East Anglian Film Archive

Collections Care and Preservation Policy

Background

The East Anglian Film Archive (EAFA) is a regional film archive wholly owned by the University of East Anglia (UEA). Established in 1976, and part of the University since 1984, EAFA contains a collection of thousands of films and television programmes from 1896 to the present day, including unique collections from Anglia Television, BBC East, and the Institute of Amateur Cinematographers. The collection includes approximately 75,000 catalogue titles and more than 150,000 physical items in total in the vaults.

Vision Statement

The East Anglian Film Archive will strive to be a sector leading moving image archive inspiring new and diverse audiences through technological innovation.

Mission Statement

The East Anglian Film Archive is an accredited archive service that collects, preserves, and makes accessible the moving image heritage of the East of England (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk) and complementary collections. We seek to connect with the most diverse audiences possible. We evolve our technological practices contributing to national and international standards.

Preservation

Preservation is defined as all activities necessary to maintain the authenticity of selected materials for posterity. Where possible these activities should protect materials from loss including deterioration and damage with the long-term goal of ensuring authentic usability for as long as required. Preservation is recognised as an ongoing process. "Nothing has ever *been* preserved – it is only *being* preserved".[1]

EAFA's aim is to preserve moving image material, both physical and digital, held in its collection. We also aim to ensure that the material is accessible. Both aims are equally important.

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[1] Ray Edmondson, *Audiovisual Archiving: Philosophy and Principles*, Third Edition (UNESCO, 2016). v

EAFA aims to put long-term preservation before the short-term exploitation of material.

Storage

EAFA has purpose-built vaults for film and video storage which are humidity and temperature controlled. In addition, EAFA has ensured that the following conditions are in place:

- purpose-built and maintained secure premises.
- dedicated collections storage areas.
- fire suppression system.
- fresh-air exchange.
- clean environment.
- appropriate shelving.
- appropriate film cans, boxes, and other containers.
- items barcoded and locations recorded.

EAFA aims to provide the optimum conditions for each physical medium held in the collections, within practical and financial constraints. EAFA's current storage was designed to fully comply with PD 5454:2000 and partially meets BS 4971:2017.

Film Preservation

Wherever possible EAFA will preserve originals. For example, moving image material originally produced on film such as 35mm, 16mm, 9.5mm, 8mm standard, Super 8mm and other rarer gauges will be stored based on our Acquisition and Disposal policy. This is because of the evidence value of the original; its significance as historical artefact; that there may be more latent quality in the original; that any future copying will require access to the originals.

EAFA aims to monitor and understand the condition of its collections by recording condition assessment information during both item inspections and planned collection sample assessments.

For access and preservation purposes a master digital copy will be produced which can be made available to third parties, where copyright allows.

Video Preservation

EAFA holds a wide range of video formats. Where material has been produced on video EAFA aims to migrate its content to a digital preservation master that authentically captures all the item's significant properties. Following the migration of video the archive may

consider disposing of the original source with the agreement of the donor/copyright owner and in accordance with the Acquisition and Disposal policy.

Specialist Off-Site Storage

Owing to site restrictions EAFA's nitrate collection is stored in specialist conditions at the British Film Institute (BFI). This is managed under an agreement between EAFA and the BFI.

Part of EAFA's paper collection is stored at the Norfolk Record Office. Storage is BS 4971:2017 compliant.

Born-Digital Preservation

EAFA recognises the importance of born-digital preservation in achieving its mission statement and broader policy framework objectives. It aspires to develop a pro-active, risk-based, and scalable approach to born-digital which is both deliverable and appropriate for its preservation requirements. Broad principles outlined elsewhere within EAFA's collection policy framework from acquisition to access apply equally to born-digital materials.

Due to the transient nature of born-digital objects, EAFA prioritises securing *bitstream* preservation whilst simultaneously capturing as much representation information as possible to enable later long-term *content* preservation. Bitstream preservation ensures an unchanged bit-perfect copy, it secures the data. Content preservation is an additional stage of preservation which includes all additional activities required to maintain context and the ability to meaningfully interpret and display the data over time. Both bitstream and content preservation encompass digital preservation.

