The ALA-ICA Mexico 2017 Conference “Archives, Citizenship and Interculturalism” was a remarkable professional forum that engaged our community with some of the most challenging issues affecting governments and civil society, as the world adjusts to an unprecedented growth in publically available information. The depth and breadth of the conference programme reminded us that as archivists, we are much more than simply guardians of documents – the true value of our work flows from the potential of documentary memory to empower a future of opportunity and justice for all people. It is now beyond debate that we are living in the “information” age; just as steam powered the industrial revolution of the 19th century and oil transformed the global economy of the 20th century, it is information that fuels the digital disruption of the 21st century. Change in the information industry is occurring at a lightening pace, and events such as this will enable archivists to move at an ever greater pace to ensure the most precious information is preserved and kept accessible for future generations.

ALA and the AGN chose a theme for the conference that was both interesting and ambitious, taking on the highest level challenges faced by nations today. The keynote address from Mr Frank La Rue (UNESCO) addressed the role of archives to uphold the individual’s “right to the truth”. The concept of “citizenship” was explored, investigating the role of Archives in the identity, rights and agency of every individual in society; including keynotes from Miguel León-Portilla (UNAM), providing a perspective on Archives in Mexico reaching back to the Pre-Hispanic era, and Professor José María Muriá (INAH), speaking on the topic of Archives and Social Classes. Subsequent speakers explored further the complex relationships between data protection and the public’s right to information, and Professor Luciana Duranti (University of British Columbia) confronted the issues of “post truth” and “alternative facts” in her keynote address on an “Infrastructure for Truth” with a vision for a TrustChain; embracing Blockchain principles within a set of soundly based archival principles.

The theme of “Interculturalism” provided a forum for discussion of archival contributions to a better understanding of cultural identity, and the role of primary source material in the reconciliation between indigenous peoples and broader national communities. The creative arts are also increasingly important in the expression of cultural identity and its appreciation by a national population; this was eminently addressed by a keynote address from Professor Anna Maria Guasch (University of Barcelona), who directs the Global Art Archive research group that analyses the value of the archives as the mediator between collective memory and individual development. The ever present and disruptive influence of technology was given ample exposure. Archivists occupy a specialist niche within the “information industry”; uniquely within this expanding field we care about the long term accessibility and utility of authentic social memory; including in its digital form. Google’s Vice President, Mr Vint Cerf, reminded us of the increasing vulnerability of information in the digital age and a range of subsequent speakers explored strategies to ensure humanity’s digital heritage is faithfully carried from one generation to the next.

Significantly, this was the first ICA annual conference in Latin America. For the international delegates it was a chance to become personally acquainted with our talented and knowledgeable colleagues in ALA, and of course the opportunity to enjoy the vibrant and multi-faceted culture of Mexico. We are grateful to our ALA colleagues for inviting us to Mexico City for this event, achieving the goal expressed by ALA President Mercedes de Vega that “professional reflections and fruitful discussions will redirect, in the short term, the archival profession and the full use of archives for the benefit of all nations.”

TO KNOW MORE

The Mexico City Declaration: www.ica.org/en/mexico-city-declaration
The ALA-ICA Conference on Twitter: #ALAICAMexico2017
Archives as a source of memory, evidence and documentary heritage

The Association of Latin-American Archives (ALA) and the General Archive of the Nation (AGN) of Mexico were satisfied to have hosted the world archival community at the Conference of the International Council on Archives, ALA-ICA Mexico 2017 Conference. The theme of the conference should be as interesting as ambitious, given the challenges that the countries must face today, such as government systems, updated archival legislation, the stage of development of professional training, the proper use of technologies, the balance of relations with the mass media, the growing demands of a citizenship oversaturated with data, but without accurate information, or the need to professionalize and position archival activity. Facing an unbalanced globalization, which claims to drive forward markets and consumerisation while respecting differences, the ALA-ICA Mexico 2017 Conference could not omit the theme of interculturalism, which is seen as the communication and interaction between people and groups with diverse cultural identities, without the ideas and actions of some of them being seen as superior to others’ ideas and actions, but fostering respectful dialogue, agreement and a healthy coexistence between different cultures which have their own identity.

The theme of the ALA-ICA Mexico 2017 Conference, “Archives, Citizenship and Interculturalism”, has encouraged important exchanges and reflections on the challenges faced by governments, companies and civil society. It is increasingly observed that archives management as a source of memory, evidence and documentary heritage has a profound impact on human rights, access to information, protection of personal data and in the creative industries. This conference was the site of an unprecedentedly high level of discussion in Mexico about archives. We had 560 attendees from more than 70 countries from five continents, including 202 specialists who participated in 45 panels, eight workshops and six keynote conferences. All of them had a broad level of knowledge that, from various angles, widened the range of the meanings of archives in human activity.

Many topics remain open to analysis, discussion and debate, such as digital preservation, a challenge that requires multidisciplinary work and debate, such as digital preservation, a challenge that requires multidisciplinary work and the participation of technology makers. I am grateful to the international archival community, as well as the Mexican and Latin American archival community, and I urge you to consult the Mexico City Declaration, as I am sure that professional reflections and fruitful discussions will redirect, in the short term, the archival profession and the full use of archives for the benefit of all nations.

Mercedes de Vega, AGN-Mexico Director and ALA President, welcomes the participants at the opening ceremony.
The ALA-ICA Mexico 2017 Conference was widely diffused in Mexican social networks and mass media. On Twitter, the hashtag #ALAICAMexico2017 was the second most trending topic in Mexico City and, nationally, won fifteenth place with a total of nine hours on the first day. The international archival community’s participation influenced the impact on social networks, since participants and lecturers shared their experiences through Twitter during the three days that the event lasted.

Miguel Angel Osorio Chong, Secretary of the Interior in Mexico, joined the conversation and published a video of his participation during the opening ceremony, which obtained more than 10,500 views.

Meanwhile, the social networks of the General Archive of Mexico (AGN) and the Association of Latin American Archivists (ALA) streamed the contributions from the specialists who participated in the 45 panels, as well as the keynote lectures.

From September to November, a total of 429 publications related to the Conference were released in portals, interviews, radio and television segments, as well as in print media. In this way this event became a watershed in the media outreach and exposure of archives in Mexico, hence opening new spaces that allow its importance and relevance to be highlighted by reaching new audiences.

TO KNOW MORE

Facebook: International Council on Archives
Twitter: @ICArchiv & #ALAICAMexico2017
Linkedin: ICA International Council on Archives
WeChat: archivistnp

Marie Pelkonen
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ICA Facebook posts during the ALA-ICA Mexico 2017 Conference aimed at covering three different aspects: attracting last minute participants to join the event, showcasing the Conference’s versatile content and sharing information about ICA’s modus operandi worldwide. From the statistics it is clear the Conference was well received.

The most viewed post during the Conference was a promotional post (2258), the most liked one was about the new Secretary General (45) and the most shared post was about the Universal Declaration on Archives (13). All these items included a link to the ICA website which is the most essential of ICA’s communication tools.

Unfortunately it is impossible to cover all or even most of the Conference presentations or meetings on Facebook but the communications team strive to give a taste of the huge event for the audience. Interest shown in specific topics as well as in the activities of the ICA’s core functions clearly depict there is a willingness to further fostering dialogue between the archival community and the ICA itself.
Once again this year, this great annual event was a clear success on social media, including Twitter. The Annual Conference 2017, organised by ALA in collaboration with ICA, was widely shared online, in the institutional arena mainly through the organisers’ accounts: @AGNMex, @ALAArchivos and @ICArchiv; and in the individual arena, in a personal and a professional scope, via the accounts of individuals, associations and companies attending the conference.

Governance meetings, opening and closing speeches, sessions, panels, workshops, social events, as well as professional and personal experiences have been extensively documented with photos, and shared with the hashtag #ALAICAMexico2017.

We witnessed a new increase in the number of subscribers during the month of November 2017, and a notable peak activity around the 2 days of governance meetings and 3 days of conference. Log in on Twitter and relive this international archival event thanks to the hashtag #ALAICAMexico2017!

