

SOIMA 2007

Safeguarding Sound and Image Collections

6-31 August, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

COURSE GLOSSARY I

AV ARCHIVING TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The following glossary is adapted from Ray Edmondson's monograph *Audiovisual Archiving: Philosophy and Principles* (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001364/136477e.pdf>), in which further details can be found. The numbers in brackets refer to the relevant sections of the text.

Physical descriptors (3.2.2)

The discrete physical items – whether discs, rolls of tape or film, cassettes and so on – are generically referred to as *carriers*. The particular type of material used – vinyl pressing, photographic film, videotape etc – is the *medium*. The typical collection contains a variety of *media* in various sizes, shapes, configurations – or *formats*.

Film refers in a physical sense to the perforated nitrate, acetate or polyester strip carrying sequential images and/or sound track. It refers also to the various forms of transparent negative or positive used in still photography.

Tape denotes the polyester strip with magnetized coating carrying audio and/or video information. It is used in a wide variety of open reel and cassette formats.

Disc or *disk* denotes the vast range of sound and/or image carrier formats developed over more than a century, ranging from the 78 rpm analog sound recording to current digital compact disc (CD) and digital video disc (DVD) formats.

Some *carriers* are best known by commonly understood or proprietary acronyms, like CD, CD-R, DVD, VCD, VCR or Compact Cassette.

Groups of related, technically identical carriers forming a cohesive whole – such as several reels of film comprising the complete picture negative of a feature film – are sometimes referred to as *elements* or *components*.

Conceptual descriptors (3.2.3)

There are several ways of describing moving images and recorded sounds in a conceptual sense. The nuances of particular terms vary with different countries, languages and institutions.

Audiovisual – 'directed at the faculties of seeing and hearing' – has gained increasing use as a convenient single word covering both moving images and recorded sounds of all kinds. It is the term adopted by UNESCO to draw together the separately originated fields of film, television and sound archiving, which have found increasing commonality through technological change.

Originally **document** applied to the written word – a recording of information, evidence, creative or intellectual activity. In the 20th century, especially in relation to audiovisual works, it has broadened to include the factual presentation of real events, activity, people and places – the *documentary* is a particular type of film, television or radio program. UNESCO's *Memory of the World* program recognizes that all documents, including audiovisual documents, have two components: the information **content** and the **carrier** on which it resides. Both are equally important.

Record is a related term and can equally apply to any medium or any format. As traditionally used in archival science it has the sense of lasting evidence of transactions, decisions, commitments or process, often in the form of unique original documents. Separately, it is also familiar shorthand for **sound recording** (gramophone record, phonograph record, pressing) – both the object and the verb.

Originating as the term for a clear cellulose nitrate support base carrying photographic emulsion (*photographic film*), **film** has accrued broader meanings evoking moving images in general as well as particular types of works, such as *feature films*, regardless of carrier. Television presentations use some filmic terms like *footage* and *filming*. Related terms like *cine*, *cinema*, *motion picture*, *moving image*, *screen*, and *video* to varying degrees share the same territory.

Sound is literally the sensation produced in the ear by vibration in the surrounding air. It can be recorded and played back to reproduce those sensations.

Broadcast denotes television and radio, irrespective of whether transmission is by air or by cable. Both media have in common the capability of live immediacy – for example, in news, current affairs, phone-in or interview programs – which is not, and cannot, be characteristic of studied creations like pop music recordings, feature films or documentary programs.

Video may denote an electronic (as opposed to photographic) moving image displayed on a television or computer screen, or be shorthand for a related medium or format, such as *video recording*, *videotape* or *videocassette*.

Special materials, non-book, non-text and similar terms are commonly used to identify audiovisual carriers in the parlance of libraries and sometimes traditional archives. From the point of view of the audiovisual archivist these are not useful terms because they are not descriptive. They describe carriers by *what they are not*, rather than *what they are* (2.1.7)

Preservation and access (3.2.6)

Preservation may be defined as the **totality of things necessary to ensure the permanent accessibility – forever – of an audiovisual document with the maximum integrity**. Potentially, it embraces many processes, principles, attitudes, facilities and activities. These may include *conservation* and *restoration* of the carrier, *reconstruction* of a definitive version, *copying* and *processing* of the visual and/or sonic content, *maintenance* of the carriers within appropriate storage environments, *recreation* or *emulation* of obsolete technical processes, equipment and presentation environments, research and information gathering to support these activities.

For historical reasons the term is widely used – even by archivists – simply as a synonym for copying or duplication. This unfortunately tends to reinforce the misleading idea that making a new copy from a threatened carrier is the end of the story when, in fact, it is only the beginning. Preservation is not a discrete process, but rather a never-ending management task. How well the recording or film survives in the long term – if it survives at all – will be determined by the quality and rigour of that process, under a succession of management regimes, into the indefinite future. Nothing has ever *been* preserved – at best, it is *being* preserved!

Access is correspondingly also a term of great scope. It means any form of use of an archive's collection, services or knowledge, including playback in real time of sound and moving image holdings and reference to sources of information about sound and moving image holdings and the subject areas they represent. It can be *proactive* (initiated by the institution itself) or *reactive* (initiated by users of the institution). A subsequent stage may be the provision of copies of selected material created to the client's order.

