European Board of National Archivists (EBNA)
The National Archives, Kew, 17-18 November 2005

Transcript of the Conference

"European Archives: Forming Partnerships in the Digital Age"

Natalie Ceeney, who took over as Chief Executive of The National Archives (TNA) in October 2005, expressed her determination to build on the success achieved by her predecessor, Sarah Tyacke, and to continue modernising The National Archives in partnership with different organisations.

Ms. Ceeney stated that the history of TNA in UK (which resulted from the merger of the Public Record Office and the Historical Manuscripts Commission) has been one of a transformation of a records repository into a service-oriented organisation. However, this metamorphosis would not be possible without the invaluable collaboration of external partners and without a deep understanding of the changes that affect the way archives are stored and accessed.

The Chief Executive of TNA highlighted four main challenges the institution is facing nowadays:

1. **Users' needs are changing**: Search engines, for example Google, are democratising information access and research. Users expect information to be free, simple, online and, increasingly, accessible via mobile appliances.

2. **Technology drives users' needs:** There's a massive amount of work required by National Archives to make information accessible to different users and in different formats.

3. **National Archives faces external competition:** With the proliferation of the internet, users want to research information irrespective of the sources (these include search engines, websites and weblogs). Ms. Ceeney believed that, instead of being an obstacle, this development represented an enormous opportunity to maximise the public exposure of TNA. As an example, she referred to the fact that TNA's Family Records website is on the top of Google's index when users search for "family history".

4. **The political environment is increasingly focusing on transparency:** UK's Freedom of Information Act and the European Directive on Transparency are two examples of governmental actions towards better governance and transparency. In practical terms, this means that citizens have the right to request the disclosure of classified information held by public institutions. On the other hand, the ministerial and parliamentary demand of "value for money" spurs National Archives to demonstrate the practical benefits of the services they provide.

In the wake of these challenges, TNA is adopting a set of measures aimed at better meeting public demand:

1. **Widening user access through digitisation of online archives.** Natalie Ceeney mentioned that the TNA partnered with private organisations to ensure that highly demanding accessibility requirements are met. She explained that this approach allowed TNA to negotiate lower prices with suppliers and meet users' needs in a more effective manner. As an example, the Chief Executive of TNA highlighted the success of the Access to Archives

(A2A) initiative, which allows users to access metadata from archives held across England.

2. **Promoting and reinforcing TNA's brand.** TNA has partnered with commercial institutions to ensure effective corporate communication via traditional media (brochures, leaflets, press-releases) and new media (e.g. through search engine optimisation). Ms. Ceeney pointed out that the success of these initiatives was the result of TNA's experience in archival issues allied to the practical know-how of marketing companies on corporate branding and customer needs' assessment.

3. **Investing in technology.** TNA's action is twofold: investing in a 'seamless flow' digital preservation programme (governmental proceedings > metadata > preservation) and in online access to information (24/7 services and search engine optimisation).

4. **Responding proactively to political demands.** The Freedom of Information Act means that TNA has to review requests from the public to disclose previously classified information. In addition, TNA has been actively involved in raising the profile of records and archives management in public administration.

Natalie Ceeney also mentioned that TNA has been working with European partners to promote the DLM Forum, monitor the impact of EU Directives and advise on best practices for record management and archival networks. Ms. Ceeney took this opportunity to unveil a new section on TNA's website containing translations in German, Spanish and French of best practice guidelines on managing digital records and The National Archives Standard for Record Repositories, which is the UK's benchmark for preserving and providing access to records in publicly accessible archives.

The URL is: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/interactivity/?source=ddmenu_services8

Progress on the European Report

Frank Brady
European Commission

The highlight of this presentation was the announcement of the approval of the *Council Recommendation on priority actions to increase cooperation in the field of archives in Europe* by the EU Council on Monday 14th November 2005. This recommendation is based on the *Report on Archives in the Enlarged European Union*, which examined the situation of public archives in an enlarged European Union. The approval of this recommendation also paves the way for the establishment of the European Archives Group (EAG).

