

ESTABLISHING COMMON PLATFORMS FOR JOINT INITIATIVES IN THE HERITAGE FIELD

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In this paper I would like to illustrate what has occurred in the history of the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA) in the last thirty years and what is currently the purpose of IASA and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in the field of audiovisual archives among the international associations of heritage institutions.

I. From “sound” to “sound and audiovisual”

In 1984, when I joined IASA, the organization was still the International Association for Sound Archives and the annual conferences were organized together with the International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentations Centres (IAML), from which IASA had separated in 1969. One of the main topics of the annual conference which took place in Como (Italy) was “Sound archives—from separation to integration.” The papers on this topic were published in the *Phonographic Bulletin* (the title of the IASA Journal at that time). In his introduction, Rolf Schuurmsma, Librarian-in-Chief of the Erasmus University Rotterdam, an important scholar active in IASA and IAML, wrote these most interesting lines:

“More and more collections of sound recordings become part of an institution with a wider aim, be it library, broadcasting organisation, national archive or museum. There may not be more than a loose connection between the different departments of such an institution, but even then there is a beginning of integration. ... New technical developments like the digital way of recording may also bring about changes towards greater integration.”¹

The discussion about integration at that time concerned sound and moving image documents, the latter in form of video, because film was the domain of FIAF (International Federation of Film Archives), the eldest NGO in the audiovisual area. The articles following this introduction came from Leif Larson, National Archive of Recorded Sound and Moving Images (ALB) Stockholm; Sam Kula, National Film, Television and Sound Archives, Ottawa; and David Lance, Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

In his article on the ALB established in 1979 as an institution separated from the National Library, which until then had been in charge of audiovisual heritage, Leif Larson wrote:

“My contribution to this session can be concluded as being a strong plea for radical integration regarding the internal handling for various media. There is an implicit warning, however, against integration of an institution for preservation of video and audio materials within a bigger unit, be it the National Library or the National Archives.”²

At that time, many colleagues agreed on the opinion that the institutions in charge of audio-visual preservation should be independent from larger institutions, such as national libraries and national archives. However, the development (at least in Europe) went in the opposite direction:

1 Rolf Schuurmsma, “Sound Archives – from Separation to Integration,” *Phonographic Bulletin* 40, (November 1984): 17.
2 Leif Larson, “From Separation to Integration – the Swedish Experience,” *Phonographic Bulletin* 40, (November 1984): 21.

- In 1983, the British Institute for Recorded Sound joined the British Library and became British Library National Sound Archive and later British Library Sound Archive.
- In 1994, the Département de la Phonothèque Nationale et de l'Audiovisuel had been renamed Département de l'Audiovisuel and integrated into the New Bibliothèque Nationale de France.
- And 2009, in Sweden the audiovisual collections were moved back from the ALB to the National Library.

In December 1995, IASA members, after a debate which had lasted for ten years, decided on a change in IASA's scope: the Association would in future deal not only with sound, but also with audiovisual matters, and changed its name to International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives.³

The Executive Board's draft working plan for 1997–1999, published only in January 1999, shows how this expansion would affect future cooperation:

“Concept for the integration of audiovisual matters into IASA's scope:

Following the draft working plan 1997–1999, IASA needs:

4. To cooperate with institutions experienced in the AV field

Apart from the branches and the affiliates, there are associations such as FIAT (International Federation of Television Archives) and FIAF (International Federation of Film Archives), but other organizations such as AMIA (Associations of Moving Image Archivists), AVICOM (ICOM International Committee for Audiovisual and New Technologies of Image and Sound), ICA (International Council on Archives), IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions), etc. should be considered.”⁴

2. From the “Roundtable” to CCAAA

In fact a kind of cooperation has occurred since 1979, when with the help of UNESCO the Roundtable on Audiovisual Records was established. The Roundtable assembled the associations of IASA, FIAF, and FIAT, and the Audiovisual Committees of ICA and IFLA and organized through its Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) since 1983 the Joint Technical Symposium—a gathering of specialized technicians in film, video, and sound preservation.

