

“Let there be more light”: the ICA-PAAG short Guide series

This is not a new revival of the Pink Floyd popular song but a new resource for archivists around the world who have responsibilities in the audiovisual field. The ICA-PAAG short Guide series project aims to create guides for archival use in order to offer a general approach to different subjects concerning photographic and audiovisual materials. This melody sounds nice, but let us start at the beginning to better understand why ICA is publishing these guides.

It is a fact that words and images are not produced in separate contexts. In each period of our history, texts, graphics, photographic and audiovisual records are produced, sometimes by the same authors. As a consequence, it is evident that archives hold this whole variety of

record types simultaneously, in multiple formats and at many different levels of organization, preservation and access. Fully aware of this reality, ICA decided to create a Working Group with the mission to establish the general guidelines for undertaking actions on photographic and audiovisual collections, offer work-tools to archivists for carrying out their duties, promote activities and educational resources, and create a virtual space for inter-professional communication and the diffusion of resources.

With nine specialist archivists in the field of photography and audiovisuals, the Photographic and Audiovisual Archives Working Group (PAAG) started its activity in 2010, the same year that a specific site in the ICA website was created: www.ica.org/5074/about-photographic-and-audiovisual-archives-group/about-photographic-and-audiovisual-archives-working-group.html

For four years we have been working on

the creation of new resources for the website. We created a download page for some publications and papers that are of interest for archivists managing photograph and film collections. These are materials that can rarely be found elsewhere. We also made a selection of basic bibliography and website links and we created a chronology of photographic and audiovisual media. This is a double product: first, a poster where you can view simultaneously the chronology of the most remarkable events in the evolution of photography, film, television and video, and sound; second, an electronic resource available through the website with the information contained on the poster, expanded with more text and images (it also includes amateur film chronology). There are versions in four languages of both poster and website: English, French, Catalan and Spanish. The chronology was distributed on the occasion of the World Day for

Audiovisual Heritage on 27 October 2011: www.girona.cat/web/sgdap/cat/CRDI_Cronologies/angles

Nevertheless the main activity of the Group is focused on the different projects we have been working on since 2010: the Survival Kit, the Case Studies and the short Guides Series www.ica.org/6896/activities-and-projects. The Survival Kit has been the pilot project that, in accordance with the mission and goals set out,

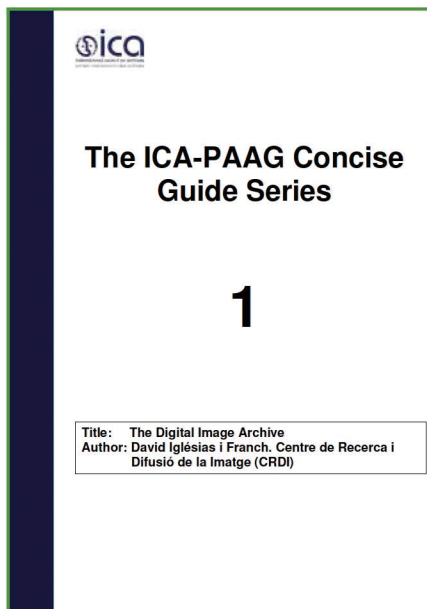
has directed the work of the PAAG. It aimed to provide basic resources for all those archivists who face the challenge of dealing with and organizing photographic and audiovisual material. So when faced with the question “What do I need to know to perform an appropriate archival operation on photographic or audiovisual records?” archivists will be able to find a series of resources that will greatly facilitate their work.

The second project was the Case Studies. The aim was to provide real examples from specialized centres in photography and audiovisuals that could be useful for the archival community. So, to the question “What are other people’s experiences in describing, conserving or digitizing specific material with particular issues?” archivists might find an answer in those case studies.

Last but not least, what we reported first: the ICA-PAAG short Guide series project, funded under the PCOM programme. Up to now, 3 guides have already been published on our website. They have been translated into four languages: Catalan, Spanish, English and French. The guides are: guide 1, *Digital Image Archive*, by David Iglésias; Guide 2, *Digital Video Archive*, by Pau Saavedra;

Guide 3, *Management of Photographic Repositories*, by Josep Pérez.

We need more involvement from our colleagues in order to provide our website with more content, to increase the existing number of proposals and to develop new projects for professional archivists. Our last goal is to create a professional network with people from the photographic and audiovisual field. People are willing to share their knowledge, doubts and experiences with archivists around the world, but, first of all, archivists need to believe in this group and in these projects. As the lyrics say: “Now, now, now is the time, time / Time to be, be, be aware”.



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