The Council recommendation sets up five priority areas that will be addressed by working groups to be created within the EAG:

1. **Preservation and damage prevention for archives in Europe.**

2. **Reinforcement of European interdisciplinary cooperation on electronic documents and archives.**

3. **Creation and maintenance of an Internet Gateway to documents and archives in Europe.**

4. **EU and national legislation relevant to management and access to documents and archives.**

5. **Theft of archival documents.**

Mr. Brady mentioned that these procedures were extremely important because, in many cases, governments tended to resemble "usines de papier" (paper factories): records of proceedings weren't looked after carefully and important documents couldn't often be found.

The representative of the European Commission mentioned that the approval of the Council Recommendation was a major step forward.No new budgetary resources by either the EU or the Member States would be committed. Mr. Brady tried to assure the delegates that, despite this fact, EU Commission would be prepared to help, namely through directing projects within these five priorities to European programmes where funding was available.

With regards to EAG, Frank Brady mentioned that this group will comprise experts designated by the Member States and the institutions of the European Union. The EU will establish and chair the group and provide the secretariat. The first meeting of the EAG is scheduled to take place in Spring 2006 in Brussels. After three years, the EAG will present a progress report to the Council of the European Union on the implementation of the priority measures. Frank Brady mentioned that the EAG shall have a vision of cooperation with other countries (e.g. USA, Australia) and institutions (e.g. ICA).

When questioned about the composition of the EAG working groups, Mr. Brady, who will chair EAG, raised no objections to the continuation of the five working groups that already exist within EBNA, stating that it wasn't his intention to "reinvent the wheel".

Other delegates expressed concerns about the funding of particular projects, namely of competence centres. Mr. Brady referred that the EU Commission will want to see the results of the five working groups before agreeing to any funding. The representative of the European Commission reiterated that his mission would be to facilitate and coordinate the tasks of the working groups and guaranteed that within 3 years there will be concrete actions regarding the five priority areas.

Taking the European Report Forward – Updates from the Five Working Groups

"Disaster Prevention for Archives"

Hartmut Weber
President of the Bundesarchiv

Hartmut Weber spoke about the noxious consequences caused by natural disasters, namely fires, earthquakes, armed conflicts and floods, and the practical measures adopted in Germany to face them. In this context, Mr. Weber recalled the floods on the Elbe River (which affected Germany, Czech Republic and Poland) mentioning that polluted water, rather than water on its own, is the main factor responsible for damages inflicted on archives.

The President of the Bundesarchiv also referred to the recommendations of the *Report on the Archives in the Enlarged EU*, in particular to the development of an action plan to handle and prevent disasters; the establishment of a European network for disaster prevention and management; the elaboration of a feasibility study to establish four competence centres for cross-border disaster relief and the creation of emergency teams.

Hartmut Weber mentioned that adequate planning and designing should be behind the establishment of any archival institution. Mr. Weber explained that public bodies must be ready to answer questions on how archives should be designed so as to ensure there are useful facilities nearby that can minimise the impact of a possible catastrophe.

Discussing the crucial aspects of the action plan to handle and prevent disasters, Professor Weber mentioned that it should focus on providing preventive measures for buildings and infrastructures without neglecting the concrete actions to handle archival assets and the proper training of specialist and support staff. He considered that the scope of such an action plan should be broad enough to apply to different types of archives and even to libraries.

With regards to the European network for disaster prevention, Professor Weber explained that it should consist of information on best practices on how to handle an emergency situation, (including a detailed checklist) and of a comprehensive register of relevant experts, equipment and facilities near the emergency site (these would include refrigerated warehouses, freeze-drying plants, vacuum drying or mould-removal plants).

Mr. Weber mentioned that his working group forecast that the establishment of four competence centres for cross-border disaster relief would cost approximately 2.6 million euros. He added that the integrated network of the four centres should include legal experts (to help with cross-border issues) and insurance teams. The creation of emergency teams, within the scope of the competence centres, would ensure that any site issues would be identified and resolved accordingly.

The President of the Bundesarchiv illustrated the practical benefits of the above mentioned approach by referring to the measures currently being adopted in Germany. He explained that

Germany has an area-wide disaster prevention organisation in individual *Länder*, collaborative archive-to--archive disaster prevention in the Berlin region and the brand-new NORA Emergency Register Archives project.

