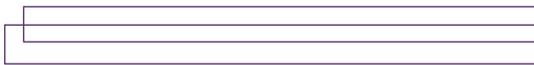


At our Athens conference we engaged in an ongoing discussion about the degree to which technological developments are bringing all the information managing professions together. There is little doubt that the users of collection material are benefiting from this convergence, as integrated web-based discovery services deliver a wide variety of available material, including sound and audiovisual items. Many of IASA's members all over the globe are participating in projects that are delivering on this aspect of technological convergence. However, the power that these systems have in providing the valuable and useful information they do, is built on the foundation of specialist knowledge and expertise. And access and discovery is only one aspect of collection management; In order to make appropriate decisions about collections and their management, let alone their discovery and use, it is vital that the managers of these collections understand how convergence and specialisation are necessary partners in the expanding technological world. This remains an important topic for IASA's members and colleagues, and one we expect to continue for some little time yet.

In another type of convergence, the IASA Executive Board, and the conference organising committee of the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) converged on Philadelphia to meet and hammer out the details of our upcoming joint conference. As befits such an historic meeting, the subjects for discussion ranged widely. However, the current hot topics of video preservation standards and technological convergence will be features of the 2 - 6 November conference (<http://www.iasa-conference.com/>). There was a lot of good will and mutual support for our forthcoming joint conference, and all agree that the program will benefit from our cooperative planning. The historic town centre of Philadelphia is a beautifully laid out part of the city, full of people, parks, bars and restaurants, and your hardworking board strove to find the most suitable ones. I expect it to be a great conference, a marvellous city to meet in, and an excellent example of professional collaboration in the sound and audiovisual archiving community.

At our IASA mid-year board meeting in Philadelphia the board was also very pleased to hear about the work that the latest co-opted member to the Executive Board has been undertaking. Richard Ranft, who volunteered in Athens to take on the role of IASA's web manager, submitted a plan to the executive board, and with their approval, commenced building many of the new features we need to help IASA participate more fully in the online world. Many benefits will accrue to members, including online spaces for committees and sections to work, members sign-in, and the delivery of more information, some specifically for the membership, and others for all to use. For example, the IASA publication, TC04 "Guidelines in the Production and Preservation of Digital Audio Objects" will be made freely available as a printable PDF to all IASA members, and as an online document that non-members can browse through. Of course the printed version of the book can still be ordered, and signed-in IASA members will be able to order the book at the members' price, while non-members will pay a more expensive price. Other benefits to members will include recent journals and digitised copies of previous publications. All of this will allow us to more easily work together and to provide information that will help support the community of sound and audiovisual archives.

The Board also discussed the growing concern amongst IASA members about some of the shortcomings of the rules, laws and guidelines that govern IASA and agreed that there is probably a need for some adjustments. The IASA constitution has been serving us well in allowing us to function as an organisation, and though it has flaws, we manage to continue working and providing all the useful services that IASA does through interpreting that constitution and selectively applying it as best we can. This is no different to the way that all organisations, right up to nation states, function. Every now and then events occur which alter the way an organisation functions and the constitution becomes a limitation and has to be changed. The growing digital environment, and the changed way that branches and affiliated organisations relate to the parent body are demonstrably different to how we used to be, and there needs to be some thinking done on how we might do it better. We need to review these aspects to make them more logical and functional with the aim of improving the relevance of the organisation and increasing membership, so we can do more of the



things we see as important. The complex part of this process is trying to find a way that increases involvement, and membership, but doesn't constrain the work of the organisation by bringing conflicting aims and purposes into, well, conflict.

The other side of this is that IASA has been an association representing institutions, as archives and institutions have been the organising force behind archival innovation. Most of our innovations and developments have come about as a result of the archives themselves. The changing shape of the sound and audiovisual archiving world means that the innovators are less likely to be the institutions and more likely to be the private companies working with the archives and institutions. If IASA is going to be relevant we have to continue to work with the private sector, and we don't have to look very far to find some very fine examples of private/public sector working together within IASA. However, our membership categories are not really appropriate, and we need to face up to this issue and find a way of supporting the diversity of our membership.

With something as complex as this, and with so many competing and vested interests, it is going to be very important to get the opinion of membership in shaping the changes, so here is the plan. Past President Richard Green will, on behalf of the Board, put together a panel for the upcoming IASA-AMIA conference in Philadelphia. We'll be scrutinising the issues and problems as we see them, and seeking input from the members as to their views and matters to raise. We will also be representing some of our ideas and canvassing widely for our members' ideas. It will be in terms of "do not tell us how the constitution should be changed, rather, tell us the sort of organisation you want IASA to be in the future and help us shape changes that will bring that into being". After the conference, the board and any helpers we have will have around 6 months to draft the changes to the constitution. Then, in accordance with the constitution, the draft will be submitted to the membership in time to be voted on and ratified at the 2011 conference in Frankfurt.

So, yet another reason to be in Philadelphia in November. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Yours truly,
Kevin Bradley
President IASA