In 2000, the Roundtable became the Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations (CCAAA), thanks to the initiative of two IASA presidents: Sven Allerstrand (ALB) and Crispin Jewitt (British Library Sound Archive). CCAAA is an umbrella organization for associations dealing with audiovisual matters. In CCAAA's terms of reference its aim is defined as follows:

“CCAAA is a network of relevant international non-governmental organisations dealing with all aspects of audiovisual archiving on a professional level speaking with common voice with the aim of promoting and encouraging the recognition of the audiovisual heritage as part of the world's cultural and documentary

3 An interesting summary of the discussions can be found in: Helen P. Harrison: “IASA Future and External Relations,” *Phonographic Bulletin* 61 (November 1992): 28–33.

4 “IASA Business,” *IASA Journal* 12 (January 1999): 7.

heritage, the preservation and the accessibility of the audiovisual heritage on an international level.”⁵

CCAAA has two categories of members. Category A members are associations whose main activity is audiovisual archiving. They pay the full membership fee and have two votes on issues that are decided by ballot. Category B members are affiliated associations whose activities include audiovisual archiving. They pay a reduced membership fee and have one vote on issues that are decided by ballot.

The Category A members are:

- Association for Recorded Sound Collections (**ARSC**)
- Association of Moving Image Archivists (**AMIA**)
- Federation of Commercial Audiovisual Libraries (**FOCAL**)
- International Federation of Film Archives (**FIAF**)
- International Federation of Television Archives (**FIAT-IFTA**)
- International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (**IASA**)
- Southeast Asia-Pacific Audiovisual Archive Association (**SEAPAVAA**)

The Category B members are:

- International Council on Archives (**ICA**): Photographic and Audiovisual Archives Working Group
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (**IFLA**): Audiovisual and Multimedia Section

ICA and IFLA are not associations of institutions specialized in audiovisual archiving. Nevertheless, both are represented by groups of specialists from large non-specialized institutions.

In 1988, Leopold Auer, former Secretary for Publications in ICA, explained to the IASA General Assembly why ICA had its own activities in the audiovisual field:

“In the world of AV media ICA is a comparative newcomer and you will perhaps ask yourself whether it has been necessary to duplicate already existing efforts and to establish new bodies while already existing ones in the field face grave problems. This question raises the problem of relationship to be developed between ICA and sister organisations at the international level. It is at the same time a repetition of the question for the relationship between public archives and specialized archival institutions such as sound or film archives at the national level.”

He ended with an observation concerning the problem of sharing responsibilities for the audiovisual heritage in the framework of a national archival policy:

“What is important is not which institution is taking the responsibility for which type of archives but that this responsibility is taken at all by whomever so that the archival policy of a country may form a coherent pattern.”⁶

5 www.ccaaa.org/what.html. See also: Bruce Royan, “Saving Fading Heritage: the Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations,” *Alexandria* (21[3] 2011): 55-63.

6 Leopold Auer, “Statement addressed to the General Assembly of IASA, 16 September 1988,” *Phonographic Bulletin* 53 (March 1989): 37-38.

The role of ICA and IFLA obviously goes beyond the representation of the written portion of cultural heritage and the community of archives and libraries. Thanks to their involvement in numerous international bodies such as UNESCO, WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization), and the International Council of the Blue Shield they are important players in the process of shaping the future of the knowledge society.

Since it was established in the year 2000, CCAAA has organized three Joint Technical Symposiums and, since 2007, has coordinated the UNESCO World Day for Audiovisual Heritage which was established by the General Conference of UNESCO in 2005. Some activities dealt with the field of training but the members could not agree on a consistent cooperation in this field. CCAAA has the status of observer in the UN-agency WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organisation) and is recognized by the Communication and Information Sector of UNESCO without being in an official relationship with the organization. An official relationship would be possible only on the condition that the Category A members give up their individual relationships with the organization.

3. Libraries, archives, museums, monuments, and sites (LAMMS)

In 2008, IFLA took the initiative to convene an informal group of prominent NGO representatives active in the heritage field, including organizations of archives, museums, monuments, and sites. This was the outcome of a working group of the IFLA Governing Board which focused on advancing the convergence agenda.

In a draft policy paper which was discussed during the IFLA World Conference at Helsinki in 2012, IFLA gave the following definition of convergence:

“Convergence is not aimed at merging collections or organizations, but upon enhancing, improving, and/or stabilizing cooperation among Libraries, Archives, Museums, Monuments, and Sites.”