Key concepts (3.3)

Audiovisual documents – the recordings, films, programs etc as defined below - are part of a larger concept which can be styled as the **audiovisual heritage**. The connotations and scope of this concept vary across cultures, countries and institutions, but its essence is that audiovisual archives need to *contextualise* their holdings of recordings, programs and films by collecting or nurturing a range of associated items, information and skills. The following definition is proposed:

The **audiovisual heritage** includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) Recorded sound, radio, film, television, video or other productions comprising moving images and/or recorded sounds, whether or not primarily intended for distribution to the public
- (b) Objects, materials, works and intangibles relating to audiovisual documents, whether seen from a technical, industrial, cultural, historical or other viewpoint; this shall include material relating to the film, broadcasting and recording industries, such as literature, scripts, stills, posters, advertising materials, manuscripts, and artefacts such as technical equipment or costumes
- (c) Concepts such as the perpetuation of obsolescent skills and environments associated with the reproduction and presentation of these media.
- (d) Non-literary or graphical material, such as photographs, maps, manuscripts, slides and other visual works, selected in their own right

Accordingly, the following is advanced as a *professional* definition of **audiovisual documents**:

Audiovisual documents are works comprising reproducible images and/or sounds embodied in a carrier whose

- *recording, transmission, perception and comprehension usually requires a technological device*
- *visual and/or sonic content has linear duration*
- *purpose is the communication of that content, rather than use of the technology for other purposes*

The term **work** implies an entity resulting from a deliberate intellectual act, and it could be argued that not all films, video or sound recordings have deliberate intellectual content or intent - for example, a sound recording of a streetscape, whose content is incidental.

The notion that an audiovisual work can only be made and perceived diachronically - over a lapse of time - is difficult to define, especially when the work may be perceived as part of a website. Nevertheless, image and sound recordings, no matter how short, are by their nature linear. They cannot be perceived instantaneously.¹

¹ This definition does not have precise edges! It is meant to decisively *include* conventional sound and video recordings, moving images (sound or silent) and broadcast programs, both published and unpublished, in all formats. It is meant to decisively *exclude* text material per se, regardless of the medium used (whether paper, microform, digital formats, graphics or projection slides, etc. - the distinction is conceptual rather than technological, although to a large extent a technological divide exists as well.) *It is also meant to exclude the popular connotation of the term media* which includes newspapers as well as broadcasting. Radio and television programs - including news programs - would, of course, be *included* within the definition of audiovisual media.

Sitting between these two groups is a spectrum of materials and works which may or may not fully meet the above definition. These include photographs, multimedia/ CD ROM, piano rolls and mechanical music, and the traditional tape-slide 'audiovisual'. CD ROMs, video games, websites, and other digital creations are, by definition, non-linear in their construction.

Cultural variations mean that in some countries the term *audiovisual* connotes a very wide range of non-literary visual media including maps, photographs, manuscripts, websites and other imagery, collected both in their own right and as material relating to audiovisual documents.

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COURSE GLOSSARY II

AV ARCHIVING TERMS AND CONCEPTS-PARTICIPANTS' CONTRIBUTION

This document contains terminology contributed by the course participants. Words and terminology adopted in new technical fields can be confusing at first. This is especially true for terms related with conservation and use of sound and image records. Thus, in preparation of the course, Participants were invited to share and define the most common terms they use in their job for identification, documentation and preservation of audiovisual records. Furthermore, those participants who speak English as a foreign language were invited to identify words used in this field that they find difficult to translate in their respective native languages. Some of the terms were just mentioned, others were actually defined. This document collects all these definitions. Where applicable, definitions from the Course Glossary of Terms-I are given as a reference, which has been excerpted from: *Audiovisual Archiving: Philosophy and Principles*, Paris: UNESCO, 2004. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001364/136477e.pdf>.

We are very thankful to the following PARTICIPANTS for their contribution:

Vivian Spoliansky (Museo Etnográfico "Juan B. Ambrosetti", Argentina), Junia Guimaraes E Silva (Arquivo General da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) and Vynns Wharwood (National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago).

Terms in Spanish from Argentina

1. Acceso (Access): all the means that the archives provide for the intellectual and physical use of the materials.

Course Glossary of Terms I: Access means any form of use of an archive's collection, services or knowledge, including playback in real time of sound and moving image holdings and reference to sources of information about sound and moving image holdings and the subject areas they represent. It can be proactive (initiated by the institution itself) or reactive (initiated by users of the institution). A subsequent stage may be the provision of copies of selected material created to the client's order.

2. Almacenamiento (Storage) - includes the space where the records are kept in terms of facilities and their environmental conditions and may include the individual housing enclosures that protect the records.

3. Digitalización (Digitisation) - strategy implemented by archives in order to preserve and grant access to moving images materials

4. Formato (Gauge): the standard format of the moving image or audiovisual records. It involves both the dimensions of the support and the materials that compose the support

5. Restauración (Restoration) - digital manipulation performed to the digital surrogate of the audiovisual record in order to enhance the image and/or sound to improve access to the audiovisual record.