Céline Fernandez
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Now it has to be admitted that General Assemblies have seldom been the highlight of ICA Conferences. Most of the people who choose to attend them do so out of a sense of duty, and only rarely are the procedures enlivened by an unexpected matter of controversy or complexity of procedure. My last ever General Assembly, in Mexico City on 27 November 2017, ran to true to form. Although the quorum was quite comfortably attained (a modest 5% of voting members), attendance was sparse. The President presented his Annual Report; the Vice President Programme updated members about the development of the flourishing professional programme; the Vice President Finance provided clear information about the generally healthy state of the organization’s finances; and I signed off as Secretary General by reflecting as honestly as I could about the high and low points of my mandate. Members also welcomed the appointment of Anthea Seles as my successor. And, by way of conclusion, the meeting learnt more about the planning for the Annual Conferences in Yaoundé, Cameroun (24-28 November 2018) and Edinburgh, Scotland (19-23 October 2019), as well the next Quadrennial Congress in Abu Dhabi (15-22 November 2020). The video presentations were colourful and the General Assembly ended on a lively note. Although the meeting had been meticulously prepared and presented much useful information about the activities of ICA, not a single question was asked from the floor. It could be argued that this silence is a reflection of the fact that ICA is a relatively well run organization, and I draw some satisfaction from that. But it could also indicate an underlying apathy which would be far from healthy. In particular, category C members have, on the whole, been slow to exercise their role as voting members since they gained this right as part of the Brisbane reforms in 2012.

And, in spite of the provision of Spanish interpretation, few colleagues from Latin America attended the meeting. So I leave to my successor Anthea Seles the unfinished task of organizing General Assemblies that from time to time provide a forum for genuine debate about the future of the organization. It may be asking too much to generate excitement at General Assemblies, but they should certainly do more than rubber-stamp decisions from on high. Although I might not miss the General Assemblies in their present form, I am nevertheless extremely grateful to the Secretariat team which has organized them with such calm efficiency over the years. In my view they do not get sufficient credit for all their fine work behind the scenes, which is absolutely essential. I hope that this too may be corrected during the mandate of my successor.

Finally, I should like to convey my sincere good wishes to Anthea Seles as she takes on the demanding role which I have tried to carry out with commitment and integrity since August 2008.

David Leitch
ICA Secretary General
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My Last Ever ICA General Assembly

Category C members have, on the whole, been slow to exercise their role as voting members since they gained this right as part of the Brisbane reforms in 2012.”
The ICA Programme Commission (PCOM) met on 25 November 2017 in Mexico City. The meeting room was the gorgeous Mural Room at the Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), whose walls are decorated with a mural in the Mexican style by inmates of the prison that the building once housed, depicting scenes from Mexico’s history.

This year was marked by the natural disasters that affected archives in the Caribbean and Mexico. PCOM has allocated some project funding to CARBICA to aid in rebuilding after several hurricanes hit the region in the last few months of 2017. The ICA is allocating further funds to support this effort.

The main discussion item at the meeting was the approval of the Strategic Plan 2018-2020, which includes the following strategic goals for 2018 to 2020:

- Raising Awareness,
- Influencing the Development and use of New Technologies,
- Building Capacity in the Records and Archives Profession.

These goals will be familiar, as they are the same strategic goals as PCOM identified for 2016 to 2018. The Strategic Plan outlines the main programme elements of the ICA – the Africa Programme, the New Professionals Programme, and the Training Programme – and links their major activities with the strategic goals. The strategy also outlines risks to success of each programme. The plan also includes a description of the three programme-related entities of the ICA: Expert Groups (under PCOM), Sections (under Executive Board) and Regional Branches. Each entity type has a relative amount of autonomy to make their own plans, but it is hoped and expected that their planning will be undertaken in connection and informed by the Strategic Plan. PCOM hopes this document will encourage a process of planning alignment across the ICA.

The ICA as a whole will need to develop a new plan to succeed the Strategic Implementation Plan, which is set to expire in the near future. That process will have an impact on PCOM’s strategy and will be taken into account as the PCOM Strategic Plan is implemented.

Also at the meeting, PCOM members received reports on PCOM Projects, the Africa Programme, the New Professionals Programme, and the Training Programme, from members of the PCOM secretariat Jessica Squires, James Lowry, Cécile Fabris, and Margaret Crockett.

PCOM will meet next in Paris (Vincennes), France on 16-17 April 2018.

PCOM developments

TO KNOW MORE

To apply for PCOM Project Funding and Endorsement: www.ica.org/en/invitation-apply-pcom-project-funding-and-endorsement
Keynote speech from Frank La Rue: Archivists as contributors to peace

In his speech, Frank La Rue emphasizes the importance of archivists as contributors to peace; according to the perspective of our speaker, archivists have a fundamental role in the creation of peace around the world due to their role as custodians of the documentary heritage.

La Rue’s words make us reflect on our role in society; as a New Professional, I believe that beyond guarding documents, we have a mission that transcends borders, since we are part of the change to make this a better world. Through the documents and especially the information they contain, we can make major changes, mainly in the area of human rights.

One of the phrases, mentioned by this great speaker, that most caught my attention was “Truth is the weapon to break down the wall of impunity.” To me, its meaning is very powerful because with the truth we can do justice and that truth is shown through the documents in the form of data and information.

Likewise, our duty as records managers is to ensure that this truth is known and to preserve documents in the best possible way so that they can be accessible to citizens and thus contribute to the respect of human rights.

Another aspect emphasized by La Rue was the role played by young people in strengthening the truth to avoid conflict and work for peace. It is at this point that I feel identified, as part of the ICA 2017 New Professionals Programme; I consider it a great challenge that young people must take on as part of the generational change. However, we need the support of experts to be able to achieve it.

Regarding my experience as a 2017 New Professional, it has been very satisfactory; this type of event is the door to be able to share with international experts with different points of view on Archives, such as Mr. Frank La Rue.

Finally, I believe that the ALA-ICA Mexico 2017 Conference has been one of the most important experiences in my professional life. I gained knowledge but also gained 5 friends and colleagues.

Frank La Rue, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information at UNESCO, at the ALA-ICA Conference 2017.

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To know more
About the New Professionals Programme:

To apply for the 2018 session:
Access to information and citizenship in post conflict societies

The ALA-ICA Mexico 2017 Conference had several panels about the relationship between Access to information and archives, especially in post conflict societies. One of the panels was “The right to access to information and citizenship”, moderated by Elsa B. Peralta Hernández (Mexico). The speakers were Maria Patricia Kurczyn Villalobos (Mexico), Sandra George (Canada), Joan Soler Jiménez (Spain), and Andrés Segovia Salcedo (Ecuador). This panel focused on the archives as a resource for preservation of collective memory and a pillar of the right to access to information of citizenship, helping to the transparency and accountability towards more democratic societies.

Another panel was “Restoring access to history: archives after Dictatorships”, where we heard several panels about the relationship between Access to information and archives, especially in post conflict societies.

“Several panels about the relationship between Access to information and archives, especially in post conflict societies.”

The following panelist, Emmanuelle Luccioni (France), explained how the Institut national de l’audiovisuel collaborates in the preservation and dissemination of the Memoria Abierta archives.

Finally, the ICA Human Rights Working Group (ICA-HRWG) organized the workshop “Human Rights and Archives in Latin America”, with a session led by Mariana Nazar (Argentina) and Vitor Fonseca (Brazil). They discussed the various actions carried out by the National Archives of countries such as Argentina, Brazil and Colombia to facilitate access to archives related to serious violations of human rights, in accordance with the principles and methods of archival discipline. In relation to this, Giulia Barrera and Hans von Rütte explained the importance of the document “Basic Principles on the Role of Archivists and Records Managers in Support of Human Rights”.

In this way, throughout all these panels and workshops during the ALA-ICA Mexico 2017 Conference, the fundamental importance of archives as a tool to guarantee the right to access to information, especially to help justice, reparation and historical memory was underlined, as well as strengthening democracy in countries that have gone through serious conflicts, such as those in the Latin American region.

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Selecting & retaining archives documenting human rights violations

Personnel files of the military disappear. Files of persons imprisoned for political reasons are preserved in the archives, but are hidden, kept out of sight. Multiple memory organizations devoted to documenting human rights violations inadvertently break up important fonds, damaging the historical information they may have for discovering and linking human rights violations. Court files have only one retention schedule. All are destroyed after 5 years. A central intelligence agency decides that videos of torture sessions are not precious to society. The national archives disagrees.

