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# The Russian Methods of Audio-Visual Records Selection for Permanent Archival Storage

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LARIN Michail, **The Russian Methods of Audio-Visual Records Selection for Permanent Archival Storage**. Atlanti, Vol. 16, N.1-2, Trieste 2006, pp. 191-197.

*Original in English, abstract in English, Italian and Slovenian, summary in English.*

*Managing audiovisual records causes archives more difficulties to solve compared with the documentation consisting of electronic data, drawings, photographs or databases.*

*Two main problems arise: the big dimension of audiovisual records, forcing to zip the files, and the variety and complexity of the existing computer programming languages.*

**Key words:** 3.1.1 general; 3.1.5 audio - visual; 3.3.6 cataloguing, sorting; 3.2.9 other

LARIN Michail, **Metodi adottati in Russia per la selezione dei documenti audiovisivi per la conservazione definitiva in archivio**. Atlanti, Vol. 16, N.1-2, Trieste 2006, pp. 191-197.

*I documenti audiovisivi, che si tratti di suoni, immagini in movimento o di entrambi contemporaneamente, pongono gli archivi di fronte a problemi molto più difficili da risolvere rispetto ai documenti formati da testi elettronici, disegni, fotografie o banche dati. Si individuano due ordini di problemi: la grande dimensione dei documenti audiovisivi, che costringe a compressioni, e la molteplicità e complessità dei formati digitali in uso.*

LARIN Michail, **Ruske metode za dolgotrajno hrambo izbranih avdio vizualnih dokumentov**. Atlanti, Zv. 16, Št. 1-2, Trst 2006, str. 191-197.

*Z upravljanjem avdiovizualnih dokumentov se arhivi srečujejo že dalj časa in avdiovizualni procesi prinašajo nekatere težave, ko gre za prenos*

## General provisions

The life of a person and a society as a whole are reflected in a complex of audio-visual records. The photo-, film-, audio-, video records reveal in images and sounds a private human life, activity of collectives, organisations and the events of personal, state, political and cultural value. The development of shooting and recording means, an opportunity of almost each person to use them allow to fix significant facts, events, and also daily, household details of the family, certain groups of people, city, country. With a variety of themes and technical quality of audio-visual records their complexes (and sometimes individual records) are of great interest for studying the historical process as a whole and its different aspects.

In Russia the selection of audio-visual records to the state archives is carried out on the basis of the Law on archival matter in the Russian Federation from October, 22, 2004 and also the legislative and normative documents of the Russian Federation subjects. The audio-visual records, which are selected for the permanent storage, is an integral part of the Russian Federation Archival Fund.

The audio-visual records, included into the Archival Fund of the Russian Federation, irrespective of their origin, types of carrier, storage place and a pattern of ownership, are subject to the obligatory preservation by organisations or persons - the acquisition sources - and to the transfer to the appropriate archives according to the archival law and the Main working rules of the Russian Federation state archives.

## The definition criteria of organisations and persons - acquisition sources of the state archive by audio-visual records

The legal persons refer to a number of acquisition sources of

the state archives on the basis of two main criteria: functional and special-purpose designation of organisation and completeness of reflection (recurrence) of audio-visual records information in the audio-visual records, already kept in the archives.

The criterion of the functional and special-purpose designation of the organisation assumes to solve the primary tasks and functions of the organisation as a founder of audio-visual records.

The criterion of reflection (recurrence) completeness of audio-visual records information of a certain organisation means the establishment of novelty, originality, expressiveness of information in comparison with other records, already stored in archives.

In practice to the acquisition sources of archives refer:

- legal persons (state and not-state organisations), for which creation of audio-visual records is one of the basic functions: studios, editions, news agencies etc.
- legal persons (state and not-state organisations), which can create valuable audio-visual records during their activity: government bodies, public organisations, theatres, high educational institutions, scientific and research institutes etc.
- physical persons (citizens, authors, executors, operators, collectors etc.), which can create valuable audio-visual records in their daily and professional life.

The definition of acquisition sources of the archives by audio-visual records includes:

- revealing of organisations and persons - the proprietors of audio-visual records;
- preliminary collecting of data about the records composition;
- making contacts and realisation of special explanatory work with the given organisations and persons;
- analysis (studying) of audio-visual records complex;
- definition of the records reception form for archival storage;
- making contracts with non-state organisations and private persons about the reception of their records to archives;
- inclusion of the organisation and person into the list of acquisition sources of archives.

## Initiative documenting of events by state archives

Initiative documenting - the creation of audio-visual records by the archives itself - is an additional kind of work on restocking of the Russian Federation Archival fund by the valuable records, reflecting the present-day reality.

