

REPORT ON THE CATALOGUING COMMISSION WORKSHOP
held at the Hotel Grande Bretagne, Athens, 19 April 1991
during the 47th FIAF Congress

Purpose and Framework

The intended purpose and framework of the Workshop are described in the following text, which was distributed in advance to Congress participants to encourage their attendance at the Workshop:

Cataloguing Commission Workshop

Managing Cataloguing Activities - Standards, Resources, Systems

The Workshop will provide an opportunity to explore what is required for successful cataloguing in film archives. It will look at issues such as the role and purpose of cataloguing, the requirements of a good cataloguing system, and the resources needed to maintain efficient cataloguing programmes.

Participants are invited to raise issues or bring specific questions for discussion and to share real experiences - good or bad. The Workshop is intended to get as close as possible to the day-to-day activities of film cataloguers.

The Workshop will be led by the following Cataloguing Commission members, who will make brief introductory presentations:

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| Jon Gartenberg | (Department of Film, the Museum of Modern Art, New York - editor of the Commission's <i>Glossary of Filmographic Terms</i> and author of the chapter on cataloguing in the forthcoming <i>FIAF Handbook for Film Archives</i>)
Presentation Theme: The Role of Cataloguing |
| Rolf Lindfors | (Cinematket, Svenska Filminstitutet, Stockholm - editor of the forthcoming new edition of the Commission's <i>Bibliography of National Filmographies</i>)
Presentation Theme: Resources |
| Roger Smither | (Department of Film, Imperial War Museum, London - editor of the Commission's <i>Study on the Usage of Computers for Film Cataloguing</i> and author of <i>Evaluating Computer Cataloguing Systems</i>)
Presentation Theme: Standards and Systems |

The workshop leaders have all had experience with the implementation of computer systems, which they will be pleased to discuss in the context of the Workshop.

Participants

At the start of the Workshop, participants were invited to make a brief statement introducing themselves and their archives,

and explaining either the state of cataloguing in their archives or their main interest in attending the Workshop. In addition to the three Workshop leaders, the following were present:

Name	Archive
Sylvie Piskin	Cinémathèque Universitaire, Paris
Sunniva O'Flynn	Archive Section, Irish Film Institute, Dublin
M H Khoshnevis	Film-Khane-Ye Melli-E Iran, Tehran
Peter Konlechner	Österreichisches Filmmuseum, Wien
Catherine Gautier	Fimoteca Española, Madrid
Francisco Gonzalez	Anthology Film Archives, New York
Betty Kidd	National Archives of Canada, Ottawa
Dan Nissen	Det Danske Filmmuseum, København
Vesna Maslovaric	Cinémathèque of Macedonia, Skopje
Kaarle Stewen	Suomen Elokuva-Arkisto, Helsinki
Kirsi Rinne	Suomen Elokuva-Arkisto, Helsinki
Ildikó Berkes	Filmarchivum, Magyar Filmintezet, Budapest
Masatoshi Ohba	National Film Centre, Tokyo
Gudmundur K Björnsson	Kvikmyndasafn Islands, Reykjavik
Lia van Leer	Archion Israeli Leseratim, Jerusalem
Luis Rosario Albert	Archivo de Imagenes en Movimiento, Puerto Rico
Penpan Jarernporn	National Film Archive, Bangkok
Vittorio Boarini	Cineteca Comunale, Bologna
Savel Stiopul	Arhiva Nationala de Filme, Bucuresti
Enrique Planas	Filmoteca Vaticana

Discussions

Following the introductions and the presentations by the Workshop leaders (which included a re-statement of the Cataloguing Commission's approach to the question of the endorsement of any one computer system for film cataloguing), there was a lively discussion between participants which included the following topics:

- the question of computer standards, with regard both to cataloguing systems and the exchange of information between archives; in this context, the increasing speed and capacity as against the decreasing cost of micro-computers, the importance of output in a standard (ASCII ?) character set, and the erosion (by the evolution of WINDOWS software) of the difference between IBM PC and Apple Macintosh platforms were among the points noted;
- the various implications of different database models (hierarchical as distinct from relational) and the specific capabilities of certain packages, linked to the overwhelming primary importance of ensuring careful definition of the requirements and priorities of the individual archive that is acquiring the system;
- the importance of ensuring that computer software adopted in an archive is likely to have a long, stable and well-supported life (also noted, however, was the extreme

desirability of having in-house at least one member of staff familiar with the system and capable of its day-to-day upkeep);

- methodologies for providing subject access, including the various benefits and problems of classification systems such as Dewey or UDC, of natural language keywords and the availability of thesauri such as the Library of Congress subject headings and the Unesco Thesaurus, and of text retrieval;
- correct procedures for cataloguing films held in multiple versions when the only difference between the various versions was a change in the language of the commentary;
- procedures that could help ensure (or enforce) consistency of terminology or of spelling among cataloguers in an archive - for example, authority lists that could be enforced by a computer with varying degrees of fierceness; data entry via word-processors with spell-checkers, etc;
- problems caused to archives by the Anglo-American origins of most software packages - whilst obviously most severe for those needing to use a language (such as Farsi) which is not only not a user of Latin script but also does not use one of the major non-Latin scripts such as Arabic, Cyrillic etc, this problem affects cataloguing in virtually any language other than English, for example by the provision of so-called spell-checkers that will not accept (or data bases that will not correctly sort) words incorporating diacritics; the absence of a world-wide standard for the computer coding of letters with diacritics was also pointed out;
- the need for universally agreed standards for transliteration between various scripts, and for authoritative statements of original titles (and perhaps also of correct translations of original titles) in publications purporting to be national filmographies - for example the Japanese title commonly given in the English-speaking world as *A Page of Madness* is actually an incorrect translation.

The Workshop leaders expressed their gratitude to all the participants for what was agreed to have been a useful and interesting afternoon. The Commission has been much helped in its understanding of the needs of FIAF members and observers, and will reflect this in the content and presentation of its future work: it is hoped that other participants also found the Workshop useful.

Roger Smither
Cataloguing Commission