You may have assumed that these are examples of the archival misdeeds that occur during periods of dictatorship or extreme political unrest. You would be wrong. Each of the above actions were answers to the intriguing entry question posed to a group of archivists in Day 2 of a two-day workshop on archives and human rights. That question? It was the following: “In democratic periods, has there been destruction of archives due to malpractice or mistakes? We all know that destruction can happen intentionally during dictatorships, but what about during democratic times?”

The Human Rights Working Group (HRWG) workshop was an opportunity for Latin American archivists and others to gather and discuss the records of Latin American dictatorships and civil wars, ICA’s Basic Principles document, records as evidence of human rights violations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Universal Declaration on Archives. This topic was of particular interest of the New Professionals in attendance who, in preparation for the conference, had used social media to devote the month of November to the topic of Human Rights & Archives. Our goal was to encourage new archival & records professionals around the world to become familiar with key documents on archives & human rights.

Although the many obligations of New Professionals prevented us from attending both days of the workshop, Day 2 was well worth staying an extra day for. During the very last section of this workshop, attendees examined the ICA document “Basic Principles on the role of Archivists and Records Managers in support of Human Rights”. The key question above helped move attendees – and can help move us all – away from the too-easy assumption that human rights violations primarily occur during dictatorship or civil war. As one attendee noted, “It is the transitional time, after a dictatorship period but before a full democracy, when it is not clear what will happen to the records and who is responsible, when records are vulnerable to destruction.” Indeed, another attendee noted that “It is not only during periods of transition that records are vulnerable to being destroyed.” Full democracies require the vigilance of civil society and archivists alike.

The 25 principles of the “Basic Principles” document were further discussed according to their basic archival function: Preservation (articles 1-6), Providing access to archives (articles 7-10, 12-13), Reporting human rights violations (articles 15-16), Discrimination against minority groups (articles 3, 12, 14, 17, 21, 22), Archivists’ human rights (and duties) (articles 23-24), and Disputed archival claims (articles 17-18). You may find it useful in your own organization to ask some of the discussion questions posed to workshop participants, including: Does your national legislation provide for the protection of whistleblowers? In your country are there minority groups whose archival needs are not sufficiently met, and have professional associations of archivists ever taken initiatives aimed at overcoming the situation? Is your country involved in disputed archival claims? (For example: archives disputed by two different countries; or by the central government and a regional government; or by the state and an indigenous community). What else could the international archival community do in order to help archivists who are fighting to preserve archives documenting human rights violations?

If you haven’t taken the opportunity to read the ICA Basic Principles document, I encourage you to do so. The 25 principles can easily be digested or discussed with your colleagues once a day for a month. You can also find images of each Principle on the ICA NP Twitter feed (@ICA_Riv_NP).

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Fighting against illicit trafficking of documentary heritage

The illicit trafficking of documentary heritage is a little understood problem facing the international archival community, the broader galleries, libraries, archives, museums and records (GLAMR) sectors, and the citizens of any nation whose documentary heritage is illegally removed and traded or sold. At the joint ALA-ICA Mexico 2017 Conference, three respected members of the international archival community gave a panel presentation on this topic, each providing insights into the issue from their uniquely national perspectives. Moderated by Sebastian Van Doesburg (Mexico), Bolfy Efraín Cottom Ulín (Mexico), Arda Scholte (Netherlands) and Beatriz Kushnir (Brazil) provided the audience with an exposition of illicit trafficking activities in their own nations, together with recommendations for tools to tackle the problem: the creation and use of inventories of missing or at-risk archival artefacts, the cooperation of national and international bodies to develop robust anti-trafficking policies, and an increase in awareness about the issue amongst archivists, archives users and the wider population. All three presenters identified the lack of information and intelligence about missing, stolen and at-risk artefacts as a significant contributor to illicit trafficking. In many cases, archival institutions are unaware of a theft until months or years after it has occurred, and may only be alerted to the fact that an item is missing when it appears for sale or is actually returned to the institution. This was illustrated in an anecdote by Beatriz Kushnir, who recounted the story of a Brazilian institution receiving, by certified mail, an object which it did not know was missing from its collection. According to research by Arda Scholte, the primary culprits in the theft of heritage documentation are visitors, archival staff are also sometimes complicit. Of course, any involvement by archives employees would naturally mean that the likelihood of a theft being reported is significantly diminished. This affects both archival institutions and law enforcement agencies who are unable to properly pursue the recovery of stolen items, and illicit trafficking of documentary heritage is relegated to a “hidden problem”, out of the international spotlight. This lack of information about illicitly trafficked items could be combated by the creation and use of inventories for stolen, missing or at-risk archival artefacts. All three presenters proposed that increasing the amount of accessible, transparent information about archival collections would have a positive impact against illicit trafficking of documentary heritage, and, in order to be most effective, this information should be easily transferrable between regions through the registration of archival collections into central inventories. Although some registers for missing cultural and heritage artefacts do already exist, such as those kept by Interpol and the “red lists” of the International Council on Museums, documents rarely feature on these lists and, as the registers are not specifically designed for common archival formats, it is difficult to capture complete descriptive information for archival artefacts. Institutions and governments require robust policies to fight illicit trafficking. Bolfy Efraín Cottom Ulín believes that two main instruments exist for the development of these policies, these being first instruments of international law, and second federal legislation developed within each nation. Although Mexico has two federal laws which relate to the trafficking of documentary heritage, these feature conflicting definitions which mean each piece of legislation can potentially contradict another. Beatriz Kushnir described how until recently Brazil had been operating in a “state of chaos” due to the lack of strong public policy in this area. The third tool recommended by panel members in this fight is improved awareness of the issue amongst both the international archival community and the wider population. The ability to understand the causes, implications, and common scenarios that relate to the theft and illegal sale or trade of documentary heritage is crucial in order to underpin a move towards a climate in which items of documentary heritage no longer find a place on the international black market.
In a time confronted by forces of division, archival institutions attempt to answer the call through providing memory and preservation services to remind the world of our unity. It makes sense, then, that the ALA-ICA Mexico 2017 Conference adopted the theme, “Archives, Citizenship, and Interculturalism.” Panel sessions and workshops grappled with a wide range of topics including information governance, accountability, big data, and interculturalism and native cultures. Among the panels that touched on the theme of interculturalism was the discourse provided by Miguel León-Portilla. His talk entitled “The Background of Archives in Mexico since Pre-Hispanic Times,” brought to light the persistence of power within documentation in Mexico for indigenous people and their colonizers. As a keynote, the address laid grounds for the panel sessions which followed and discussed cultural inclusion in archives.

Miguel León-Portilla’s work is cemented through the decades. An anthropologist and historian, he is considered a paramount authority on pre-Columbian history as well as Nahuatl philosophy and literature. His notable accomplishments include his work and advocacy for establishing rural bilingual education in Mexico. He is an acting Researcher Emeritus since 1988 of the Historical Research Institute at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM).

Through a video transmission due to illness, León-Portilla unfolded through his keynote the motivations and importance of documentation in the history of mankind. “Human beings desire to conserve memory of the past, and through such, discover media to leave behind inscriptions, texts that persist through the centuries.” We are transient beings in this earth, but through writing, humans have attempted to keep memory living beyond flesh. And this preservation enriches culture. Mexico in particular, he states, is a country based deeply in documentation since pre-hispanic times, noting amoxcalli which he defines as “library” in Nahuatl. Even in his contact with Hernan Cortes, Moctezuma presented maps that outlined some of the lands of Mesoamerica. Archives have always been part of the history in Mexico. León-Portilla continued in the second half of his lecture outlining in depth the development of the “General Archive of the Nation” in Mexico, and the persistence of the importance of documentation through the centuries. Towards the end of his talk, he notes, “The archive and the library are where you find the memory of the country.”

Sentiments shared by León-Portilla were touched upon in other panel sessions that highlighted interculturalism. For example, one such panel, “Topics of Artistic and Literary Archives of the Caribbean”, shed light on projects which attempt to capture literature being produced from within the islands. Another panel, “Archives and Original Cultures in the Americas,” shared and discussed investigations that showed the traces left behind by native cultures in historical documents preceding the original contact with Europeans on the American continent. The panel entitled, “Archives and Mesoamerican cultures,” touched on the social, religious and political thoughts that cultures of Mesoamerica recorded in archaeological artifacts and documents. It was abundantly clear in each of these sessions what León-Portilla asserted – that cultures of the Americas, throughout the centuries, made all attempts to create records of their histories. The fact is still true today. Archival projects are being undertaken to highlight the multiplicity of cultural histories. The challenge for archivists today, however, is to ensure that the artifacts of the past (and those being created in the present) have their meanings and features properly preserved and contextualized for centuries to come.