The NORA project consists of an IT application which stores information about federal archives, including name, location, competence, description of building, description and age of the archive, characteristics of the archive, name and location of the experts in charge of the archive and emergency resources in the nearby. This information is regularly exchanged with the Federal Agency for Civil Defence and Disaster Relief so that the civil protection can act quickly and systematically whenever necessary.

When asked by the audience about the applicability of such measures to other institutions (e.g. museums and libraries), Mr. Weber expressed reservations about the integration of libraries in such a scheme because, as he said, in Germany these institutions have no common structure.

Taking the European Report Forward – Updates from the Five Working Groups

"DLM Forum – Revising MoReq: A report on the Scoping of MoReq2"

Richard Blake
Head of the Records Management Advisory Service – The National Archives UK

This presentation reflected on the impact of MoReq (model requirements for the management of electronic records) and on the pertinence of a revision in the light of social and technological changes. Richard Blake recalled the main premise behind MoReq, namely ensuring that the records needing preservation would be duly identified and that adequate measures would be taken so as to create records that kept the same integrity and usability as the original. Mr. Blake also emphasised the invaluable role of the DLM Forum in establishing a strategic network (comprising 25 European archives and numerous academic and IT organisations) and facilitating technology and knowledge transfer.

Richard Blake mentioned that a revision of MoReq was needed in order to reflect the technological advances and to develop extended functional requirements within a European context. Mr. Blake also emphasised the need for a compliance testing scheme to benchmark software products against the standards set out by MoReq.

On the other hand, as Mr. Blake stated, MoReq2 should introduce more flexibility, recognising the unique requirements of different countries under the proposed "Chapter 0" (Country Rules) and provide optional models for different environments. He also suggested that areas for improvement include the controls on access to facilities (base modules need to be as credible and granular as possible: *who needs to have access to what, when and where*); retention schedules and disposal (which material is suitable for archiving); export and transfer; preservation; and metadata (including digital signatures).

The optional modules currently under discussion are as follows:

- Content Management Systems (there is a need to define the parameters of quality CMS);

- Management of non-electronic records and hybrid files;

- Workflow and case-work (there is a need to define what type of information needs to be abstracted from workflow and case-work processes);

- Document management and collaborative working (what type of information needs to be archived);

- Encryption and watermarking;

- Interoperability and openness (how to ensure different platforms communicate with each other and how to avoid Microsoft dependency);

- Distributed systems

Mr. Blake also announced further actions to be carried out by DLM Forum, namely the development of a compliance testing regime and the export and transfer methods. The publication of MoReq2 and the subsequent start of compliance testing are scheduled for 2007.

Taking the European Report Forward – Updates from the Five Working Groups
"EU Internet Gateway / Portal"
Bill Stockting
Senior Editor for the Access to Archives (A2A) Programme

Bill Stockting reviewed the purpose and structure of the Internet Gateway proposed under the Priority Action 3 of the Report on Archives in the enlarged European Union. Mr. Stockting also discussed issues associated with the creation of international gateways taking into consideration recent professional initiatives.
He mentioned that the creation of a central access point to all published archival description would bring benefits to the public (by democratising access and enhancing awareness of European heritage) and to archivists (by enabling networking and knowledge share).

At the centre of such a model would be a Union Finding Aid (cross-searching) with links to national and / or local services and to digitised images of archives. The Union Finding Aid would be backed by Online (links to databases and websites) and Offline (references to printed resources) Finding Aids. The Gateway should then be built up incrementally with galleries of digital images of significant historical documents, general information on repositories and have a component of e-learning (e.g. explaining users how to read archives).

Mr. Stocking recalled the conclusions of the Research Libraries Group International Archival Gateways Meeting (Kew, May 2005), which discussed the nature of interoperability and issues of the development of gateways in an international context, namely:

- **The user-centric nature of such a gateway** (knowing who the users are and providing them with quality services).

- **Adoption of ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF)** for the description of the archives and their context.