The modern significant events of state, public, cultural, economic, scientific and other spheres of life; the daily typical facts; recor-

*elektronskih podatkov, fotografij, datotečnih podatkov, itd. Pri tem nastajata dva glavna problema: nastajajo velike količine avdiovizualnih dokumentov, za katere ne vemo, kako jih bomo brali, obstajajo pa tudi raznovrstni programi, ki jih bo težko obvladovati, ker se oprema spreminja.*

### SUMMARY

*Selection of audio-visual records in the Russian archives is held according to the provisions of the Law on the archival matter, 2004, and methodical recommendations, made up by the All-Russian archival science and records management research institute. The audio-visual records are included into the Russian Federation Archival fund.*

*The main methods of forming a list of archival acquisition sources by the audio-visual records, criteria of appraisal and selection of these records for permanent storage, selection methods of audio-visual records for permanent preservation.*

dings, shooting of memoirs, certificates on events, objects of the past - all these things are subject to the initiative documenting.

The choice of the initiative documenting themes is determined by:

- the absence of an opportunity to get audio-visual records from the appropriate special organisations and also authorities;
- the importance or typical nature of fact, event;
- the absence of a complete set of records about certain events of the past in archives.

## General and specific criteria of audio-visual records appraisal

The appraisal of audio-visual records is carried out on the basis of general and specific criteria of the records value.

The general criteria of the audio-visual records appraisal are the following: the criteria of the groups of origin, contents and external peculiarities of the records, using to the given category of records.

The criteria of origin groups are the following: functional and special-purpose designation of organisation and the value of the person who is the proprietor of the records and also time and place of records creation. The criterion of the records creation time means estimation of simultaneity of events and its documenting (concurrence in time); records creation in the definite periods of time which are significant for the country, certain territory, concrete organisation, specific person. The criterion of records creation place suggests estimation of the territory, the organisation, the inhabited or other space, which is significant because of the events, taking place at the moment of recording, shooting or those ones, which have happened before (historical places, architectural and other cultural monuments, space where a significant event has taken place etc.).

The criteria of the contents groups are the following: significance of records information, its recurrence in other records, type of record, authenticity of record. The significance of the information, contained in the record, assumes accounting the uniqueness and special values of fact, the event of state, public and cultural life of the country or private life of citizens. The recurrence of information allows to establish repeatability (typical nature) of fact or event. The criterion of records kind as far as the audio-visual records are concerned is conditional in many respects. However, it helps to mark out certain groups of film-records (films, newsreels, special film-releases), demanding special attention while selecting because of their information value. The authenticity of record, meaning availability

of necessary essential elements of registration and technological parameters, data on its origin for its identification, is an obligatory condition of records appraisal as a record, not simply recording.

The criteria of external features group include form of contents transfer, technical, physical and chemical state of the record. The form of the contents transfer suggests definition of the way and quality of recording, reproduction, allowing to reflect, to keep and reproduce the fact or event more better. The criteria of the technical, physical and chemical state of audio-visual records is to determinate conformity of the carrier to the state standards.

The degree of records preservation (availability in archives), reflecting the definite facts or events, is also taken into account.

There are specific criteria of the audio-visual records appraisal: character of disclosing the information; independence of the record information from its belonging to a special organisation - the founder of the record; completeness of records; presence of the accompanying documentation; social recognition of audio-visual records. The character of disclosing information means an estimation of artistic features, cameramen decisions, composition and plot integrity, expressiveness and originality of recording, shooting. It is necessary to pay attention to the moral and ethical aspects of shooting, recording of concrete persons with the aim of protection according to the acting legislation about the confidentiality of private life and also the elimination of the opportunity to cause a person moral damage by using audio-visual records. The independence of the audio-visual record information, that is the fact or event, reflected in it, not its interpretation, from the definite organisation shows the existing principle of a wide range of themes in the work of any special organisation (studios, firms, companies). The audio-visual records are received to the storage with the appropriate set and accompanying documentation. The social recognition of the audio-visual records value (awarding, intensity of usage) submits to define their importance nowadays. However, it is necessary to remember, that the intensity of records usage is of conjuncture character and eventually changes.

## Specific features of audio-visual records selection

It is necessary to consider the following things while selecting audio-visual records to archival storage.

Films and video records (video phonograms) can combine audio- and video-information, each of them is appraised in a complex and independently.

The photo- and the audio-records, created on the already used carriers (glass, phonograph record etc.), are accepted to storage irre-

spective of the existence of their analogues on modern carriers (film, slide, magnetic tape, compact disc etc.). The collections of audio-records, forming the united fund, received from private persons, are transferred to archives with the applied documentation (catalogue cards; books - lists with authors, executors) irrespective of technical state of the carrier.