Javier Garibay
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Imagine this: you’re the head of the in-house archives department and your organization just hired a new executive director. You attend a reception where employees can meet the new director. Eventually the new director comes up and introduces herself and says, “So, what do you do?” How do you respond? Is your natural inclination to spend ten minutes explaining to her the details of acquiring, accessioning, processing and describing records? To quickly tell her that you manage the archives and then quickly head to the wine and cheese table? If you nodded your head to either of these answers then you might want to spend some time working on your elevator pitch.

Those attending the ICA Section of Professional Associations workshop on “Perfecting Your Elevator Pitch” got to address this scenario plus three others that were devised by the workshop’s enthusiastic leaders Vilde Ronge (Deputy Director General, Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Service) and Becky Haglund Tousey (Consultant, Archives and Content Management).

An elevator pitch is a persuasive speech aimed at sparking interest in a project, business or organization that should take no longer than 30 seconds, in other words a quick elevator ride. While these pitches are a common trade tool for screenwriters, salespeople and tech entrepreneurs, a pithy elevator pitch is likely not at the tip of the archivist’s tongue. As Ms. Ronge stated in the beginning of the workshop, “We’re archivists, not sales people... But we need to start selling... if we want to get the support we need.” Fortunately, as she highlighted, in today’s “age of information, people are increasingly understanding how important it is to care about structuring information so that we can find it again.” In other words, archivists might find an increasingly interested and receptive audience waiting for the elevator – or standing at the wine and cheese table. Which makes the ability to deliver a perfectly crafted and executed elevator pitch all the more critical.

So what makes for a compelling elevator pitch? Here are Seven Key Components presented by Ms. Ronge during the first part of the workshop: 1) Be prepared: be well practiced before the elevator door even opens 2) Stay compact: if you can’t describe your vision in less than a minute (ideally 25 words or less) you don’t know how to sell it. Consider developing one or more pitch per stakeholder or values community and break competing ideas into smaller value orientated ideas 3) Use the right language: don’t use “shop talk” or industry jargon and keep it simple 4) Arouse an interest: think from the point of view of your audience by asking yourself what’s in it for them 5) Include a value proposition: this is the benefit do you provide and how do you do it the best 6) Tell a story: capture attention while adding authenticity to your pitch 7) Conclude with a call for action: don’t just walk away at the end, request a meeting, position a donation, etc.

During the workshop’s second half, participants formed into small groups to create pitches based on four scenarios – some that may sound familiar – including how to respond to a journalist’s inquiry about why an organization should even have an archives in an environment of fiscal restraint; how to foster commonality with the head of an organization’s IT department; and how to pitch your archives to secure the personal papers of a notable professor or author. Ms. Tousey encouraged participants to use key phrases that made sense to a business person, using an example: “The archive is the memory bank of a company and the keeper of brand equity... In archives we deal with the past but do so with an eye to the future.”

As each group presented their pitch, claps and sometimes chuckles followed. Participant’s elevator pitches stressed how an institution’s archives can in fact lead to cost-savings by providing findable records and positioned the archives as “the heart of an organization.”

Pitches also underscored that archivists make the jobs of others in the organization easier. As one team succinctly put it: “I help you sleep at night by making sure you get the right information at the right time.”

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Challenges of Latin-American new professionals

During the opening ceremony of the ALA-ICA Mexico 2017 Conference, Mercedes de Vegas accurately pointed out the difficulties faced in Latin-America regarding the negligence of archives and documental heritage, while reinforcing the relevance of political will concerning archives and the necessity of creating public archival polices, which is fundamental for elaborating a new perspective. Living in a reality where social inequity and archives are not perceived as priorities, the conference in Mexico was relevant when drawing attention to archives in this region, that are mostly present at the edge of the political and governmental systems.

Aware that the fight for a proper archiving system in the Latin-American society is arduous, Brazil does not find itself out of the scenario. Archives are still seen as a pile of old papers, commonly known as “cold file” or “inactive”, a place you do not want to get into, and changing this perception while involving a majority of the population also means a cultural change, in order to resolve the social invisibility. As a recently formed democracy, and to end corruption whilst demanding government transparency, an act was approved in 2011, called “Act of access to information” (number 12.527) which has helped Brazilian institutions in relation to their visibility.

The absence of regulations for archivists in several Latin American countries and even the shortage of post-secondary degrees and specialisations focusing on this specific area makes it difficult to find qualified workforce and to gather of professionals in those regions. Both topics were highlighted at the meeting of Latin-American New Professionals. Brazil’s reality is more positive in this field. The archivist, as a professional career, had its degree founded in 1972 and its regulations established in 1978. The academic base finds itself consolidated, with 16 degrees and a postgraduate degree in the archival science, in addition to other specialisations regarding the information science. Archival science research has developed and strengthened more and more with consistent publications and events. The awareness of professionals and their function was also discussed at the meeting, as there is a certain unfamiliarity of the archivist itself and its importance, which lead to identifying a low self-appreciation of the professional. Such situations need to be remedied as soon as possible, as the required skills are highly specialized and complex and require training and qualifications.

Associated with this scenario, most Latin-American countries are fighting against impunity and demanding access to archives in order to grasp the truth denied to many and reform their history whilst repairing and reorganising their society. To aid against this social neglect we oppose the constant attempt of law created to weaken archiving even more. An example is the “Archive burning” act, currently up for voting in Argentina and Brazil, that proposes a massive digitalization of governmental documents and the discard of their respective paper files, without considering records management, technical criteria for digitalization, preservation processes and probationary value.

During the conference, Enrique Vargas Flores pertinently mentioned the moment we are living in, where “Latin-America is the most unequal region worldwide. We shall not believe in false speeches affirming we are technologically strong. We must take advantage of digital broadening to become a more competitive site”. The current moment is an opportunity for archival growth. However, it requires recognition of our own fragilities and to act accordingly towards a solid development. The challenges are extensive, but not insurmountable. We remain confident, searching for new solutions to problems of the 21st century and progress of transparency, citizenship and human rights.

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“The absence of regulations for archivists in a few countries and even the shortage of degrees and specialisations focusing on this specific area makes it unfavourable to find qualified workforce and the consolidation of professionals in those regions.”
ALÁ-ICA 2017 Conference from a New Professional’s experience

One of the main objectives of the International Council on Archives is to support New Professionals to develop their academic, professional and personal knowledge, through their different programmes, the main one being “New Professionals”. This made it possible for me to participate in the ALÁ-ICA Mexico 2017 Conference, since it made 20 mini-bursaries available to Latin American New Professionals, one of which was granted to me. As far as my experience in the ALÁ-ICA Mexico 2017 Conference “Archives, Citizenship and Interculturalism” is concerned it is important to mention that this experience began long before November 27, the day on which the conference began, because before then I could feel the excitement. I was going to attend for the first time an international event in the archives field; moreover, I would dare to say that I was going to attend the biggest event in the archives field and the one attended by most people and institutions involved in this discipline. I was not wrong, as Mr. José María Muriá said during the conference: “the crème de la crème of the Archival World was gathered”. In addition to attending an event of such magnitude, I was also going to arrive in a country with more than 2000 years of history, which I never cease to find amazing. With regard to the conference, I must admit that I had very high expectations, starting with its theme: “Archives, Citizenship and Interculturalism”, I found it quite ambitious, but it did not fail to deliver. The first day of the conference, of course, I attended the opening ceremony. It was with great pleasure that I heard Dr. Mercedes de Vega and David Fricker’s welcoming speeches. I have to admit that I admire both due to their performance during the conference and their work in general, as well as for their accurate speeches. Once the opening ceremony was over, I had to choose among the various and interesting conferences, panels and workshops taking place in different auditoriums. Without a doubt my eye was more on the technological and Open Government fields, hence I chose panels and conferences oriented to Big Data, digital preservation and information access, while always bearing in mind the historical and intercultural part of the event, of course. It is important to highlight the contrast achieved during the conference between History and culture and also with technologies, as could be seen in the keynote lectures of two great speakers. The first one, Mr. Miguel León-Portilla, during his lecture “La trayectoria archivística en México desde los tiempos prehispánicos”, managed to abstract in an impressive way the major milestones of Mexican archiving, finishing by creating awareness of the importance of documental preservation, regardless of its format. This last coincides and also contrasts with the opinion of the other great speaker aforementioned, Vint Cerf. His lecture “On the long-term preservation of digital information” strongly drew my attention as he addressed how impressive it is that each day we, the archivists, must create strategic relationships and partnerships with technology specialists, in order to preserve information over time. In the words of Mr. Cerf: “Long-term conservation is a big challenge and deserves a more systematic attention than the one that it is receiving today” and with this he highlighted the importance and interest that we must give to these issues, as León-Portilla did. I could write pages and pages describing each session and workshop that I attended, as each one of them was extremely useful and enlightening; however, the article would be too long. Therefore, I feel the urge to point out that both aforementioned sessions as well as those that I do not have time to describe, increased my interest in the main topics mentioned above (digital preservation, Big Data, Open Government); furthermore, they really motivate me to aim my future studies to topics of this nature, and gave me a good outlook of my career’s future, or should I say future of archiving.”