The LAMMS group currently has five members and two observers.

Members:

- International Council on Archives (**ICA**)
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (**IFLA**)
- International Council of Museums (**ICOM**)
- International Council on Monuments and Sites (**ICOMOS**)
- Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations (**CCAAA**)

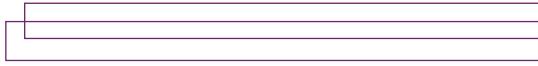
Observers:

- Conference of Directors of National Libraries (**CDNL**)
- International Council for Scientific and Technical Information (**ICSTI**)

Its terms of reference read as follows:

“The five international organisations for cultural heritage, IFLA (libraries), ICA (archives), ICOM (museums), ICOMOS (monuments & sites), and CCAAA (audiovisual archives), have a long-standing relation of cooperation and are now agreed to intensify cooperation between their organisations in those areas where libraries, archives, museums, monuments, and sites have mutual interests and activities.”⁷

7 www.ifla.org/about-lamms/.



In the agenda of the group we can find the following activities:

- Copyright and other legal matters
- Political lobby
- Preservation and protection of cultural heritage
- Global digital libraries
- Standardization

In the copyright field, IFLA and ICA are participating in the debates of the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights of the UN-Agency WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organisation). Current exceptions and limitations of copyright for archives and libraries are in discussion and IFLA has published a proposal for a treaty. There is also in discussion a treaty for Copyright Limitations and Exceptions for the Visually Impaired and the Protection of Broadcast Organisations.

On the political side IFLA is at the origin of manifestos endorsed by UNESCO on topics such as Internet, Multicultural Library, or Digital Library. UNESCO has also endorsed the Universal Declaration on Archives, prepared by ICA and Principles of Access to Archives are currently being discussed by the ICA membership. ICOM and ICOMOS were particularly active in the field of preservation and protection of cultural heritage under the framework of the Blue Shield organization. Numerous armed conflicts and natural disasters in the last few years have shown how fragile and permanently endangered heritage of all varieties has become in the world and consequently the importance of coordinated actions of the NGOs.

The members of LAMMS have adopted a Statement of Principles on Global Cross Sectorial Digitisation Initiatives which contains a shared vision for global heritage and promotes long-term access to cultural heritage. At the beginning of the statement is a long term vision for the development of a global digital library proposed by the Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL) in 2008. This meets the two final points of the agenda on “Global digital libraries” and “Standardization.”

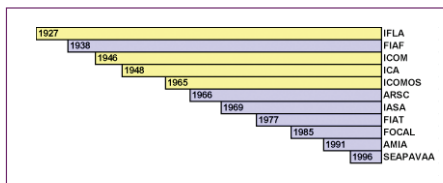
My concern as a representative of the CCAAA in the LAMMS council is that the members of CCAAA do not seem to be particularly interested in this agenda. This is a pity because all its points are directly concerned with problems of preservation and accessibility of audiovisual heritage.

Concerning copyright, access to audiovisual heritage is still difficult because only a small portion is in the public domain and the numerous neighbouring rights are complicating the situation.

In UNESCO, CCAAA has no official status because some of its Category A members already have official relationships with the organization. As a result there is no common policy on audiovisual matters and no coordination with ICA and IFLA possible.

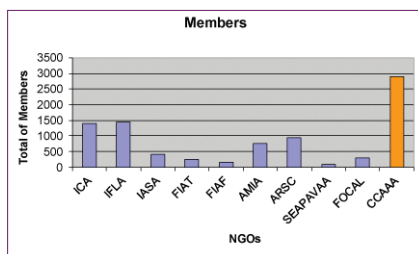
We all know that audiovisual heritage is also threatened by natural disasters and armed conflicts around the world. There were very few initiatives from NGOs during the last decade to help rescue endangered audiovisual heritage. CCAAA had been invited to be a member of the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS), but due to its weak structure it had to back out when ICBS planned its incorporation.

The current situation is the result of a historical development. The following table shows the chronology of the establishment of the NGOs in the heritage field:



It is not astonishing that the NGOs of the audiovisual community are younger than those who are working in the field of written heritage, museums, monuments, and sites. But we can also see that between 1966 and 1996 six organizations representing the audiovisual heritage were established. This meant an extreme fragmentation of the community, which is probably the main reasons for its weakness.