The photo-, audio-, video records (video phonograms) have a high degree of information recurrence, so they demand complex appraisal in order to realise the selection of audio-visual records for storage with the availability of a set of records, reflecting one and the same event.

The audio-visual records have a material value both from the point of view of their carrier and contents, that can demand the additional means for their new recording or purchase.

Audio-visual records are looked through and listened to while selecting. At the same time it is necessary to check them with the covering documentation.

## Methods of audio-visual records selection

The audio-visual records selection for permanent storage is carried out on the basis of several methods.

The following traditional methods, such as historical, source study and informational ones are used. They realise the principles of history science and integrity in practice.

Each record is studied from the point of view of its origin (historical method); as a potential historical source about the events, happened in the certain period of time, in the definite territory (source study method); as a source of information about the event, inter-related to the general history context and also found reflection in other records sources (informational method).

The following methods: modelling, idealisation, axiomatic, selective are used.

The modeling method is reproduction of a complex of audio-visual records, really existed in organisation or person, according to the inventory, list of facts and events or list of concrete records. It is used while determining the acquisition sources of archives.

The idealisation method is mental reproduction of a complex of audio-visual records, reflecting these or those facts or events. In practice such complex can and cannot exist. It is used while defining the acquisition sources of archives, making up the provisional list of

facts, events, phenomena which can be reflected in the audio-visual records.

The axiomatic method is reference of certain audio-visual records to a number of valuable ones without their studying on the basis of similar records analysis, held before. It is used for records appraisal and while selecting the records for permanent storage.

The selective method is selection of only parts (a sample set) for permanent preservation from the whole set of audio-visual records (a general set). It is used while selecting certain audio-visual records, reflecting homogeneous repeating information, for archival storage.

## Stages of audio-visual records appraisal

The realisation of the audio-visual records appraisal includes:

- analysis (initial appraisal) of organisation or person records complex;
- possible formation of model lists of facts, events and phenomena, which can be reflected in audio-visual records, subject to the reception for storage;
- selection of audio-visual records for storage to the state archives.

The selection of audio-visual records for storage in the state archives is carried out on the basis of the criteria of records data value.

The valuable audio-visual records, meeting one or several criteria (features) of value are subject to the selection for storage. The criteria of external features are taken into account, but they are minor than the others. Only unsatisfactory physical, chemical and technical state of the records, not allowing to perceive images or sounds, can be the basis of refusal to receive valuable audio-visual records for preservation. However, the unique records will be accepted for storage with due regard of possible appearance of new sounds and images restoration methods in future.

The specific criteria of the audio-visual records appraisal are applied after the general criteria.

As a result the selection of audio-visual records can pass some levels of the information selection, taking into account:

- 1) the importance of event, fact, phenomenon (global, state, regional, local);
- 2) the degrees of fixing of event, fact, phenomenon (single, multiple, mass fixing);
- 3) completeness of visual and text interpretation of event, fact, phenomenon (a display sequence of their development; presence of wit-

nesses, experts and other person comments; availability of interesting details which are not fixed in other records);  
4) combination of visual and sound lines in the records;  
5) the degrees of work completeness, concerning the information, reflected in the record.

## Conclusion

The selection of audio-visual records for permanent storage needs solving a lot of questions. Some of them are still in a process of studying, such as: definition of structure or distribution of records through the network of state archives, organisation of selective acquisition of audio-visual records at the level of the Russian Federation Archival fund, application of computer techniques for the audio-visual records preservation or their usage, optimum attribution of records at the reception stage, legal confirmation of the records authenticity by the indirect way (by studying the circumstances of records creation and preservation) etc.

The selection of audio-visual records for state storage to the archives of the Russian Federation subjects is carried out on the basis of the Methodical recommendations. However, special nature of organisation and the conditions of the records data storage, positions of the legislative and normative acts of the Russian Federation subjects, determining or influencing on the records selection to the state archives are taken into account.

The archives of the Russian Federation subjects can accept for storage the audio-visual records, containing not only the events of local scale, but also the Russian and the world one. They can exchange copies of audio-visual records both inside the archival system and outside it, define the records themes for effective realisation of records selection for storage, solve the problem on the reception of valuable audio-visual records as copies or in the incomplete set, allowing their usage, carry out deposit preservation of audio-visual records.

## Literature

The Federal law N° 125 from October, 22, 2004, "On the archival matter in the Russian Federation".

Methodical recommendations "Selection of audio-visual records for permanent storage". M.: VNIIDAD. 2004.