



DIGITAL PRODUCTION CHALLENGE II

Digitisation and Archiving in Europe (with a focus on France)

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Summary

(for details see [Digitalisation and Archiving: The Big Issue](#) [.ppsx] and [Digital Preservation in Europe](#) [.pptx])

At the end of 2011: the American continent had 25.000 screens in digital, Europe 20.000, Asia 16.000 and the rest of the world 5.000. By the end of 2012, 90% of the French screens will be digitised. 4 countries are already fully digitised: Norway, the Netherlands, Luxemburg and Hong Kong.

In terms of production, there is the same evolution with an increasing number of films being produced in digital. Over the period of January-September 2012, only 16% of film projects were shot on 35mm. In France, the market for positive film has declined by 81% between 2011 and 2012. Nevertheless, Kodak has launched a new range of film internegative for long term preservation (50 years).

Some countries have been developing new funds dedicated to digitisation and restoration of movies such as in France with the “Grand Emprunt”, a loan targeted at private film companies to digitalise films produced before 2000. This fund is also open to European producers, distributors and laboratories that work with French companies.

But the issue is that there is no long term guarantee of preservation of films on digital format. Many technical elements have short term or limited archiving lifespan such as: a hard drive disk, 5 years; a LTO, 10 to 15 years; even the new ODA (Optical Disk Archive) by Sony, 50 years.

US Majors are trying to reach a consensus on a standard digital file format for sharing and preserving movies.

Nevertheless, the best to do in digital is a digital master at the end of post-production in an uncompressed format as DPX or OpenEX, following an interoperable format (IMF) as DCDM and a tape storage current standard as TAR or LTFS. In France, the CNC has recently changed their conditions for films being supported by the fund: now producers need to have **a legal deposit of their movies in 35mm!**

Thus, there is an urgent need of standardisation in archiving.

It thus means that digital motion picture materials require an **active, continued management of digital material/data for secured, long term preservation**, especially: maintenance of hard drive disks, regular migration of contents tape to tape (a long process), rapid obsolescence of the machines.



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Besides, there is also no guarantee of access to materials in the case of bankruptcy by a service company. For example, in France, the recent disappearing of Quinta Industries Group pushed film institutions and professional associations of producers to discuss rules (such as contracts requiring “re-materialisation” of content in case of bankruptcy danger ahead) or at least good practices to improve the security of material for films, at production, post-production and preservation stages.

One important consequence of digital archiving is that digital storage of a movie is more expensive after 10 years than the equivalent storage in 35mm. At the same time, the level of revenues of a movie 3 to 4 years after its theatrical release decreases rapidly and significantly. In this context, producers and distributors have to decide an archiving strategy regarding the cost of preserving film materials and securing their financial benefits.

It is clear that archiving is an urgent, key issue. The technical and political agendas are busy, both at a European and international level, to bring effective solutions.