The direct consequences of this fragmentation can be shown by a comparison of the membership figures. In the following table, ICOM and ICOMOS are missing. If I had considered their membership figures (30,000 for ICOM, 9,500 for ICOMOS) the audiovisual associations would have disappeared from the table.



The last column shows that together, CCAAA category A members represent a group with more members than ICA or IFLA, but due to the different scopes of the organizations a merger of all CCAAA members is not possible. It is interesting to see that in the time of the Round Table, this problem had been discussed. Helen Harrison, Secretary General of IASA reported from a meeting held in 1989, in Brussels:

“David [Francis, representative of FIAF] went on to consider the areas of cooperation between the Archives Associations. IASA, FIAF, and FIAT obviously [they] have a common purpose on the technical front and there are other areas of mutual interest. While not advocating any sort of merger of the Associations, it would be worth exploring a biennial meeting on a topic of mutual interest, albeit retaining separate identities and business sessions as well. The Associations could hold separate conferences in the alternate years and still retain their own identity.”¹⁸

Since then, the situation has changed in many ways:

After the establishment of CCAAA other associations have joined the group, mainly ARSC and AMIA which jointly represent more members than IASA, FIAT and FIAF together. Their scopes, however, are nearer to IASA than to FIAT and FIAF which address a particular genre of institutions: Film archives for FIAF and Television Archives for FIAT.

8 Helen P. Harrison, “IASA Future and External Relations,” *Phonographic Bulletin* 61 (Nov. 1992): 33.



The mission statement of AMIA reads:

“AMIA is a non-profit international association dedicated to the preservation and use of moving image media. AMIA supports public and professional education and fosters cooperation and communication among the individuals and organizations concerned with the acquisition, description, preservation, exhibition and use of moving image materials.”⁹

And ARSC's aims are:

“The Association of Recorded Sound Collections is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and study of sound recordings in all genres of music and speech in all formats and from all periods. ARSC is unique in bringing together private individuals and institutional professionals everyone with a serious interest in recorded sound.”¹⁰

Together the two associations cover the field of sound and moving image, both contained in the mission statement of IASA:

“IASA supports the exchange of information and fosters international co-operation between audiovisual archives and other interested in the field especially in the areas of acquisition and exchange, documentation and metadata, resource discovery and access, copyright and ethics, preservation and conservation, research, dissemination and publication, digitisation of media content.”¹¹

The three mission statements contain many common interests and goals which could form a large platform of common activities. But from the point of view of IASA is there a need for such a platform?

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Due to the integration of audiovisual collections in large generalist institutions, mainly national libraries and national archives, the profile of people interested in IASA's activities has changed: instead of senior managers of institutions specializing in audiovisual heritage, persons with specific skills necessary for supervising audiovisual collections are active in the association. Their aim is to become informed and trained on new developments in the field and learn from the experiences of colleagues from other institutions.


To justify membership in IASA and the participation in a IASA conference they have to prove to managers, who often know very little or nothing about audiovisual heritage and audiovisual associations, that IASA provides substantial information in audiovisual matters through its website and its publications and that the conference programs contain elements which can improve the professional skills of the participants through tutorials and workshops.

In other words, not the identification with IASA as an organization, but the value of providing information and training will contribute to the elevation of professional levels of audiovisual archiving of institutions. This is the main argument for membership and participation in the conferences. Therefore, IASA finds itself in a competition with other organizations offering

9 www.amianet.org.

10 www.arsc-audio.org.

11 www.iasa-web.org/activities/.



similar “products” and the association has to develop a marketing strategy if it wants to survive in this competition.

The advantage of IASA in this competition is that a large range of capacities are represented in the membership. The disadvantage is the size of the organization, which has limited financial resources, therefore it does not allow for even a small staff of professionals to be in charge of developing and promoting the content of IASA’s program.

As a substantial increase in the finances of the association does not seem realistic, IASA has to find partnerships with other associations active in the same field. A possible loss of identity seems to me a minor disadvantage in comparison to the danger of becoming insignificant and sooner or later condemned to disappear.