- **Adoption of XML data structure** for the online presentation and interoperability of archival data (EAD for the archives; EAC for the content; EAG for archive repositories and METS for the encoding of Digital Images).

- **Digital finding aids and versions of the archives** which implies mass retroconversion (e.g. initiatives like Access to Archives in the UK) and cataloguing databases or XML-based systems

- **Technical architectures based on distributed systems** where the gateway gains access to metadata created and managed by archival institutions.

- **Culture / language, leadership / partnership and funding** are still issues to be resolved.

Delegates enquired about the search of metadata in real-time, the possibility (and adequacy) of a business-orientated structure for the gateway and the pertinence of its scope as outlined in the *Report*.

Bill Stockting replied that searching metadata in real-time is a possibility but not yet a reality (everything would depend on the favourable evolution of the distributed systems). With regards to the business model of the Internet gateway, he admitted that it would be difficult to find a model where the portal would pay for itself (and certainly impossible when it comes to accessing catalogue information). However there were cases where it was appropriate to come forward with a business model for such a gateway, mentioning the example of TNA's website, where the access to metadata is completely free of charge but the download of archives (e.g. in image format) is paid.

He also recognised that significant changes have occurred since the report was drafted and that the scope of the gateway should be revised. Some delegates suggested that, instead of a holistic approach, the project should start with the resources currently available and grow in an incremental manner. This approach, it was agreed, would also facilitate the definition of priorities for financing the project.

Taking the European Report Forward – Updates from the Five Working Groups

"Legal Database / Watchdog Function"

Martine de Boisdeffre – Director of the French Archives
Christine Martinez – Manager of the French Association of Archivists Training Centre

This presentation provided an update on the progress of the project of a European legal database (EURBICA), which was presented at the Vienna Congress and in the EBNA meeting that took place during the Dutch Presidency of the EU.

Martine de Boisdeffre mentioned that this project is being carried out in a collaborative basis and consists of three "circles" of cooperation:

1. **An experts group works on the content and structure of the database** (Finland, France, Switzerland and United Kingdom)

2. **A second circle of four countries provides information** according to the rules and models established by the experts group (Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Turkey).

3. **EURBICA member countries will provide information on national legislation** which will be placed in the countries' pages within the website.

The Director of the French Archives mentioned that funding will be needed for technological developments and training sessions. She also stated that the Direction des Archives de France has indirectly financed the elaboration of technical specifications through its subvention to ICA but that the European Commission hadn't approved a funding proposal for the project on the grounds that it didn't correspond to the criteria set out by the IDA programme.

Ms. de Boisdeffre, who estimates the total amount needed for these initiatives to be in the region of 20,000 euros, is considering alternative solutions, namely presenting this project as an ICA one (with the EURBICA experience being a pilot) or resorting to other institutions within the US and Canada.

Christine Martinez described the structure and content of the database, mentioning that, for each country, the information is divided into six sections:

1. **Political and administrative context** containing a brief description of the territorial administration of the country,

2. **Legal framework of the administration and management of records and archives** to allow the user to understand the background of the archival legal system of the country.

3. **Legal texts** submitted in the original language and in French / English at a latter stage.

4. **Index** allowing the user to access legal texts directly by the subject. The index will also allow the user to carry out comparative research on a specific point of different archival laws.

5. **Bibliography** comprising books or articles on the specific topic or relevant themes published in the country.

6. **Contacts** containing names and contact details of experts and institutions in the country.

Apart from the information related to the individual countries, a special section dedicated to the European institutions will feature legal provisions, resolutions or recommendations concerning records and archives.

Ms de Boisdeffre and Christine Martinez asked the Commission to help them to organise the "European space" in the database, and to take on the watchdog function concerning European texts and disposals.

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Taking the European Report Forward – Updates from the Five Working Groups

"Measures to prevent theft of archives"

Tomas Lidman – Director of the National Archives of Sweden

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Tomas Lidman presented the conclusions of the working group appointed at the EBNA meeting in Luxembourg to discuss the protection of archival holdings from theft. The discussion has been summarised, with recommendations, under five headings:

1. **Legal practice and experience in restitution of stolen archival documents** aiming at creating a guide of the European countries' legislation and practices applied in case of proven international illicit trade and restitution of stolen documents purchased "in good faith".