TO KNOW MORE
About the New Professionals Programme:

To apply for the 2018 session:

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The ALA-ICA Mexico 2017 Conference took place in Mexico City, under the title "Archives, Citizenship and Interculturalism". This international event gathered not only the most experienced Archivists from all over the globe but also students and trainees from member organisations of ICA and also individuals working in archives and record management. The Centro Médico Nacional Siglo XXI was the venue where all these professionals met for daily meetings, to develop an intellectual exchange and of course to establish career-long friendships.

The topics of the Conference were as diverse as its invitees who came from the five continents to deepen their knowledge in the following matters: Interculturalism and native cultures, Human Rights, Illicit Trafficking of Documentary Heritage, Archives and Artistic Creation, Accountability, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection, Archives, Environment and Natural Disasters, Regional Cooperation, Information Systems and Digital Preservation, Big Data, Information Governance, just to mention a few of them. In this context is where the New Professionals Programme decided to facilitate a workshop from “pairs to pairs”, let’s say, from a former NP to the 2017 ones; it was specifically targeted to LATAM participants. Participants from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico and Ecuador exchanged experiences, professional knowledge, common issues and possible solutions to these.

The workshop was structured in two main topics:
- “I’m an Archivist, What now?”
  Transitioning from student to new professional. Preparing and adapting to your “new environment”. Assessing and developing your skills. Archivists Professional Profile for the XXI Century.
- “Work market for archivists in Latin America”: Challenges and common issues.
  Where to work? Government vs private companies and their job profiles.

The workshop included videos from renowned personalities from the Archival world such as Anna Szlejcher (Argentina), Ramon Aguilera Murguía (Mexico), Yolanda Bisso Drago (Peru), Ramon Alberch Fugueras (Spain), Lluís-Esteve Casellas (Spain) and Alicia Casas de Barran (Uruguay), who covered some of the topics and shared their experiences with the participants which led to very interesting debates especially in regards to the professional profile of archivists in the XXI Century and the challenges we all face and how we can to deal with them. It also included exercises and the participation of two of the 2017 bursaries: Stephanie Calderon (Costa Rica), who facilitated an activity “Tools for the Design and Analysis of Systems”, and Eugenia Alves (Argentina), who made very enriching contributions throughout the whole workshop. It also highlighted the amazing job done by two archivists who participated in the poster contest, Berryl Corea (Costa Rica) and Rocío Ponce (Ecuador), who did remarkable work.

It is always interesting to see the synergy that occurs in these international events where professionalism, camaraderie, knowledge and friendship combine to shape the next generation of archival leaders who are already undertaking the new challenges and preparing to contribute to the developing and visibility of this rich profession. I’m glad to see that not only the most experienced archivists but also the new ones are all transitioning to this New Professional phase where technology should not pose a threat but quite the opposite. After having facilitated this workshop I am convinced that we are on the right path.

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Reinforce, Extend and Innovate: a high-level vision for ICA

As the new ICA Secretary General I have been asked to discuss the high-level vision I presented at the Executive Board meeting during the ALA-ICA Mexico 2017 Conference. The vision for the ICA has three pillars: Reinforce, Extend and Innovate. These are early days, however, and what I propose here will be refined via consultation and collaboration with the membership and domain experts.

Reinforce. This has many facets to it; first it is about reinforcing our relationships with allied organisations such as United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), International Council on Museums (ICOM), International Centre for the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICOM), The Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA), Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC), national archival associations, and many other allied professional organisations. We share common concerns with these organisations and we need to reinforce existing relationships as well as partnerships with them to advocate for the importance of information and records, regardless of form, as vital forms of evidence for accountability, transparency as well as culture. The only way we can achieve our common goals is by working together and deploying our resources to best effect, drawing on our respective areas of expertise as well as fostering continuing respect and collaboration. However, “Reinforce” is not simply an external looking facet; it is also about reinforcing our profession and our digital capacity. Digital has wide reaching effects on our practice, agency, ethics and how we conceive of our role as archivist. We need to understand in more practical terms how digital works and we also be realistic and practical about what our work looks like with little or no resource: How do I do digital preservation with no money? This does not mean we ignore the fact that a large portion of our membership still works and deals with analogue records, but we need better support for digital professional development which is difficult to find and access. There are projects underway at ICA that might help move us forward in this area, but we will need to carefully assess where best to apply our resource and efforts to achieve maximum effect.

Extend. Not only do we need to strengthen existing professional relationships and the profession, more generally, but we also need to extend; extend our strategic relationships with non-traditional professions that have similar concerns as us, but may express them in different terms. We need to connect with the World Bank and the United Nations, who are promoting the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). It is a golden opportunity for us to help colleagues in the developing world, put records and archives at the core of an international initiative, seeking to improve the lives of millions of the world’s poorest. Ostensibly SDGs are predicated upon the existence of trustworthy records (and data) and without this information, what exactly are they measuring? And is it indicative of eradication of poverty, improvement of health care and other developmental goals?

We need to build relationships with software providers, to help us ensure that the memory of the world in digital form is not compromised by proprietary software licences. We need to reach out to the information ethics community that are increasingly concerned about the ethical implications of machine learning and artificial intelligence on people, along with their freedoms. We need to work more closely with the research data management and data science communities as more and more data (structured and unstructured) becomes foundational to organisational work and government policies; we all need to understand the long-standing value of this information and what should be captured and by whom. The list goes on. The goal is a symbiotic one: learn from these communities and contribute to their thinking as well.

Finally, but definitely not least for me, is Innovate. Digital brings with it many opportunities and challenges. I want to use the ICA as a hub to share international practice and innovative pieces of work happening in our field and others. There is much to learn and much to do. Equally I want to push for more research in digital, in particular to examine on a practical level what digital archival practice begins to look like in the trenches. We had a saying at TNA: “learning by doing”, and that is what I would like to do. I want to organise hackathons, I want us to offer hand-ons digital opportunities allowing people to experiment; whether highly technical or not, allowing them build their technical expertise by playing with tools. I think there are already interesting initiatives happening that we can use as platforms to begin enabling this type of work. In order to achieve these goals we need to be willing to move at pace, be flexible, try new things and accept that we may not always get it right, but learn from our mistakes. I look forward to speaking to the membership beginning in February as I refine my vision for the ICA to make it our vision, one that we all feel invested in and work towards together.

TO KNOW MORE

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Anthea Seles, ICA New Secretary General, at the ALA-ICA Conference 2017 in Mexico City.
Since its creation in 1948, ICA has concerned itself with the relationship between archives and law. This has been the theme of different CITRAs (the ICA Round Table), several volumes of Archivum have been devoted to the topic and different works have been published in Janus. For several years, ICA also benefitted from the contributions made by a group of archivists specialising in this field who were very active in the 1990s, but this group was abolished when ICA was restructured in 2004.

