

## PROBLEMS OF DOCUMENTATION

A Discussion Paper prepared by  
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### A. What are Film Archive Documents?

#### 1) General Definition

By film archive documents we mean all those records, mainly but not exclusively on paper, other than the films themselves and other than apparatus and machines.

#### 2) Classes of Document

The following is a list, not necessarily complete, of various classes of document falling within the above definition:

##### (a) Production Material

Scripts  
Set Designs  
Costume Designs

##### (b) Distribution and Exhibition Material

Stills  
Brochures  
Posters

##### (c) Material Reflecting Public Reaction

Criticisms  
Analyses  
Press Cuttings  
Magazines and Periodicals  
Newspapers  
Books, Pamphlets  
Gramophone Records and Magnetic Tapes  
(e.g. of film music interviews etc.)

##### (d) Personal Records

Diaries, letters, etc. of people who have worked in films or in connection with films

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### B. Problems to Consider in Relation to each kind of Document

In considering each class of document in the above list, the following problems arise:

#### 1) What is the Purpose of Collection?

Collections of the above documents may be maintained for any or all of the following purposes (once again, the list is not necessarily complete):

- (a) Preservation
- (b) Private research within the archive
- (c) Public use within the archive
- (d) As the basis of an information service within the archive
- (e) Public dissemination outside the archive
- (f) Exhibition and display

2) How are the Documents to be Selected?

It may be said that ideally everything should be acquired, but if the archive's resources of staff, storage space and finance are limited, it will be forced to select. It may be possible, in certain cases, to establish principles of selection, and if so, these should be determined. Otherwise selection must rest with the personal judgement of the staff, and it will be important to employ staff with the right qualifications (see below, under Staff)

3) How are they Best Stored?

In deciding the best storage conditions for any document, the following requirements are important:

- (a) Maximum protection
- (b) Ease of access
- (c) Most economical use of space

4) How Should the Documents be described and listed?

Here we are concerned with problems of identification, cataloguing and indexing. Two questions, amongst others arise:

- (a) The best forms of classification and cataloguing for each class of document.
- (b) Can a single comprehensive catalogue embrace all classes of documents (and even, perhaps, all films in the archive also) or is it more desirable to maintain separate catalogues for each.

5) Staff (and Working Conditions)?

The qualifications of staff to deal with books, for example, may be different from those required to deal with still photos, or with posters. The staff requirements for each class of document need to be considered, and also the working conditions (photographic darkrooms, racks for posters etc.) which they will need.

6) How can the Documents be Communicated and Disseminated?

This is of major importance, because the whole purpose of preserving collections of documents is to make them available for use by research workers and by the general public. Communication and exchange with other archives must not be forgotten, either. Here, again, the methods of dissemination and communication will vary according to the type of document. Stills can be copied almost exactly, and reproduced in books, periodicals, etc.

Books will be normally used as they are, but may be microfilmed. Posters and set designs require exhibition and display. All the most suitable means of making each class of document publically accessible must be considered.

7) Can Mechanical or Electronic Aids be Used?

In each of the problems listed in this section the possible use of modern mechanical and electronic aids should be considered.

8) How can Members of FIAF Co-operate?

To avoid a duplication of effort between FIAF members, it is desirable to explore ways in which members can between them share the work in each area of documentation (e.g. indexing periodicals, etc.)

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