

The Twin Black Hole



Key findings
and proposals
from the Study

“Digital Agenda for European Film Heritage”

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Film Heritage Institutions and the cinema industry face a dramatic restructuring – deeper than ever in film history

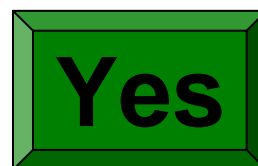
- Cinema is digital. **Now.**
- Theatrical distribution became the last distribution channel to turn totally digital, after homevideo, TV, VoD
- Most analysts place the ‘tipping point’ for D-Cinema in 2012 (for the key EU markets)
- Analogue film industry and technology is already fading away, including film laboratories.
- Soon scanning technology will not be used in production and will eventually also disappear

- As all films are now produced digitally, **they must be preserved digitally** (any other alternative is short-lived and not practical)
- Analogue film preservation is safe, **it should continue and be reinforced**
- LTDP (Long Term Digital preservation) is a “system”, not a technology or a product. It requires **strict procedures** and **sustained investments**. FHI should apply proven practices from other fields.
- Due to its well-known weaknesses (small size, market share and capacity to invest) it **is unlikely that the European cinema industry alone** can undertake the **digitisation** of its catalogue and the **preservation** of new productions

- Unless actions are taken immediately there is no doubt that we are heading towards two huge **BLACK HOLES** for European cinema:
 - **In 2-3 years, there will be virtually no access on film.** For all commercial and cultural purposes, **all analogue films will be LOST.** The whole cinema history until now will not be available anymore.
 - **Digitally produced films will face serious risk of loss.** In 5 to 10 years, hundreds of new productions are at danger of **being lost forever every year**
- **We are at risk of losing all films produced until now, plus all those produced from now on**

One basic question:

Do we **want to keep European cinema alive?**



(why? +€2.6B/year investments from MS/EU + commercial value + competitive disadvantage + 'the cultural exception' + 'the cultural identity and diversity' + 'the EU history and culture of the last 120 years, etc...)

The Study offers solutions **IF the answer is yes.**

- Compulsory deposit (legal or contractual) is in place in almost all MS, but almost invariably need revision
- Due to piracy concerns, opposition to compulsory deposit of digital materials - particularly non-encrypted - seems to be increasing. There is a danger that works get lost and forgotten
- **LEGAL DEPOSIT SHOULD BE ENFORCED ACROSS EU (IF NOT, AT LEAST CONTRACTUAL DEPOSIT) FOR UNENCRYPTED DIGITAL FORMATS (TO BE DEFINED BY THE ARCHIVES)**
- **No Digital Preservation is realistic for encrypted materials**

- Cost for producer to deposit a digital master in an archive is close to zero.
- The annual EU film production (1100 feature films + 1400 shorts) is calculated to require **5.8 PB/year** of digital storage, that will cost between **€1.5M and €3M** or 0,77% of €2,7B - annual state aid to cinema industry to conserve every year (and costs decreasing)
- EU FHI film collections are calculated at **1M hours**
- Costs of mass digitization of all EU film holdings are calculated to be at maximum between **€500M and €2B**
- Conserving the result of digitization will cost a maximum of **€290M across all Europe** (2015 costs)

Proposals for key recommendations

- **Digital Preservation must start now.**
- **Digitization must also start now.** (time frame for their completion is 7 years)
- **Digital Preservation is a system, not a storage medium.** This means that FHI must be legally authorised to perform all the processes required.
- Also, Digital Preservation requires regular ongoing funding, and MS should provide sustained support to FHI
- FHI should start **prioritizing digitization and Digital Preservation NOW** as transition will take time and **digital films are lost as we speak**

Proposals for key recommendations

- Even at the planning stage, FHI need to be supported by MS with appropriate funding, FHI should immediately start planning for digital repositories based on open standards, and these must be 'trusted repositories' able to preserve content safely and securely
- MS should support FHI also for that. This includes the work required to clear rights, as one major reason behind FHI's concerns about copyright is that they lack the resources to research and clear them (also in the case of Orphans)
- **Without these resources, digitization and access – including on national or EU-wide platforms like Europeana – is simply impossible**

Proposals for key recommendations

- **Research** is needed in developing systems to manage LTDP of cinema content, possibly open-source as such systems do not exist or are excessively costly. Ideally, if such an open-source solution was used across Europe, this would simplify interoperability
- **Higher education** FHI will need highly competent staff, trained and educated for analogue and digital archiving and preservation.
- **Training** of existing staff is also critical and it should be undertaken immediately.

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