel was made for meetings and business events. It has good facilities and has gained an excellent reputation as a leading conference venue in Iceland. The hotel is a popular choice for both local as well as international gatherings of all kinds. We hope to see 400-500 delegates from around the world in Iceland. Registrations will be limited to a maximum of 550 delegates in order to have plenty of space for meetings, exhibitions and informal networking.

Welcome to Reykjavík
We feel that the location, right in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, where the continental plates meet, will be attractive to many colleagues on either side. The growing tourism in recent years shows that many find Iceland the right place to go. We hope that will be the case for you, both for professional and personal reasons. You certainly are most welcome. For more information on the 3rd ICA Annual Conference please visit our Website www.ica2015.is.

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The National Archives of Iceland will host the conference.
Two issues of Comma have been circulated to members this year, a Miscellany issue (2013:2) which comprised articles submitted by members, and an issue (2014:1-2) edited by members of the Section on Municipal, Local and Territorial Archives (ICA-SMLT). The former represented a break from recent tradition for Comma as potential authors were not restricted to a specific region or topic. Nonetheless, the themes which emerged demonstrated the importance of similar issues within the international community: access, legislation, and of course, the changing relationships between creators, users and practitioners in the e-environment.

The majority of articles were published in English and French; for the first time in many years we were delighted to publish one article in Arabic.

Comma 2014:1-2 was conceived as a double issue partly because of the importance of the topic, and partly for pragmatic reasons – to allow the volume numbering to “catch up” with the year of actual publication. The special issue editors commissioned a range of articles which together help to illustrate both commonalities and differences between the functions, characteristics and structure of local, municipal and territorial archives across the world (including Europe, South and North America, Australasia and Japan). The 16 articles are organized around three themes: relationships between local archives and other state institutions, the organization and management of municipal archives and the nature of the services provided.

Looking forward, the Editorial Board, in conjunction with colleagues throughout ICA, is working on issues on Archives and the Cinema and on Archives in Francophone Africa, while a future issue on User Engagement (planned as 2016:1) has resulted in a large number of article proposals being submitted. Owing to the number of issues already in the production or planning stages, the Editorial Board decided not to hold a meeting in the first half of 2015 and conducted its work remotely. This work was facilitated, as usual, by Nathalie Florent, whose assistance and guidance has been invaluable to the work of the Editorial Board over many years and whose advice and guidance will be sorely missed on her departure from the Secretariat.

“This work was facilitated, as usual, by Nathalie Florent, whose assistance and guidance has been invaluable to the work of the Editorial Board over many years and whose advice and guidance will be sorely missed on her departure.”