

PrestoSpace Preservation Factory Workshop

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For two years, the PrestoSpace project has been promoting the concept of a *preservation factory* as a better way to preserve Europe's audiovisual heritage.

But, what exactly is a Preservation Factory? Over 100 people came to Vienna to learn about the relationship between archives and the audiovisual services industry – and to discuss a business model for the **PrestoSpace Preservation Factory**.

The day began with three viewpoints:

- **What Archives Want** – Beth Delaney, B&G, The Netherlands
- **What Service Providers Offer** – Noelle Prat-Vong, Vectracom, France
- **What PrestoSpace Adds** – Richard Wright, BBC, UK

In brief, archives want:

- bulk media transfers, as automated as possible
- cleaning/physical repair made easier
- quality assessment tools
- project tracking
- FUNDING

The offer from service providers is comprehensive: Noelle, speaking not just for her company but also using results from a PrestoSpace survey, outlined comprehensive services beginning with expert advice for project planning, and assistance as required through the whole process.

What PrestoSpace adds is a general information and training on preservation – beginning with the new **Preservation Guide** wiki that was previewed (to be launched in June). In addition, PrestoSpace adds new technology – fully integrated -- for digitisation, restoration, documentation and delivery of a digital archive (turnkey system).

The morning concluded with consideration of what a PrestoSpace Preservation Factory could be. Daniel Teruggi outlined five possibilities, ranging from just publishing results and folding our tent – to one or a few major European full-service PrestoSpace audiovisual preservation facilities. The arguments for and against each of the five options are complex – and there may be other options to be considered – but the proposal to the group was consideration of a “licensing model” – where service providers can earn a PrestoSpace certificate. The licence would be issued by a PrestoSpace Competence Centre, with a European-wide remit to provide:

- service-level agreements
- licences for PrestoSpace technology
- monitoring of service providers
- linking customers to service providers
- providing comprehensive advisory services to all parties
- collection of preservation data at a central point
- training
- an annual report on European preservation progress

Much discussion followed, and any comment on what the archive should do is invited. Please leave comments on the [Forum](http://www.prestospace.org/user_group/forum/index.php) (http://www.prestospace.org/user_group/forum/index.php)

In the afternoon PrestoSpace was joined by the Technical Committee from TAPE, our sister project for preservation training. The central issue was: can small archives with very mixed collections still use service providers? The answer was: up to a point! **The key issue is the contract – whether either side attempts to contract the impossible, namely transfer of degraded material in a cheap, automated fashion.** The consensus was that contracts had to be sensible, so that efficient workflow was used only where it was appropriate – and the ‘hospital workflow’ for problem media was also used where appropriate.

There were presentation from three service providers, showing the range of their offerings, ranging from a dedicated mass-transfer facility specialising in Sony media (presented by Sony, France), to a service that includes digital storage, backup and web-hosting (Moving Media, Ireland and UK) – and a presentation from Memnon (Belgium, France and UK) showing how a service provider with sufficient interest and will can even help archives find funding, besides providing technical services.

Rainer Hubert and Hermann Lewetz of the Austrian Mediathek outlined the problems of small collections that come to the Mediathek for advise. Again, the issue that was highlighted was that archives need more help than just cheap transfer services – they may well need basic guidance and advice on the whole range of preservation issues. PrestoSpace can definitely help here – if the archives can find PrestoSpace! And certainly service providers can help, if their advice and guidance is trusted and affordable.

There were then three presentations on archives that use service providers extensively: ORF, Vienna; BBC, London; B&G, Hilversum. These archive use service providers where they offer a better price, where they have capabilities that the archives don't have. Adam Lee of the BBC stressed that technical process are not core business for archives. Cataloguing and rights and re-use and access are core, and planning and funding preservation are core, but the technical work could well be done outside the archive, either elsewhere in the same broadcast company – or by a service provider. Karin Westerink of B&G showed an archive that not only outsources transfer services – it also outsources digital storage. This takes Adam's point even further: the core business of an archive is metadata and management, not transfers and mass storage.

Finally, the day concluded with the Swedish State Audiovisual Archive, where Martin Jacobsen is leading a team that will tackle over 1 million hours of legal deposit material (video and audio) using high-throughput workflow of their own devising – without outsourcing. This presentation made a very useful complement to the day, showing what an archive that did have internal technical skills (core or not!) could achieve.

The day went off completely without a hitch, thanks to the wonderful accommodation and very thorough organisation by ORF – and by B&G beforehand. I hope all interested parties will look at the presentations, and give PrestoSpace feedback on what kind of ‘permanent PrestoSpace’ would be suit you.

Richard Wright, BBC