Where possible EAFA will work with depositors to ensure the authenticity of transfers and at the earliest opportunity will generate checksums to enable fixity of content entering the repository. EAFA will additionally seek to capture as much information as necessary from depositors to support ongoing digital preservation.

EAFA will not ingest content into the archival digital storage service without undergoing relevant quarantine checks. Where possible EAFA will characterise and validate content prior to ingest including the creation of persistent unique identifiers (PIDs) and checksums if not already available.

Broad digital preservation principles outlined within policy such as those for storage, planning and activities, apply equally to all digital materials within EAFA's care whether born-digital or digitised.

Archival Digital Storage

EAFA's archival digital storage service is managed by UEA IT and Computing Service (ITCS) which maintains geographically separated back-ups on appropriate carriers utilising an automated fixity monitoring, repair, and recovery system, including media replacement.

Both ITCS and EAFA limit and control staff access to the archival digital storage service. Additionally, the UEA is working towards the United Kingdom (UK) Cyber Essentials cyber security certification scheme.

The archival digital storage is shared by both born-digital material and newly digitised film transfers and video captures.

A key aspect of EAFA's bitstream preservation strategy is the provision of resilient, secure, and scalable archival digital storage which implements redundancy and fixity monitoring. To facilitate communication and a shared understanding of these specialist preservation requirements EAFA and UEA ITCS meet semi-regularly.

UEA ITCS have contracts in place with enterprise IT suppliers including media refreshment and expansion plans. EAFA and UEA ITCS are additionally working towards a Service Level Agreement.

Digital Preservation Community and Professional standards

EAFA aspires to adhere to standardised procedures informed and developed within both broad and specialist professional networks and collaborative communities of practice. An example is the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) which the UEA is an associate member of.

These networks facilitate the monitoring of changes in technology and broader designated community requirements. This in turn keeps EAFA up to date with new potential best-practices and evidence-based solutions, informing preservation strategies and activities, and minimising duplication of effort.

To improve the sustainability of tools and workflows, where possible, EAFA will use open-source software, systems and standards and will aim to contribute and share their work with said communities.

Although EAFA informally refers to standards such as the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) reference model, this is primarily filtered through the prism of guidance developed by professional bodies such as the DPC.

As part of our continuous improvement, EAFA utilises professionally recognised maturity models to benchmark, reflect on, and review its digital preservation planning and programme over time.

Digital Preservation Planning and Activities

EAFA is in the process of developing and implementing preservation workflows and procedures which are transparent and documented.

Where appropriate EAFA will keep digital originals but may undertake preservation activities to ensure continued authentic access to content over time. As a moving image archive, these preservation activities are expected to primarily focus on format migration, especially via normalisation, as required. Any migration activities will be informed by an agreed preservation and access format policy.

EAFA will not rule out other preservation strategies (e.g. emulation) if deemed appropriate based on an assessment of significant properties and preservation intent. Any preservation activities will be tested, manageable, evidenced-based, and documented.

Training

Everyone involved in handling moving image material is given appropriate training and guidance. EAFA aims to continue to keep current its knowledge through continuing professional development and awareness of best practice.

Disaster Recovery

EAFA will maintain an appropriate and up to date Emergency Plan and provide regular training.

Review of Collections Care & Preservation Policy and Related EAFA Documents

This statement of Collection Care & Preservation policy replaces all previous statements and will be reviewed every 5 years.

This document forms part of EAFA Collections management policy. Other policies include Acquisition and Disposal, Collections Information, and Access.

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Appendix

Standards referred to in this document

BS 5454:2000 Recommendations for the Storage and Exhibition of Archive Documents.

BS 4971:2017 Conservation and Care of Archive and Library Collections.

BS ISO 14721:2012 Space data and information transfer systems. Open archival information system (OAIS). Reference model.