2. **Preventive measures and proof of ownership** consisting of a set of best practices related to the implementation of security measures that could prevent theft and damage to archival collections. Amongst others, these measures include tightly controlled access to storage areas, registration of readers, close monitoring of readers' movements and the provision of photocopies, microfilms or digital copies instead of the original for use in the reading rooms. Archival institutions should also be encouraged to take the necessary measures to establish conclusive proof of ownership (including detailed cataloguing of the physical features of their collections).

3. **Training and developing awareness of the problem** aiming at developing security rules and facilitating co-operation between partners. Information packs should be compiled and disseminated to relevant interest groups, proposing schemes for training sessions, providing case-studies, concrete examples and illustrations of best-practices.

4. **Study on the present situation regarding theft from archives** which could answer questions related to the type of thefts experienced by archival institutions (internal or external) and which material was most attractive to thieves, the trade in stolen material, the profile of the dealers and buyers of stolen material, etc.

5. **An organisation** that would not duplicate the network introduced in 2002 and organised by national and larger scientific libraries (The Liber Security

Network), but rather liaise with this existing framework for co-operation. Mr. Lidman recommended that EBNA creates a working group for security matters with the remit of developing the different studies included in the recommendation.

One delegate asked Mr. Lidman whether the proposal of his working group would take into account the fact that thefts are also committed internally by archivists. He replied that, in his opinion, libraries were more vulnerable to thefts than the archives themselves. Despite the fact that libraries suffered both internal and external theft, Mr. Lidman considered that the latter was more prevalent in these institutions.

EBNA Business Meeting
European Union National Archivists

Plenary discussion

The main theme of the meeting was the discussion of the future of the EBNA in the wake of the creation of the European Archives Group (EAG). Most delegates welcomed the creation of the EAG, but while some would be happy to see the EBNA merging with EAG in the short-term, others envisaged that EBNA would continue to play an autonomous role in the discussion of archival issues. The debate served also to assess the progress of the working groups set up by EBNA.

With regards to the European Commission involvement within the EAG, most delegates acknowledged that, despite the fact that there will be no new budgetary commitments by either the EU or the member states, the co-ordinating role played by the Commission would be beneficial.

Tomas Lidman (Sweden) welcomed the creation of the EAG, mentioning that the new institution will have more power and influence within the EU. He added that EBNA should continue to exist for at least another year, period after which it should merge with EAG if the evolution of this institution went in accordance with the expectations of EBNA members.

Martine de Boisdeffre (France) also welcomed the creation of the EAG and role of the EU Commission in making sure that the five priorities set out in the *Report* were duly acted upon and taken forward. However, unlike Mr. Lidman, she didn't view positively a possible merger of the two institutions, adding that EBNA should continue to exist for an indefinite period.

Ms. de Boisdeffre argued that EBNA should maintain its status as an independent club of directors of national archives and decide on its own agenda, irrespective of the role of other institutions, namely the EU Commission. She reminded delegates that cultural policies are a national issue (rather than a European one) and that EBNA should foster the discussion of themes outside the agenda of the EAG and assess the progress of the EAG itself. According to Ms. de Boisdeffre, EAG and EBNA will play complementary roles in the future.

This vision was supported by Hartmut Weber (Germany), who mentioned that EBNA could propose other themes to be discussed within the EAG, e.g. the digitisation of archives / libraries. Recalling the example of EURBICA, whose membership is open to non-EU countries, the President of the Bundesarchiv referred that EBNA should assert itself as a space open to the debate and to the contributions of a myriad of international specialists.

Daria Nalecz (Poland) Director-General of the National Archives, acknowledged the merits of the EAG but mentioned that its role would be in contradiction with the fact that Europe hasn't a common cultural policy. The Polish representative also expressed concerns about the funding of concrete projects (e.g. competence centres) and the membership of EAG. Ms. Nalecz argued that the EAG should be composed mainly of EBNA members.