6. Soporte (Carrier): support of the moving image or audiovisual records

Course Glossary of Terms I: the discrete physical items – whether discs, rolls of tape or film, cassettes and so on – are generically referred to as **carriers**.

7. Síndrome del Vinagre (Vinegar Syndrome)- chemical deterioration of the acetate carrier, which due to the emanation of acid gases is highly pollutant

Terms in Portuguese from Brazil

1. Documentos audiovisuais (Audiovisual records): any form of record that contains moving or still images or sound, such as film reels, video, and sound recordings.

Course Glossary of Terms I: Audiovisual documents are works comprising reproducible images and/or sounds embodied in a carrier whose

- recording, transmission, perception and comprehension usually requires a technological device,
- visual and/or sonic content has linear duration,
- purpose is the communication of that content, rather than use of the technology for other purposes.

2. Documentos filmográficos (Moving image): any form of record that contains different types of moving images, with or without sound, such as films and videomagnetic tapes.

Related words *Filme*: Film of discrete images, which projected one after another, to create the illusion of movement. moving image, motion picture, movie, cinefilm, cinematograph film, film records – sequence

Course Glossary of Terms I: Originating as the term for a clear cellulose nitrate support base carrying photographic emulsion (*photographic film*), **film** has accrued broader meanings evoking moving images in general as well as particular types of works, such as *feature films*, regardless of carrier. Television presentations use some filmic terms like *footage* and *filming*. Related terms like *cine*, *cinema*, *motion picture*, *moving image*, *screen*, and *video* to varying degrees share the same territory.

3. Documento especial (Special document): group of documents that use non-textual language, in any non-conventional medium, or, if it's a paper document, its format and exceptional dimensions requires specific procedures for its technical processing, custody or preservation, and which the access depends on often technological intermediation.

4. Documentos iconográficos (Iconographic records): iconographic archives include images in many different formats, including prints, paintings, drawings, and photographs.

5. Documentos sonoros (Sound recordings): any form of record that contains different types of sound recordings.

Related words: tapes, sound tapes, audiotapes, and audio-magnetic tapes

Course Glossary of Terms I:

Sound is literally the sensation produced in the ear by vibration in the surrounding air. It can be recorded and played back to reproduce those sensations.

Tape denotes the polyester strip with magnetized coating carrying audio and/or video information. It is used in a wide variety of open reel and cassette formats

6. Espécie (Species): part of the documentary gender that put together document types for its format.

7. Formato (Format): a group of documents that contains a variety of media in various sizes, shapes, configurations.

Course Glossary of Terms I: A typical collection contains a variety of **media** in various sizes, shapes, configurations – or **formats**

8. Género documental (Documentary gender): Group of documents that presents the same characteristics, particularly the medium and the format, such as textual documents, iconographic documents, cartographic documents, audiovisual documents, electronic documents, micrographic documents.

9. Suporte (Medium): the particular type of material in which the information is registered.

Course Glossary of Terms I: The discrete physical items – whether discs, rolls of tape or film, cassettes and so on – are generically referred to as **carriers**. The particular type of material used – vinyl pressing, photographic film, videotape etc – is the **medium**.

10. Videomagnetic tape - form of record that contains a particular type of moving images recorded on videomagnetic tape.

Terms in English from Trinidad and Tobago

1. Audiovisual: relating to sound and vision, especially when combined, for example, in a presentation using both film and sound recording

Course Glossary of Terms I: Audiovisual- 'directed at the faculties of seeing and hearing' – has gained increasing use as a convenient single word covering both moving images and recorded sounds of all kinds. It is the term adopted by UNESCO to draw together the separately originated fields of film, television and sound archiving, which have found increasing commonality through technological change.

2. Acquisition : act of acquiring something

3. Digitization: to convert an image, graph, or other data into digital form for processing on a computer

4. Copyright : the legal right of creative artists or publishers to control the use and reproduction of their original works

5. Conservation : it is closely tied to preservation but it is the practice of saving of an irreplaceable object from total extinction

6. Quality: the general standard or grade of something

7. Preservation: is the intending/prolonging the usefulness, originality or beauty of an almost obsolete/defunct object, sense, idea, environment or life.

Course Glossary of Terms I: Preservation may be defined as the totality of things necessary to ensure the permanent accessibility – forever – of an audiovisual document with the maximum integrity. Potentially, it embraces many processes, principles, attitudes, facilities and activities. These may include *conservation* and *restoration* of the carrier, *reconstruction* of a definitive version, *copying* and *processing* of the visual and/or sonic content, *maintenance* of the carriers within appropriate storage environments, *recreation* or *emulation* of obsolete technical processes, equipment and presentation environments, research and information gathering to support these activities.

For historical reasons the term is widely used – even by archivists – simply as a synonym for copying or duplication. This unfortunately tends to reinforce the misleading idea that making a new copy from a threatened carrier is the end of the story when, in fact, it is only the beginning. Preservation is not a discrete process, but rather a never-ending management task.

8. Risk: the danger that injury, damage, or loss will occur

9. Standards: the level of quality or excellence that is accepted as the norm or by which actual attainments are judged