

ASSOCIATION DES  
CINÉMATHÈQUES  
EUROPÉENNES



# **Sectoral Approaches to Digitization**

## **The Film Archives**

by

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Welcome to the movies!  
In a city where a Film Festival is taking place  
Cinema.  
Emotion.  
Glamour.  
Discussions. Screenings. Social Events.  
Cultural exchange. Panels. Receptions.  
Francois Ozon. Costa-Gavras. Tati. Jack Cardiff.  
  
Big names of the European Cinema.  
  
Anything that could be preserved?



## 1. Digitization for preservation?

At least the films?

Digitization for preservation purposes means:  
for the future, preferably: for eternity.

Analogue Film material can survive for several centuries.

The challenge for Digitization:

Each frame of a film is packed with highly condensed  
Information

Converting this information from analogue film to a digital  
file adequately means:

- scanning a film in high resolution (2 to 4 Kilobyte per frame, 24 frames per second)
- not comparable with scanning a book
- expensive, time consuming



## 1. Digitization for preservation?

Furthermore:

Digitisation per se does not ensure long term preservation of the material

And even if so:

Who is in charge for this expensive measure?

The right holders, the Member States, the publicly funded archives?

Who decides what is being digitized?

The one who pays?

In conclusion, at present the main aim of digitisation is not preservation but facilitating access to collections.

Which brings us back to Cinema.



## 2. Digitization for Cinema

Digital Cinema needs digital files in high resolution.

The standard for theatrical distribution - 35mm analogue – was reliable since 1895:

Each film can still be shown in each corner of the world.

The conversion to digital projection will have a heavy impact on film culture:

- Cinemas with only digital equipment need digital or digitized films
- The decision which work of the rich European film heritage should be digitized in high resolution leads to:



## 2. Digitization for Cinema

- Selection of classical European films to be digitized for commercial and non commercial distribution in digitally equipped cinemas
- Reduction of titles under economic aspects to balance cost-benefit of the expensive high resolution digitization
- “Best of”-policy
- Low percentage of films being digitized
- Loss of visibility for the majority of the European film heritage, at least in cinemas.



## 2. Digitization for Cinema

### Solutions?

- Digitizing more films. Which ones? Who is paying?
- Keep hybrid (analogue and digitally equipped) cinemas as long as possible



### 3. Digital platform: Internet

Technical aspects:

easy, low resolution, amateur level

Cultural aspects:

showcase for European film heritage, cities, traditions, manners, architecture, fashion etc.

Social aspects:

quality, reliability, knowledge, education

European aspects:

supra national contextualisation, cultural identity of European citizens

Film archival aspects:

visibility of collections, input of expertise



## Excursion: Film archives and their mission

No changes have occurred to the classical tasks of

- collecting,
- cataloguing,
- conserving,
- restoring and
- presenting films

but entirely transformed are the aspects of

- HOW to perform these tasks in a digital world.



The film archives are interested in the promotion of moving image content and in gaining opportunities for commercially exploiting content through use and re-use.

For:

- The academic research community,
- the education sector,
- professional film and footage researchers,
- the creative industry and
- the cultural sector can be reached

These groups are interested in the online accessibility of film archival content,

they share the wish to be able to find and access archive films required either for scientific, educational, commercial or creative purposes.



And we already collaborate:

**MIDAS** (Moving Image Database for Access and Reuse; 2005-2009, MEDIA plus Programme). Creation of an union catalogue available via “[filmarchives-online.eu](http://filmarchives-online.eu)” which provides **access to catalogue information** held in 18 European film archives.

**CEN**: A two part Cinematographic Works Standard for the interoperability of film databases (2005-2009, ICT 2009 Standardization Work Programme).

Dissemination & application of the standards in four workshops, to be held in ACE archives (end of 2010-2011)



**EFG** (The European Film Gateway, 2008-2011, eContent*plus* Programme)

The web portal provides **access to the digital collections** held in 15 European film archives via one single access point. It will serve as a sector specific trans national aggregator for Europeana.

**By:** Building up the technical infrastructure, standardisation of the partners databases, matching and merging of metadata, clearing copyright issues...

**But:** 80% of the content in EFG are images, approx. 6% text **and only 12% video**

**Why?**





## Some solutions:

- The current copyright legislation has to be improved to provide sufficient legal certainty to allow film heritage institutions to carry out their missions efficiently.
- ACE is in a permanent dialogue with AV policy makers and rights holders representatives on national as well as on European level
- ACE statement on the Green Paper “Copyright in the Knowledge economy” 11/2007; ACE member of the HLEG Subgroup Copyright (2006-2008) and the AV working groups on diligent search guidelines for orphan works



### What we need:

- Legal certainty by including mandatory exceptions of Directive 2001/29/EC for cultural institutions
- Harmonization of these exceptions between the Member States

### What we wish:

#### Mandatory exceptions

- to reproduce the material on any media for preservation purposes
- to digitise extracts of the material for educational purposes
- to consult this material online by researchers (pass word protected)
- to allow access to extracts of it through Europeana



To make it clear:

Of course provisions have to be made that these uses do not conflict

- with the commercial exploitation of a film
- no exception if a relevant licensing scheme is available
- excluding works which are currently available commercially

What's next?



## Possible solutions:

- Test bed for rights clearance within EFG II, if approved by the Commission
- A database of works in public domain within EFG II
- A database of works already digitized for cinema (DCPs) within EFG II
- Negotiations with the right holders about a framework contract for the use of films out of distribution
- Facilitating the diligent search criteria for orphan works





Films and especially old films are:

- Highly attractive for the public
- Leading medium of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century
- Admired part of our European culture
- Valuable historic documents
- Unique testimonies of the European past
- Important for education and scientific research
- Great entertainment!



Thank you!  
Questions?