A RENAISSANCE

In September 2016, PCOM wanted to recreate a group of experts on judicial affairs (known by the acronym EGLM). The group serves both ICA and its members, as is made clear in its mandate: “the work of the EGLM can be concerned with project management, creation of tools and the development of resources which will support the work of PCOM, the members of ICA and the global archival community”. The diversity of topics addressed by the experts is huge:

- Freedom of Information/Access to Information,
- Laws on Data Protection and the right to privacy,
- Intellectual property,
- Laws and legislation having a great impact on archives and on records management,
- Laws authorising and governing national archival institutions,
- Protection of cultural property against theft, illegal export and falsification of archives within sovereign states and between countries,
- Declassification of archives to which access is limited.

There is nothing surprising about this: the relationship between law and archives is fundamental and has a huge impact on the practice of the profession as well as how archival institutions function.

INITIAL RESULTS

The first year of EGLM has concentrated on getting together a group of specialists, bringing together competence, experience and if possible, legal training. Consisting of nine members, the group may be enlarged in the future through the recruitment of archivists from those geographical areas and cultures not yet represented. EGLM works not only with different structures within ICA, but also with external bodies. This is why it is envisaged to include lawyers or representatives of organisations with which ICA cooperates.

Although EGLM is still in its initial phase, it has already accomplished a certain amount. As well as defining its mandate, creating its web pages, debating its objectives and the matters which the group will cover, EGLM members have issued their first pieces of advice and recommendations. Furthermore, EGLM representatives gave their opinions on different judicial topics as part of the ICA Annual Conference held in Mexico. Jean Dryden has prepared a checklist on copyright exceptions (see below) and Didier Grange has taken part in the international project on “Archives at Risk” which should be completed in 2018.

This is only the beginning. The work and the organisation of the EGLM will be led and will evolve to meet the current needs and demands of the members of ICA.

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EGLM represents new resource, Copyright Exceptions for Archives: A Checklist, is now available online in English, French, and Spanish (www.ica.org/en/copyright-exceptions-for-archives-a-checklist). In addition to raising awareness of the impact of copyright on archival operations, the Checklist provides archivists with a tool to evaluate their national copyright laws to see how well the law supports the archival mission. It is a starting point for copyright policy advocacy, or to propose amendments if the copyright law in your country is being reviewed.

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TO KNOW MORE

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The mission of PERSIST is to develop effective policies, strategies, and practices for the preservation and sustained use of digital artefacts. Its vision is for the World’s Digital Heritage to be accessible to future generations, without barriers such that they will be able to experience and learn from digital artefacts that represent achievements of humanity.

PERSIST is a creation of UNESCO, a direct result of the “Vancouver Declaration” made at the UNESCO international conference “Memory of the World in the Digital Age: Digitization and Preservation” in Vancouver in 2012. Among the recommendations of the UNESCO/UBC Vancouver Declaration was the need to establish a roadmap with solutions and policies ensuring long term access and preservation.

In the years since the Vancouver Declaration, a great deal of work has been done to advance the structure and strategies of PERSIST and to engage the interest and support of Memory Institutions, Academia, the Open Source Community and the ICT Industry. Indeed, PERSIST has been one of the main platforms upon which ICA and IFLA have given shape to their collaborative relationship with UNESCO. The PERSIST group organised the UNESCO sessions for IFLA WLIC in the last three consecutive years; ICA has featured PERSIST sessions at each of its last four annual conferences. Expert group meetings have been held in UNESCO Headquarters April 2015, a side event was held during the General Conference of November 2015, and a major international experts’ group meeting was hosted by National Archives UAE in March 2016. At its most recent meeting in October 2017, the Memory of the World (MoW) International Advisory Committee gave thought to how to more formally establish PERSIST as a key activity of the MoW programme; and is now finalising arrangements to incorporate PERSIST into its subcommittee structure. In parallel, the PERSIST Steering Committee is developing an Operating Manual and Committee Guidelines for PERSIST, and a medium to longterm Activity Plan, to set down procedures by which the international documentary heritage and digital preservation communities can get involved.

Visit UNESCOPERSIST.org for more information on all of the above developments, and join the conversation on #UNESCOPersist.

David Fricker, President, ICA and Chair PERSIST Steering Committee

UNESCO-PERSIST: latest news

“The mission of PERSIST is to develop effective policies, strategies, and practices for the preservation and sustained use of digital artefacts.”

TO KNOW MORE

To know more about the UNESCO-PERSIST project: www.ica.org/en/networking/about-unescopersist

More information: www.unescopersist.org

Join the conversation: #UNESCOPersist

David Fricker, Ingrid Parent and Guy Berthiaume at the UNESCO-PERSIST session in Mexico City, 28 November 2017.
The Programme Commission (PCOM) funded project, Learning to Walk the Talk, has led to the development of the ICA Information Culture Toolkit (the Toolkit). The Toolkit was created by Dr Gillian Oliver, Associate Professor at Monash University, Australia, and Dr Fiorella Foscarini, Associate Professor at the University of Toronto, Canada. The motivation was a need to address some basic issues with the design and implementation of recordkeeping systems and programs, i.e., the disconnect between theory and practice, and the lack of attention to the users of those systems and programs.

Information culture is a human-centred concept defined as, “the values accorded to information, and attitudes towards it, specifically within organisational contexts”. The Toolkit is based on the Information Culture Framework (ICF), which helps records and archives professionals to assess the “soft” factors that enable and constrain information-related practices. We may already look at the systems, processes and techniques that we believe are required to achieve recordkeeping outcomes. Information Culture is different, because it focuses on people. It gives you a set of concepts and a practical toolkit to help you understand and diagnose the cultural dimensions of making and keeping records in your workplace.

The ICF is based on records continuum thinking, which emerged out of Australia over two decades ago. It recognises records management and archival work under the one umbrella. The ICF recognises the complexity and difficulty in running a comprehensive recordkeeping program, especially as more and more recordkeeping is devolved out to everyday staff, and as more electronic information systems are implemented.

One of the goals of this workshop is to encourage records managers and archivists to reflect on their own practices, and consider how they can contribute to improve their organizations’ recordkeeping programs by putting the users of those programs at the centre. Oliver and Foscarini are continuing to develop and refine the Toolkit. Work is also underway on having the toolkit translated to make it accessible to as many people as possible – currently it’s available in French, Spanish, Korean, and Portuguese. The prototype toolkit and translations are freely available for download, from the website and a LinkedIn group has also been set up.

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The ICA’s Expert Group on Archival Description (EGAD) had its annual working meeting in Rome in October. The main purpose of this meeting was to finalize consideration of the many constructive and insightful comments received from the ICA membership on the exposure draft of its Records in Contexts Conceptual Model (RiC-CM) and to determine how to take the work on RiC through to completion. Readers may recall that the draft of RiC-CM was released in September 2016 in conjunction with the ICA Congress in Seoul. This release was the first major output of EGAD, which was established by the ICA in 2012 with a mandate to develop a conceptual model for archival description employing formal information modelling techniques. Led by Daniel Pitti from the University of Virginia and with a membership from across the globe, EGAD’s task has been to update the ICA’s suite of archival descriptive standards in a way that unifies the standards into a holistic, coherent and conceptually sound framework for archival description in the networked world. The 2016 draft of RiC-CM enshrines and enriches the traditional archival principle of provenance (respect des fonds and original order). It proposes approaches to archival description that will enable archivists to create, repurpose and deploy descriptive metadata in ways that reflect the vast, complex and dynamic networks of contextual interrelationships in which records are made, kept and used. RiC proposes an innovative and openended approach to archival description called “multi-dimensional description”, in contrast to more traditional approaches such as “multi-level description” that are presented in existing ICA standards like ISAD(G). The approach proposed in RiC is a quantum leap forward in archival description, which stays true to, but also enables better operationalization of, the core archival principal of provenance. Comments received on the exposure draft demonstrated that, for the most part, ICA members welcome and are ready for this new approach to archival description. At the Rome meeting, EGAD refined its methodology for determining and grouping the separate entities or components of description, both primary and secondary. The provisional grouping agreed upon proposes three main groups:

- Archival resources (records, record parts, record sets),
- Agents (persons, groups, positions, delegate agents),
- Functions (goals, activities, transactions).