David Leitch (United Kingdom), Head of the Chief Executive's Office at TNA, stated thatit was intended to strengthen EBNA during the UK Presidency. He observed however, that EBNA should justify future meetings by addressing specific themes (e.g. digitisation) as well as discussing general issues. He also suggested that the entire proceedings of EBNA meetings should be published online.

José Mundet (Spain), acknowledged the progress made on archival issues, but was concerned that little had been done about the training of archivists within the EU. Mr. Mundet suggested the creation of a working group, which would be in charge of creating a template to be used in the training of archivists. After being approved, this template could then be distributed to academic institutions all over Europe. Mr. Mundet further suggested that EBNA should strongly lobby for the creation of a European qualification on information and document management.

Daria Nalecz (Poland) and Hartmut Weber (Germany) considered this issue extremely relevant but preferred to wait for the European Conference on Archives (to be held in Warsaw between 18-20 May 2006), which will address the future of the archival profession in Europe. Martine de Boisdeffre (France) added that special care should be taken when addressing this subject: universities have an independent status and no model can be forced upon them.

Progress of the working groups

Delegates unanimously approved the progress made on the DLM Forum and EURBICA fronts. With regards to the working group on the theft of archival documents, Tomas Lidman suggested the creation of a subgroup devoted to security matters, involving the participation of the European network of national archives. The delegates raised no objection and the proposal was approved.

It was also acknowledged that the "Internet Gateway" and "Disaster Prevention" groups were at a much earlier stage and further work would be necessary to finalise the membership and to define their own scope and remit. Hartmut Weber (Germany) mentioned the intention of his working group to share experiences and collaborate with Poland, Czech Republic and Italy in the disaster prevention domain. The President of the Bundesarchiv also stated that Germany was ready to share the experience of the NORA project with other countries willing to participate in this working group.

It was agreed that further discussion on these two working groups would take place at the Warsaw conference.   It was also agreed, in the connection with the Archives Portal, that advisory input from Bill Stockting (United Kingdom) would be invaluable.

EBNA recommendation for the European Digital Library project

Martine de Boisdeffre (France) presented the delegates with a draft EBNA recommendation for the European Digital Library project. This recommendation comes in the light of the initiative of six heads of state / government (Germany, Spain, France, Hungary, Italy and Poland) that put before the President of the European Commission a proposal intended to create a European Digital Library. Ms. de Boisdeffre emphasised that such a project should contain explicit reference to the digitisation of the archives (and not only libraries) and their exploitation in a European network.

The recommendation was later approved by the EBNA members, with slight amendments to the text.

EU Initiatives and Archives

Pat Manson
European Commission

This presentation explored the issues and challenges behind the creation of European digital libraries. This initiative represents the pursuit of the Lisbon agenda on the requirements for a common information space, access to cultural heritage and inclusion.
, Digital libraries will be the "common glue" overarching the content pillars provided by the different member states. The content will not be limited to text and may even include 3D model representations of items included in museums.

Digital libraries will be linking multiple and distributed collections while integrating different layers of access and search (including search engines). This project will have three main components: digitisation, online accessibility and digital preservation.

Ms Manson drew attention to some issues and challenges facing access and preservation of digital content. On the access side, the issue of copyright is still a considerable barrier, threatening to create a "20th century black hole". Other issues to be tackled include integrated access and the creation of structures and quality description of the content. In addition, there are still no policies in place when in comes to digital preservation of archives, a major concern because digitisation without digital preservation might become a wasted investment. Nowadays, digital preservation faces challenges of an economic, organisational, technical and legal nature.

Pat Manson also recalled some initiatives currently under way, namely co-funded projects such as TEL (which includes 11 million objects from 43 European national libraries); MICHAEL (project that aims to open up worldwide access to the European cultural heritage); PRESTOSPACE (standardised practices for preservation, storage and access for audiovisual contents in Europe) and other projects on digital preservation (NEDLIB and ERPANET).

New or reinforced initiatives include a strategic discussion with stakeholders (namely an online consultation and the creation of a high level group on digital libraries, which will be up and running in early 2006) an update on the Lund action plan, fostering co-operation between stakeholders in different areas (in order to avoid the "silo" effect) and a proposal for a recommendation (2006).

