

A LETTER FROM IASA'S PRESIDENT

Patrick Midtlyng, Library of Congress, USA

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Dear IASA Community,

Hello again! To start, I would like to sincerely thank everyone who provided feedback following the conference in Valencia and in the lead-up to this year's conference, including those who participated in the survey on safety concerns. There have been several unanticipated challenges that have threatened our ability to hold a conference in the United States, and the Executive Board has been committed to exploring every possible avenue to ensure the safety of our members.

I'm thrilled that the conference is moving forward with only minimal changes. This September's event at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa features thematic streams on the preservation of climate-impacted media and intersections of climate, culture, and marginalized identities. The programme for this conference is outstanding, and I hope that many of you will be able to attend in person or online.

It has been 17 years since the IASA conference was held in Sydney, Australia, and 25 years since the joint SEAPAVAA event in Singapore. A return to the Asia-Pacific region, and the opportunity to reconnect with SEAPAVAA, were both highly desired. I am grateful to the IASA Executive Board and the SEAPAVAA Executive Council for working hard to make this possible.

At the Singapore Conference in 2000, Presidents Ray Edmondson (SEAPAVAA) and Crispin Jewitt (IASA) introduced three resolutions that addressed the shared and long-ranging vision of the partnership between their organizations and our partners in the CCAAA:

- 1) IASA and SEAPAVAA believe there is an urgent need to develop the CCAAA as an effective coordinating body for the strategic development of the global audiovisual archiving sector. Both associations are keen to play an active and appropriate role within this Council, and urge UNESCO to afford it due support and recognition on a par with existing levels of support for the libraries, archives, and museums peak bodies.
- 2) IASA and SEAPAVAA support the principle of the adequate and equitable development of audiovisual archiving skills and infrastructure in all countries of the world. The audiovisual memory of the 21st century should be truly and equitably reflective of all nations and cultures; the failures of the 20th century to secure this memory in many parts of the world must not be repeated. This principle is consistent with the development of mutual support and encouragement which are part of the *raison d'être* of both associations.
- 3) IASA and SEAPAVAA recognise that the emerging profession of audiovisual archiving now requires the recognition and availability of formal professional training at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This will improve options for the personal development of existing practitioners and it will also open the way for young people to pursue a long term career in the profession. Both organisations encourage the development of existing and future programs to this end.

As we mark the 25th anniversary of these resolutions, I find it remarkable to reflect on how far we've come, yet how far we still have to go. The "Singapore Declaration" is both a challenge to do better, and a recognition that doing so requires us to be better stewards of our resources and better caretakers of our collections, our knowledge and ourselves.

We've seen a rise in the professionalization of many aspects of audiovisual archiving, but the establishment of formal preservation programs still lag behind our collections' needs. IASA's Education and Training Committee has worked tirelessly to help build infrastructure and skill sets around the world and is a model for effective collaboration, promoting AV education, and building hands-on experience.

Technological advancements have made the adoption of "Good, Better, and Best" practices more obtainable than ever. However, the framing of best practice as the *only* acceptable practice has introduced unnecessary tensions. I appreciated the recent, wide-ranging exchange on the IASA listserv concerning preservation strategies, global realities, equipment obsolescence, storage conditions, and practical limitations across different regions. It was precisely the kind of conversation we should be having more of: intentional, insightful, and collegial. Revisiting past guidance in light of new developments and refocusing our efforts on practical, achievable results without judgment will certainly advance our work.

Lastly, in putting together the plenary on the anniversary of the Singapore Declaration, I learned that Mr. Jewitt passed earlier this summer. Albrecht Häfner, who was Secretary General during Mr. Jewitt's presidential tenure commented on learning the news, "[Crispin] was a quiet, unassuming, disciplined leader, with careful decisions" and that the resolutions were "proof for Crispin's farsightedness." Christopher Clark, former IASA Editor who also worked with Mr. Jewitt at the British Library, offers his own tribute in this issue.

Best wishes,
Patrick Midtlyng
IASA President
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