Two task groups have been established by EGAD, one working on the intellectual and physical attributes of records and the other looking at the different kinds of relationships between entities that need to be described. It is planned to release the second draft of the conceptual model, along with a Beta draft of the accompanying ontology (RiC-O) in early 2018. This will be followed by application/implementation guidelines in early 2019. It is intended that the suite of RiC products will be complete and stable for ICA publication by late 2020. Further information on RiC and the work of EGAD can be found at www.ica.org/en/about-egad.

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CARBICA responds to devastation following hurricanes Irma and Maria

On 5 and 18 September 2017 the northeastern Caribbean was battered successively by two Category 5 hurricanes. Hurricane Irma with sustained winds of 185 mph made landfall on 5 September on the Leeward Island of Barbuda before tracking north and eventually west over St. Martin, the British and U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Cuba and on through the Florida Keys. Two weeks later, on 18 September Hurricane Maria, with sustained winds of 160 mph, made landfall at Dominica before tracking northwest through the Leewards, slamming Puerto Rico and the Turks and Caicos. The result was unprecedented destruction and loss of life throughout the region. For example, and even before any formal assessments were made, authorities on the ground in Dominica could see that they had “Lost all what money can buy and replace.”

Following the storms, immediate national recovery efforts rightly focused on securing the safety of citizens and restoring infrastructure. Local and pan-Caribbean relief agencies as well as European and American expeditions coordinated pre-existing emergency plans and sent humanitarian aid, which included supplies, troops and even police. However, early reports indicated that recovery would be long-term as both small and large jurisdictions overcame the initial isolation stemming from downed communication towers, closed airports, blocked roads and power outages. Considering the impact of the storms, CARBICA recognized that ‘business as usual’ was not an option and reached out for news of its colleagues. Using social media and e-mail, every effort was made to ascertain the safety of members and to determine how best the Association could support recovery. A survey to assess damage was circulated. However, initial contacts in the region were only somewhat successful and, it must be said, communication remains one of our foremost regional challenges.

News filtered in from our colleagues in the French and Dutch islands as well as at the British dependencies where we learned of the almost total ruin of many of the archival facilities.

Early consultation with the ICA Secretariat and the Expert Group on Emergency Management led to valuable discussions on the role that CARBICA and indeed ICA might expect to play with respect to response and recovery in the region. CARBICA felt that at a minimum its role should be to advocate for the protection of archival collections following extreme incidents. CARBICA also encouraged its members to participate in recovery activities as they were able. However, it was recognized that improved impact could best be achieved through liaison with other emergency response groups rather than through isolated activity.

Looking back, CARBICA had long discussed establishing partnerships with other regional entities as well as international professional networks supporting cultural heritage preservation. At its first meeting in 2014, the new CARBICA Council proposed affiliating with the International Council of the Blue Shield through national committees. This initiative came from the National Archives of Curacao, which in conjunction with their libraries and museums had recently established its own national Blue Shield Committee. Curacao’s pre-established contacts enabled it to initiate a timely Blue Shield response on behalf of its Dutch colleagues at St. Maarten, which suffered catastrophic loss during the
two hurricanes. By mid-October, with the support of Blue Shield Netherlands, the National Archives of The Netherlands and indeed the Netherlands Government, a team of four experts including an architect and a conservator from Curacao flew by military vessel with a full load of archival equipment and supplies to assist the on-the-ground recovery at St. Maarten. The success of this timely intervention drew on a groundwork of emergency planning and access to international resources for recovery.

Lessons learned from the success of the Dutch initiative at St. Maarten reinforce how planning for the needs of cultural heritage institutions before natural disasters occur is key to any subsequent meaningful intervention. CARBICA recognizes that there is much work to be done, as it is likely that the small island nations of the Caribbean will continue to be vulnerable to extreme weather.

**Summary**

In the short term, CARBICA asked the ICA to redirect PCOM funding from its “Archives at Risk” programme to establish a first relief disaster recovery fund that will assist those regional repositories directly affected by Irma and Maria. Regional conservators will assist at least two of the impacted archives to assess and report on their short and long-term recovery needs. Going forward, CARBICA will investigate the feasibility of establishing a reserve of recovery supplies/equipment accessible within the region. While these arrangements get underway, CARBICA will continue to collect information and to provide professional solidarity to the archivists on the ground.

It is foreseen that in the long term CARBICA, in liaison with existing professional networks such as the Blue Shield and the ICA’s Expert Group on Emergency Planning, will help promote a coordinated approach to emergency planning. Endorsement from local and regional emergency organisations such as the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) will be vital – as will the support of those remaining European governments with obligations in the region. To become meaningful, these new affiliations will require energy and vision and the engagement of all members. The ALA-ICA Mexico 2017 Conference provided an opportunity for our colleagues to brainstorm and discuss how to find practical and economical solutions to mitigate against catastrophic outcomes from these natural disasters.

**Karla Hayward**

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Saint-Martin Government building.

Saint-Martin Government building.

Saint-Martin Government building.

Saint-Martin Government building.

Roseau Public Library, Dominica.

Saint-Martin Archaeological Center.

Saint-Martin Archaeological Center.

Saint-Martin Archaeological Center.

Saint-Martin Archaeological Center.
In October 2017, Jeff James, Chief Executive and Keeper, The National Archives UK, became the ad interim President of the Forum of National Archivists (FAN). Jeff was appointed to lead and support FAN through a period of change that will make it a more effective forum for national archivists.

FAN was established in 2012 in part to replace the International Conference on the Round Table on Archives (CITRA). As an autonomous body for institutional members of central archive directorates or national archival institutions, it considers and responds to high-level strategic issues. Through the development of resources with a scope broader than just those eligible for membership, FAN aims to support all members of the ICA.

Five years after its creation, David Fricker, ICA President, supported by the Executive Board, felt that it was timely to re-examine and reassess the role of FAN and the functions that it performs within the ICA community. FAN plays an important role in the ICA due to its ability to influence policy makers, unlike any other group involved, necessitating a review into its objectives. Jeff has participated concurrently with FAN and the ICA, first engaging with the ICA at a FAN meeting in 2014. As Interim President of FAN, Jeff knows that his role is to interpret the needs and wants of FAN, and turn those concepts into a prioritised action plan with concrete outcomes. He believes that any achievements will depend upon the broader engagement of the national archivist community, which will bring the energy and drive necessary to take FAN into this new phase of its existence.

In its first five years, FAN has created a space for national archivists to come together and share information. Now, Jeff is looking towards a more engaged FAN, assessing its current governance and structure, and making enhanced communication and engagement a priority. These themes were identified by FAN members through a survey in summer 2017 and developed further through workshop discussions at the most recent meeting of FAN in Mexico City in November 2017.

As the FAN Interim President, Jeff will oversee this extensive review, which will include a fresh look at how FAN is defined within the ICA Constitution, the governance and terms of reference of FAN. Jeff’s emphasis is on ensuring that FAN provides value for national archivists, while also implementing positive and wide-ranging outcomes for the entire ICA membership. FAN is a network of people and institutions tackling current challenges for the archives community – for example the digital challenge – which means that FAN is uniquely placed to develop a fresh and more proactive role as a hub for sharing useful resources.

With a view to removing barriers to participation, Jeff is keen that meetings of FAN take place within the ICA conference programme rather than as a separate preceding event, and to explore the idea of organising meetings more than once a year. An early focus for him is on the Bureau, including how it is assembled, who it represents, and what links can be better created with the ICA. A longer-term interest for Jeff is how FAN can become a more sustainable entity that is less reliant on one individual or organisation, allowing anyone to become the President regardless of the resources their national archive has available. Jeff says: “There will be lots of interesting questions to try and unpick over the coming year and lots of things we can try out: some things won’t work, but some will! Now is the time to try, with the ICA showing strong support for FAN’s transformation”.

With greater collaboration, and communication involving FAN members in ongoing conversations, and with the engagement of national archivists, Jeff hopes for noticeable improvements within the next year to be shared at the Cameroon conference. Refreshing the website and improved communications are expected to be top of the priority list.

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To know more about FAN: www.ica.org/en/forum-national-archivists
The perception of the reality of Africa is expressed through an economic yardstick, and always veers between the two approaches of optimism and pessimism. It is a truism that Africa, or rather the African continent of 54 countries, which nourishes the world through its resources, is far from profiting from these.

Yes, Africa, the continent which produces immeasurable resources, but which, paradoxically, presents the ugliest face in matters of “development”... only models of development tried and tested by ‘big pharma’ have been applied to make the continent grow and make it more competitive!