In terms of co-funding initiatives, Pat Manson mentioned the eContentplus programme which makes available 60 million euros for creating conditions to make a critical mass of resources available online, available for research and use, multilingually and across borders (first call closed on 24th November 2005). The Information Society Programme also made available 36 million euros (rising to 42 million euros) for initiatives focused on improving access and digital preservation (meaning the preservation of digital content so as to improve its longevity).

Ms. Manson referred to the co-funding of digital preservation initiatives, aimed at exploring how to preserve the availability of digital resources over time, with a focus on emerging state-of-the art and "stable" documents available in multiple formats and multi-sourced. These projects could be supplemented by the possibility of longer-term research focusing on high-volume digital objects with high levels of interactivity and on projecting concepts for solutions over longer time-scales. Pat Manson added that the 7th Framework Programme will foster increased research on

digitisation, digital preservation and access to cultural content and support competence centres on digitisation and preservation.

She concluded by saying that the project of European digital libraries requires a harmonised effort between member states and European institutions but that such a project would need the indispensable foundation of a reliable technical architecture.

A delegate asked Ms. Manson whether the high level group on digital libraries would have experts on archives amongst its members. She replied that the composition of the group (which will have around 20 members) is currently being determined but that she welcomed contributions from archivists.

Daria Nalecz from Poland enquired about the way content will be described in digital libraries so that it will meet the different needs of the public. She also expressed some concerns over the fact that the current legislation on data protection and intellectual property would, in practice, limit the scope of the European digital libraries.

With regards to content description, Pat Manson agreed that more work would be needed on semantic tagging and on the identification of the possible ways different users access information. Frank Brady, from the European Commission, took this opportunity to intervene and explained that there was an inherent conflict between the European directive on transparency and the legislation on data protection. Mr. Brady stated that the European Commission is actively working in this area and that a new initiative should be expected next year.

Strategic Priorities for Digitisation: Views of Member States

David Dawson
Head of Digital Futures at MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council)

David Dawson spoke about the main objectives, action areas and implementation of the Dynamic Action Plan for the EU co-ordination of digitisation of cultural and scientific content.

The head of digital futures at MLA mentioned that this updated Action Plan contained six objectives, built upon the previous set of Lund principles, namely providing strategic leadership; strengthening co-ordination between member states' digitisation initiatives, EU networks and projects; overcoming fragmentation and duplication of digitisation initiatives; identifying appropriate models for long-term preservation strategies; promoting cultural and linguistic diversity; and improving online access to European cultural content.

The Plan also identified 5 different areas that will be the object of immediate actions during 2006-2007:

1. **Users and Content** – The plan stipulates that access should be facilitated to users so that they could become active citizens by contributing their own knowledge and experience. Immediate actions for 2006-2007 include:

   - Bringing together national and European digitisation initiatives;
   - Developing flexible monitoring mechanisms to demonstrate the authenticity, performance and security of the deployment of digital cultural content and services;

- Assessing the impact of models that ensure a fair balance between copyrights and access, support accessibility for those with disabilities and promote the use of digital content;
- Working towards common quality standards for accessibility and usability;
- Assessing the role of digital cultural content in the development of the e-learning and creative industries;
- Promoting best-practice examples of the use of technology to support access for all citizens.

2. **Technologies for digitisation** – Cultural institutions need guidance to realise the significance of existing and emerging developments in the technological domain and to ensure that their own research needs are met. Immediate actions for 2006-2007 include:

- Defining common needs for research and tools for digitisation;
- Monitoring emerging technological developments in the fields of digitisation, storage and resource creation;
- Taking a strong and active role in the development of international standards (ISO, DCMI and W3C);
- Mandating appropriate technical and content standards.

3. **Sustainability of Content** – There is a need to identify and remove barriers to the economic sustainability of the creation and maintenance of digital cultural assets, services and networks. It is also imperative to develop appropriate policies, technological solutions and business models in this area. Immediate actions for 2006-2007 include:

- Developing and promoting the implementation of funding and business models that support economic sustainability of digital cultural content;
- Promoting the take-up of effective cost-reduction methods for digitisation.

