

APPENDIX A

Why Preserve Program Originals?

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MASTER RECORDINGS

Radio and television programs are 20th and 21st century creative products whose social and historical importance is comparable to that of cultural artefacts from earlier times **such as manuscripts, paintings and music scores. Their preservation and society's continued access to them will be critical strands in the design of Canada's evolving national landscape.**

After Gutenberg invented the printing press around 1440, access to the content of most manuscripts increased over the centuries. Arguably, the practical need for them – and for their preservation – could have been minimized by the existence of multiple printed sources. But, in fact, the historic significance of manuscripts as a testament to social evolution grew, influenced by both their rarity and their artistry

Today, no one would think of destroying the Codex Leicester⁹, **the Uthman Qur'an**¹⁰ or the Stockholm Papyrus¹¹ because modern copies (even digital ones) are readily available.

The same holds true for the world's inventory of images, from the caves at Lascaux to the San rock painting in Lesotho, the frescos in the temples and tombs of ancient Egypt, the wonders of 6th century Sui dynasty landscapes or Europe's Renaissance masterworks, to the unique representations of Canada by Krieghoff, Carr, Thomson or Riopelle. Around the world their work is digitally accessible at a tap on a keyboard - yet the originals are no less valued. They continue to be preserved and treasured as important components of humanity's shared heritage.

Radio and television are 20th century media, the electronic manuscripts and recorded images of people and events in one of the most transformative periods in human history. Their familiarity makes it easy to dismiss them but they are of no less historic and creative value than their aged predecessors. While the perspective of decades is **lacking, it is our generation's responsibility to ensure that these original records of Canada's social and cultural achievement is preserved.**

It is also important to consider that each communication medium is generally less permanent than the one it succeeds, with the most lasting of all being stone tablets and prehistoric cave paintings! Technologists of the day have constantly laboured to preserve each preceding format, be it (*inter alia*) parchment, canvas, paper, nitrate film, acetate or DAT tape.

⁹ The scientific writings of Leonardo Da Vinci

¹⁰ The earliest known 8th century Qur'anic manuscript

¹¹ A third century collection of 154 craft recipes recorded in demotic Greek.

Today's digital wizardry is even less stable than its predecessor media and

subject to a range of vulnerabilities including cyberattacks, malware infections, image degradation, compromised power sources, ransom and massive electro-magnetic pulses. These factors only emphasize the importance of preserving analog originals and backward compatibility to them, as well as the urgent need to develop appropriate venues for stable, secure conservation of born-digital materials.

For that reason, long-standing international heritage protocols regard digitization as a useful access mechanism to protect original media from the deterioration of over-use, but NOT as a reliable, secure method of preservation. For that reason, in its definition of world standards the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA) emphasizes the importance of conserving original analogue carriers after transfer to other media:

Due to the high density of information, digital carriers are generally more vulnerable to loss of information through damage than analogue carriers Although the life of audiovisual carriers cannot be extended indefinitely, efforts must be made to preserve carriers in usable condition for as long as possible Original physical carriers and suitable reproduction equipment must therefore be preserved after digitisation of their contents whenever possible.¹²

¹² ¹² "The Safeguarding of the Audiovisual Heritage: Ethics, Principles and Preservation Strategies", 4th Edition, 2017, found at: <https://www.iasa-web.org/tc03/ethics-principles-preservation-strategy>