Yes, alongside models that have already been tested, with completely mixed results, there is room to approach the matter with more humility by examining the history and the memory of this continent. What if Africa developed by virtue of its archives? It is in this way that the 2018 Annual Conference of the International Council on Archives, which will be held for the first time on the African continent, aims to meet the real Africa through this great world archival assembly.

Yes, to meet the real Africa, far from the stereotypes, and to journey with her towards her future, bringing together her history, activating her memory and steering her future based on her own experience, in her own environment: free from complexes and with the resources available to her.

Under the banner of advocacy on a large scale, above all aimed at African decision makers and their development partners, the theme of the ICA Annual Conference 2018 Archives: Governance, Memory and Heritage is intended to re-position archives at the heart of “the emergence” of the continent. It will be concerned with a synthesis of specific issues of archival practice in Africa. In fact, it can never be said enough that archives have not always benefited from the status they deserve in Africa. They are generally classified as luxury spending for countries which have other priorities (health, education, security...) Therefore, the moment has come to change our approach and the development paradigm. To this end, the contribution of ICA is crucial. Around the central theme of the 2018 annual conference of ICA in Yaoundé and that activities that will take place, specialists in archives and information management will show that the success of investments considered as priority in Africa depend on good governance, which is itself intimately linked to the existence of strong and secure archive systems and the conservation of memory and archival heritage.

Holding the Annual Conference of ICA from 26-28 November 2018 in Yaounde, the political capital of Cameroon, is also the best way to evaluate the ICA’s Africa Strategy in mid-term and to adjust the priority axes if necessary in order to meet the objectives that have been fixed.

Welcome to Yaoundé, a town of seven hills, political capital of Cameroon, Africa in miniature. You will be given the opportunity to ‘live’ Africa and to appreciate it better. All of you, members of ICA, information professionals from every continent, decision makers, funders: come and share your knowledge in peace among a young, enthusiastic and generous population. Hitch the wagon which is missing or falling behind –Africa– to the ICA train.

Dr Esther Olembe
Director of the National Archives of Cameroon
eolembe@yahoo.fr
You are invited to take part in International Archives Day whose theme is linked to that of the ICA Yaoundé Conference which is “Archives: Governance, Memory and Heritage”. This conference will take place in Yaoundé, Cameroon from 26 to 28 November 2018. On Saturday 9 June 2018, celebrate International Archives Day within your institution, your business or your service. Use this global event to make known the role of archives, to share your experiences and the importance of your work. Show that the archival profession and the management of documents is fun, accessible, varied, and that your experience is useful to everyone.

**Prepare your project for International Archives Day 2018:**
1. Reserve the date now... Saturday 9 June 2018... and as this is a weekend, why not run the event throughout the week?
2. Get inspired by what your colleagues throughout the world organised last year!
3. To take part in this event on the theme “Archives: Governance, Memory and Heritage”, choose your project now: an exhibition, slideshow or a film projection, and consider opening your service to the public, explaining your work, raising the profile of your colleagues and explaining how they can offer help to other services within your institution or business.
4. To help you with these events, ICA will make available on its website personalised communications media (posters, bookmarks, postcards).
5. From now on, you can let us know about your events and send us the programme so that this can be put on the interactive map (the posters and documents which you have personalized). Make use of this incredible exposure to the global public!
6. On Saturday 9 June 2018 take photographs of your celebrations and send them to us! ICA wants people to value the work and dynamism of archivists and records managers!
7. Follow these events on social media and continue to celebrate “Archives: Governance, Memory and Heritage” by registering for the ICA 2018 Conference in Yaoundé.

Let’s share our experiences of International Archives Day on social media... We can’t be everywhere on 9 June, or before, although we put all our efforts into bringing the event as close to you as possible. We need you!

Photos, videos, recordings or simple messages... whatever means of expression you choose, you can immortalize your experiences of this International Archives Day. The great thing is: you are the narrator of your own day! Specify where the event can be found and what is happening: an animation which surprised you and made you learn about and discover archives? A place which excited you, made you shiver, tremble, which amazed you? Send us your photos, videos and commentaries and, as a bonus, we’ll be pleased to post them with a thank you, an acknowledgement and without doubt, you will get several followers. All you need is a telephone connected to the internet and a wish to share your experiences.

**Where do you post this?**

Hashtag: #IAD18
Facebook: International Council on Archives
Twitter: @ICArchiv

It’s up to you: help us make International Archives Day an incredible success!

Christine Trembleau
ICA Marketing and Communications Manager
trembleau@ica.org

The International Council on Archives invites you to celebrate International Archives Day
“Archives: Governance, Memory and Heritage”, on 9 June 2018

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It’s up to you: help us make International Archives Day an incredible success!

Christine Trembleau
ICA Marketing and Communications Manager
trembleau@ica.org


TO KNOW MORE

To know more about the International Archives Day: www.ica.org/en/international-archives-day-9-june-2018
WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

CATEGORY C
United States International University-Africa, Kenya

CATEGORY D
Cheryl Sylvester, Grenada
Joyce Fan, Singapore
Telal Hassan, Tanzania
Lidieth María Cerdas Figueroa, Costa Rica
Evelyn Wareham, New Zealand
Geneviève Piché, Canada
Beibei Li, United States
Isabel Schellnack-Kelly, South Africa
Kelly Fitzgerald, Ireland
Teresa Maljar-Hupel, Canada
Peter Daub, Netherlands
Carolina Elizabeth Calero Larrea, Ecuador
Saroja Wettasinghe, Sri Lanka
Anna Gray, Australia
Robert Dooley, Australia
Marja van der Made, Germany
Kelly Spring, United States
Stephanie Calderon Torres, Costa Rica

Bonginkosi Mfundo Ginindza, Namibia
Reto Speck, United Kingdom
Melanie Queval, France
Tiffany Kirby, United Kingdom
Suzanne Shouesmith, United Kingdom
Barbara Galimberti, Switzerland
Paul Lihoma, Malawi
Xiuyin Lin, China
Cecilia Amapola Joya Gómez, Mexico
Maria Ines Torra, Argentina
Heedo Yun, South Korea
Dagmar Hovestaedt, Germany
Susan A. Coleman, Australia
Bradley Bauer, United Arab Emirates
Kayleigh Dodd, United Kingdom
Ypapanti Kyta, Greece
Eleanor Kirby, United Kingdom
Jennifer Dekker, Canada
Michelle Kung, United Kingdom
Marie-Astrid Purton, France
Pamela Lutzker, United States
Kathryn Eminhizer, United States
Laurianne Nehlig, France
Christine Kamfeu, Congo-Brazzaville
Jill Delaney, Canada
Kathrin Gurtner, Switzerland
Muhammad Ezzat Amna, Oman
Omar Vicente Rojas Herrera, Peru
Karen Trivette, United States
Rachel L. Mihalik, United States
Rida Benjelloun, Canada
Philip Milnes-Smith, United Kingdom
Jean McCracken, New Zealand
Victor Pablo Pignatiello, Argentina
Victoria Brokenshire, United Kingdom
Luiza Angelica Lisboa Pinto, Brazil
Ernst Guggisberg, Switzerland
Li Zilih, China
Clément Pomerat, France
Eric Lemoine, France
Lars Buske Gustavsen, Norway
Tina L. Ligon, United States
Knut Kjosás, Norway
Goulven Le Brech, France
Asbjørn Skødt, Denmark
Normand Laplante, Canada
Edward S. Lowry, United States
Irene Alakopas, Finland
Maria Castrillo, United Kingdom
Lorenzo Camerini, Canada
Sanghamitra Chatterjee, India
Andrés Miguel Pak Linares, Argentina
Mignon Judy van Wyk, United Arab Emirates
Eva Mariana Nazar Gaule, Argentina
Susan M. Gordon, United Kingdom
Zhang Juan, Hong Kong SAR, China
Brenda Gunn, United States
Montserrat Pons Mascarilla, Spain
Tito Correa, Norway
Laura Luca, United Kingdom
Martino Dutto, Italy
Maria José Badenas, Spain

Repartition by continents
- Africa: 7
- Americas: 31
- Asia: 9
- Europe: 36
- Oceania: 5
- Total: 88