

UCLA FILM AND TELEVISION ARCHIVE

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To: Michelle Aubert
Archives du film du CNC
(33-1) 34 60 52 25
Mary Lea Bandy
Department of Film and Video, Museum of Modern Art
(1 212) 333-1173
Christian Dimitriu
FIAF (fiap@mail.interpac.be)
Roger Smither
Imperial War Museum
(44-171) 416 5379

From: Steven Ricci
Head of Research and Study
UCLA Film and Television Archive
Fax: 310-2063129 E-Mail: sricci@ucla.edu

Dear Friends,

As you know, the Executive Committee asked me to visit the Secretariat in order to assess how the office gathers, organizes and distributes electronic information. This November I was able to make a long weekend visit to Brussels and to take stock of the situation through extensive discussions with the staff; Christian, Sophie and Anthony. In addition, since Cathy S. was also visiting the office I had a chance to talk with her about some issues pertaining specifically to PIP.

Please note that most of the recommendations which follow are administrative in nature i.e. they require little or no additional resources in order to be implemented. I'm convinced that we can achieve most of these objectives by simply redirecting our focus and moving towards a few modest shifts in administrative structure. I look forward to discussing any and all of them with you.

Happy Holidays!

PIP/CD-ROM/DATABASES

1. Perhaps the single most troubling aspect of the current situation is that there is no ongoing oversight of the PIP/CD-ROM and related databases. As far as I can determine, virtually all major policy and planning decisions are made on an ad hoc basis, by the staff itself, and without much consultation of the EC. *In the strongest terms therefore, I recommend that the PIP/CD-ROM report unambiguously to the Cataloging and Documentation Commission on all issues of editorial policy and future planning.* As always, staff supervision should continue to be the responsibility of the Secretary General via the Senior Administrator of the Secretariat.

It should also be pointed out that the flip side of increased oversight is the possibility of increased advocacy. PIP/CD-ROM should therefore also be represented at the EC by a «rapporteur» from the Cataloging and Documentation Commission. This rapporteur will not only report on the activities of the PIP/CD-ROM, they will also clearly articulate their specific needs and challenges. I believe that this arrangement will also provide additional support for the PIP/CD-ROM initiatives. For example, PIP is in serious need of both additional indexers and proof-readers and at the moment there is no authoritative, convincing mechanism to arrange for additional volunteer help. The vast majority of the indexing continues to be conducted by the smallest number of committed individuals. In the past, requests for assistance could not benefit from the full weight and prestige of «FIAF» since PIP seemed to be administered as an autonomous operation. The PIP/CD-ROM rapporteur (probably be the Head of the Commission) should be charged to leverage additional support for these project *in the name of and on behalf of FIAF.*

2. The nature of information technologies has changed to the point where activities such as PIP/CD-ROM require ongoing, professional technical advice. Two recommendations here: First, we should proceed as swiftly as possible to hire the «replacement» for Michael Moulds. Second, in addition to the traditional library and scholarly skills, *the PIP/CD-ROM coordinator simply must have a serious knowledge of computer technologies.* At the very least, they must be fully conversant with a range of database and indexing software packages. The reasons for these criteria can be found in a cursory survey of the problems which PIP/CD-ROM currently face:

- there is no automated uploading of index entries. Currently many contributors index journals manually, type them into computers, print them out, send them to Anthony, and Anthony manually re-keys the entries.

- completely different software programs are used to organize the information which finds its way onto the CD-ROM.
 - the «FIAF» databases are kept in programs which the Secretariat doesn't have.
 - the most current version of the CD-ROM is in final production without either administrative or technical review and sign-off. In fact, there was no copy of the current CD-ROM (or even the constituent files) available for review in the Secretariat.
3. One of the most effective ways to increase sales of the CD-ROM is to further distinguish it from other, similar products. *I strongly recommend that we consider adding much more content to the FIAF CD-ROM.* First, the Cataloging and Documentation Commission could be asked to conduct a review of all FIAF publications (past journals, occasional papers, etc.) which would enrich the CD-ROM's identity. Some examples could include: The Rights Thing Symposium, glossary of filmographic terms, bibliography of national filmographies, Slapstick Symposium, etc. Second, the PIP/CD-ROM rapporteur could approach a series of FIAF-friendly entities to inquire if their publications might be included on our CD-ROM after their initial publication: Some examples could include: Griffithiana, programs from archive-supported festivals such as Le Giornate del Cinema Muto, Il Cinema Ritrovato, UCLA's Festival of Preservation, Cine Memoire, etc.
4. Investigate cost of CD-ROM recorder for the Secretariat; investigate current production costs and evaluate a Secretariat-based production.
5. Charge the Cataloging and Documentation Commission to aggressively seek additional PIP indexers especially in Asia.
6. Ask the Cataloging and Documentation Commission to evaluate potential sales of PIP/CD-ROM via Internet; investigate credit-card purchase mechanisms via FIAF web site.

The Secretariat remains unclear on the best procedures for the production of the JOURNAL. Some of the questions which I believe need to be answered as soon as possible are: Has a letter been sent to the Editor of the Journal explaining the purpose of the publications sub-committee? I see much room for potential misunderstanding if this isn't done expeditiously. At the same time, this sub-committee could help put into place streamlined production procedures, including:

- establishment of a standard style sheet for electronic submission of Journal essays
- final blue line should be approved by Editor or their designate; to ensure that sign off is for the copy and layout which actually goes to the printer, the Editor should have the same software used by the designer; the entire blue line could be sent as an attached e-mail file.

SECRETARIAT:

- computer backup files should be kept off site
- upgrade (double) memory on Christian and Sophie's machines (this will be needed sooner or later to run new software versions, price is very low now, so why wait...)
- investigate Internet connectivity via the University (this will be more reliable than the current connection will save \$200 monthly)
- register FIAF domain name «FIAF.Com, or .org» (this will resolve the single mailbox problems and provide a much more recognizable Internet address for FIAF). Once this is done, the Secretariat could then establish additional e-mail addresses for Sophie and PIP. In the meanwhile, the single mailbox should have a set of filters which direct e-mail to specific, relevant folders.
- buy subscription to network version of Netscape Anti-Virus program
- investigate the long term feasibility of making the current financial and accounting software compatible; this should be part of a long-term computer needs plan for the office.
- identify the all the file formats which are supported by IMIS; this is critical to know, for example, if we are going to be able to upload or download pre-packaged mailing lists.
- inventory and diagnosis of all computer diskettes currently in the office; many of these diskettes contain useful data (files, lists, address) but they are presently unreadable.

FIAF WEB SITE

The staff and I had very constructive conversations about the design modifications to the web site. What follows is an outline of its major components. Please note that some of the revisions are possible in the short run. Others still will have to be considered in light of available resources.

Home Page (i.e. select language page)

Activities. This should be a «news from FIAF section. Following the example of the Centennial Calendar, it will require a basic style sheet and someone to edit the content. This is still premature but I recommend we keep in mind as something which the Secretariat could do in the future. For the moment, it could include minimal entries such as the Congress Newsletters.

Directory. Maintains present structure.

Listserv. As previously discussed at the EC, we will deploy this un-moderated electronic discussion forum before the next Congress.

How to Join FIAF. This is a package of membership information and application procedures. I'm editing the package and will submit it to the EC for consideration in Prague.

Publications:

Journal of Film Preservation (back issues)

CD-ROM (promotion, how to order)

The Book Store (listing all available FIAF publications. We also want to have an electronic order form in the future.)