



International Federation of
Library Associations and Institutions

The UNESCO PERSIST Content Task Force

Guidelines for the selection of
digital heritage for long-term
preservation

Ingrid Parent 15 August 2016





Content Selection Guidelines – the context

- **December 2013 PERSIST meeting** – Roadmap for three task forces.
- **The Content Task Force** was created to provide guidance to memory and cultural institutions on selecting digital material for long term preservation.
- **UNESCO:** UNESCO Guidelines are not legally binding. Member states are invited to apply them as the baseline or best practices.





Content Selection Guidelines – the context (continued)

- The ***Content Selection Guidelines*** are designed primarily for libraries, archives and museums.
- A Generic Framework: for general application (with advice on specific application).
- Audience: aim at a diverse audience including professionals and administrators who deal with digital materials and plan to prepare a policy on selection of digital materials for long-term preservation.



Background – how did we get here?

- ‘The Paradox of Selection in the Digital Age’ -- T. and B. Van der Werf (August 2014)
- Survey on existing digital selection policy – W. Helmus (April 2015)
- The Content Task Force created a working group of experts to draft the Guidelines for the selection of digital heritage for long-term preservation in April 2015
- Extensive consultation throughout 2015 – including a very useful session at WLIC2015





Why are the Guidelines important?

- Heritage is at risk of being lost forever
- Ensure survival of digital heritage for the next generations and beyond
- Encourage national institutions to use selection Guidelines for their digital heritage preservation strategy

Challenges we encountered

- Different terminology used by librarians, archivists and museum professionals
- Diversity of the heritage community - Guidelines to be applied by libraries, archives, and museums of all shapes and sizes
- Different professional focuses and priorities:
 - **Libraries** – issues relating to legal deposit, e-publications, harvesting websites and social media sites, and short-term vs. long-term use
 - **Museums** – digital heritage is primarily information about physical holdings; metadata, research information, digital surrogates, administrative records; also born-digital art, etc.
 - **Archives** – authenticity of records, early selection and transfer, reappraisal, costs, regulatory restrictions on access and use



Focus of the Guidelines

- Understanding the problem: proliferation of digital information and preservation costs of ever-changing digital formats and carriers makes selection essential
- Overarching principles on how to assess value of digital materials, how to prioritize and what to select for long-term preservation, access and use.

Focus of the Guidelines (continued)

- Selection should be legally compliant, cost-effective and technically feasible
- The role of national institutions and shared responsibilities among institutions, non profit and private sector organizations
- Importance of metadata
- Selection based on **significance, availability** and **sustainability**





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The UNESCO/PERSIST Guidelines

<http://www.ifla.org/node/10315>



The UNESCO/PERSIST Guidelines for the selection of digital heritage for long- term preservation

By the UNESCO/PERSIST Content Task Force

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We would like to thank the writers of the Guidelines

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- Ngian Lek Choh (National Library Board of Singapore)
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And all of you for your input and comments!



Promotion and translations

- We have been promoting the Guidelines actively across the world (e.g. ICOM conference, the IFLA PAC Centres)
- We want to encourage you to use them and let us know what works and what doesn't
- We are collecting case studies on the implementation of the Guidelines
- The Guidelines are currently available in English, French and Arabic and UNESCO is working on further translations
- There will be a review process (by the Memory of the World International Advisory Committee) and we will be working towards a next edition for late 2017 – for this we need your implementation feedback





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Questions, Comments, Case Studies and Suggestions

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