

On the digital preservation of the archives of a public broadcaster: the case of ERT

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The digital preservation of the archives of a public radio and television organization is a real challenge. Public Broadcasters in most European countries were the dominant producers of audiovisual content for decades. In our paper, we are going to present the technical and organizational challenges that the Hellenic Public Broadcaster (ERT) is facing towards the digital preservation of its archive. As an organization ERT is the biggest media organization in Greece and one of the biggest public institutions in the country. ERT has the richest audiovisual archive in Greece and one of the richest in South Eastern Europe. Its analogue collection consists of more than 130.000 hours of video recordings, 18.000 hours of film and 130.000 hours of audio recordings. It also contains 370.000 photographs and 15.000 music sheets. The archive contains rare audio material dated before the beginning of radio broadcasting in Greece (1938) as well as two unique collections of photographs (Poulidis collection, GYS collection) dated back to the first decades of the 20th century. Over the last years, ERT has started a project to classify and organize its archive sections in order to preserve them and make them into a tapeless digital format. The main organizational challenge was the creation of the Digital Preservation and Documentation Centre (DPDC). It has five departments (restoration, digitization, documentation, electronic archiving and quality control). In our paper we are to describe all the phases of development of the DPDC, its current operation, lessons to learn and future challenges. Each department will be presented separately, the processes will be described and detailed data will be given. Another section of the paper will focus on the transformation of the existing every day ERT procedures due to the introduction of the new ones. From the technical side, the paper will present how the manual handling of traditional storage media is being replaced step by step with an automatic storage - server environment. From the technical side, the ERT digital archive architecture contains a multimedia indexing catalogue, a compressed (Low-res preview) video archive, an uncompressed Hi-Resolution archive, a security system and a web based accessing and applications interface. The digital archive system can be subdivided logically into two main subsystems: the catalogue, and the video libraries. Due to its size, ERT's archive can play major role as one of the national content providers in the digital era. Greek produced cultural content may be of interest to non Greek - speaking people, mainly researchers, historians, producers and journalists. Our paper will have a separate final section on the dissemination policies of ERTs digital archive and how new services can address users' needs in the future.