4. **Digital preservation** – Safeguarding digital resources for the future is a vital element of the Knowledge Society. Action research is needed to avoid a 'digital dark age'. Immediate actions for 2006-2007 include:

- Stimulating the implementation of policies and tools for digital preservation;
- Assessing the implementation of persistent resource identifiers.

5. **Monitoring progress** – Monitoring the implementation of the Dynamic Action Plan is essential to realise the impact of the efforts and funds invested in different initiatives and to track progress towards the creation of the European Cultural Information Space. Immediate actions for 2006-2007 include:

- Quantifying the results of digitisation initiatives;
- Assessing European efforts and disseminating good practices;
- Performing new surveys on user-needs;

- Identifying qualitative and impact indicators for future implementation.

Proposals for Specific Digitisation Partnership Projects

Plenary discussion

During the conference, four groups were formed to propose specific digitisation partnership projects (including funding possibilities). The set-up of the groups was the following:

1. **Recreating the virtual memory of Europe** (headed by Daria Nalecz, Poland).

2. **Genealogy and Family Ancestry** (headed by Martine de Boisdeffre, France).

3. **Cold-War in Europe** (headed by David Craig, Ireland).

4. **Preservation of Audiovisual Archives** (headed by Andreas Kellerhals, Switzerland)

Recreating the virtual memory of Europe

The Director-General of the National Archives in Poland, Daria Nalecz explained that a project aimed at recreating the virtual memory of Europe should consider two lines of action: a common memory in several countries and a memory dispersed in different countries. Ms. Nalecz considered that such a project could be based on the production of inventories (making a general description that would be of interest to other nations) and on the digitisation of historic documents (here a collaborative approach between the different European Archives would be highly desirable due to the large amount of human resources required).

Ms. Nalecz believed that this project could only be carried out with the help of external subsidies. However, the amount of information to be digitised would depend on the level of public interest and on the subsidies available to finance it. Ms. Nalecz invited interested delegates to email her with specific proposals for projects to be carried out under this theme

The concept of a collaborative approach – or loose network – has underpinned the other presentations.

Genealogy and Family Ancestry

Martine de Boisdeffre presented the case-study of NOMINA (www.france-genealogie.fr), a portal managed by the French Archives and the French Federation of Genealogy, granting free access to thousands of civil registration records. Using an OAI protocol, the portal also provides paid access to private data of a genealogical nature.

The application of the NOMINA case-study to a European level could focus on genealogic data but also on the provision of information about citizens who have been involved in migratory movements. Ms. de Boisdeffre also mentioned that this gateway could be perfectly integrated with the European digital libraries project. She added that archivists involved in a European level initiative should also set up detailed scientific criteria to ensure that published information meets the highest quality standards.

Funding should be procured initially from member states and from European institutions at a later stage.

Cold-War in Europe

A pan-European project on digitisation of Cold-War material could involve the contributions of neutral countries (Ireland, Austria, Switzerland and Finland) and of any members of military alliances (NATO and Warsaw Pact).

David Craig suggested that such a project could address topics like military alliances, espionage, nuclear weapons, military infrastructures left behind after the end of the Cold-War, disarmament or the issue of the human rights. Members of the European Board of National Archivists as well as Foreign Ministry archivists could take an active role in this possible project..

Preservation of Audiovisual Archives

The representative from Switzerland, Andreas Kellerhals, mentioned that three issues must be considered when discussing the preservation of audiovisual archives in Europe:

- Some initiatives have already started.
- The audiovisual stock varies from country to country (due to different legal requirements).
- European legislation is not clear.

In terms of concrete actions, Mr Kellerhals emphasised the following:

- The need for a European network of the institutions with specific competence in preservation of audiovisual archives.
- Creation of competence centres.
- Standardisation of processes, methods and technology
- Accessibility of different platforms and technology for the preservation of archives.
- Evaluation of archival material.
- Creation of an on-line portal from which audiovisual archives could be accessed (copyright is still a major hindrance).