



Examination of the Application of Modern Cataloguing Methods in Film Archives

Certain subjective and objective factors have prevented the desirable and necessary international co-operation in finding a solution to this problem.

Instead of a study resulting from the co-operation of several Film Archives, only some experiences from the activity of the Staatliches Filmarchiv can be submitted through which in the first place attention is drawn to the intention, purpose and form of these problems.

We are convinced that a careful study and the possible application of the modern cataloguing technique is one of the main problems in the further development of the Film Archive. The Staatliches Filmarchiv - and we are sure there are also more Archives - face the fact after having registered the total holdings according to the titles and the minimum filmographic data to elaborate index catalogues which show single filmographic data or data that result from editorial inspection.

Our theoretical considerations to build up index catalogues have been aiming at a desirable maximum of data. This maximum moves between 80 and 100 data per film, for both fictional and non-fictional films. In relation to the film collection of the Staatliches Filmarchiv der DDR this means that about 4 million data have to be fed and programmed.

The starting point for such an examination is our view that a Film Archive cannot do complete justice to its various social research and public tasks unless it has prepared and registered its collection for analysis. Already a quick glance at the facts to be gathered gives evidence that the current manual cataloguing methods are insufficient if this task is to be solved within a possible period.

In order to rationalise this procedure our considerations took three directions:

1. Study of methods for automatic mimeographing of catalogue cards.
2. Study of methods of other recording procedures.
3. Study of methods of electronic data programming.

It should be mentioned that those examinations refer to devices and equipment produced in the German Democratic Republic, and those available elsewhere.

1. On methods of automatic mimeographing of catalogue cards.

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Proposal for future F.I.A.F. Projects

Elaboration of a manual for the cataloguing of films. The Staatliches Filmarchiv der DDR suggests elaborating a manual similar to the one on film storage, preservation and restoration on the problems of cataloguing fictional and non-fictional films.

The present valuable reports of the National Film Archive, the Cinematheque Royale de Belgique and those of Gosfilmofond, the conclusions of past Congresses on various detailed problems of cataloguing should be enlarged and summarised through the experience of other Archives and new knowledge, especially with regard to new cataloguing methods.

This project should be completed within a period of two years.

The plan for the manual on cataloguing should be presented to the Congress in 1969.

The Staatliches Filmarchiv der DDR is ready to co-operate in every possible way in this project.

Basic principals of automatic mimeographing: to mimeograph the necessary number of catalogue cards according to a sample basic card and to arrange the thus mimeographed cards in corresponding index groups.

The following variants were tested in detail:

- a) Use of an automatic typewriter: Mode of operation. With the first typing of the catalogue card a perforated tape is made which permits the reproduction of any number of further copies of the card. If the front and the reverse pages of a catalogue card of size DIN A 5 (DIN = ruling German standard) have to be filled in, the necessary number of cards can be prepared in an eight hours day for 2 films.
- b) Mimeographing with xerox: We had to drop this method since, with the available equipment, an exposure of the front and reverse sides of a catalogue card is not possible. Besides, the photographic paper that has to be used in the apparatus does not have sufficient stability as a catalogue card.
- c) Manual printing of catalogue cards: This procedure is possible from a technical point of view and the printed cards are visually very impressive. The procedure proved to be too expensive since it would have to be done outside the Archive.
- d) Mimeographing with rotary press printing: The procedure is technically easy to handle and it is inexpensive. The thus mimeographed card loses its preciseness and becomes unmethodical.
- e) Mimeographing with an office-offset printing press: This method proved to be the most handy and inexpensive procedure with mechanic mimeographing, even though partial work (making of the printing plates) has to be done outside the archive.

2. Other methods of recording.

Perforated tape or similar methods were at our disposal. The principle is: there are several facts on one card which can be selected from each other irrespective of each other. The vital point of these procedures consists, for our purposes, of the following:

- a) Hand-perforated cards as well as machine-perforated cards primarily operate according to numerical principles. A certain number of filmographic data can be numerically codified without any difficulties. Other data (e.g. names) cannot be codified, or only with the help of a complicated and unwieldy key.
- b) The storage capacity of punched cards is limited because of the non-codification of dates and the high number of groups to be formed.

3. About methods of electronic data processing.

Electronic data processing is without doubt a process for the future which has a revolutionary influence on the methods of film cataloguing. From a theoretical point of view, computers being operated with perforated card or magnetic tape programming, ideal methods for index catalogues in film archives seem possible.

From a practical point of view no Archive would be able nowadays to afford the high financial expenditure of buying such a computer for programming.

The pushing development taking place in electronics has prompted the Staatliches Filmarchiv not to realise its decision at the present time to have the index catalogues designed by automatic mimeographing of the catalogue cards. This archive intends to take up exact examination on the future application of computer techniques. Considerations to programme data coming up in the range of film production and television which are of permanent Archive value in one design will be considered.

The present report is essentially based upon the experiences of the Staatliches Filmarchiv under the concrete conditions in the German Democratic Republic and the specific requirements of the Staatliches Filmarchiv. The problems raised should first of all present suggestions without giving a final opinion of one or the other method. Procedures which have not proved practical from the point of view of the Staatliches Filmarchiv can be successfully applied under different conditions.

We suggest that those archives who were ready to work together at the 1967 Congress in Berlin continue to do so. Based upon international experience, this group of Archives should elaborate a survey of the technical possibilities for the cataloguing of films, and they should aim to hand this survey over to the Congress in 1969.