



iPRES 2021 Beijing • China 19-22 Oct. 2021  
17<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Digital Preservation



## iPRES 2021 Panel 3

“Digital Documentary Heritage: Securing Reliable and Sustainable Access”

# **UNESCO policy dialogue and international policy agenda**

21 October 2021

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**unesco**

Memory of the World

# Outline

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- UNESCO policy instruments and importance for the preservation community
- Policy dialogue and policy gaps in the preservation of digital documentary heritage

UNESCO  
United Nations  
Educational,  
Scientific and  
Cultural  
Organization

Why increasing the effort on **international** policy work?

Why related to **digital** documentary heritage?

Why **access**? Why **now**?

# Importance of Documentary Heritage

UNESCO is committed to protecting, preserving and promoting access to the world's documentary heritage, from preserving documents in libraries, archives and museums to the software that is driving the digital transformation.



UNESCO  
**193 member  
states**  
11 associate  
members

Documentary heritage is a key resource that helps us learn from the past.

**Documentary heritage must be preserved and remain accessible.**



- 2015 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the preservation and access to documentary heritage including in digital form

**The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, meeting in Paris from 3 to 18 November 2015, at its 38th session,**

Considering that documents produced and preserved over time, in all their analogue and digital forms through time and space, constitute the primary means of knowledge creation and expression, having an impact on all areas of humanity's civilization and its further progress,

Also considering that documentary heritage records the unfolding of human thought and events, the evolution of languages, cultures, peoples and their understanding of the world,

Underlining the importance of documentary heritage to promote the sharing of knowledge for greater understanding and dialogue, in order to promote peace and respect for freedom, democracy, human rights, and dignity,

## 2015 UNESCO Recommendation on Policies - Section 4

4.1 Member States are urged to consider their documentary heritage as an invaluable asset for their cultural and scientific development and to recognize the need to preserve it in different types of media, to develop the necessary skills, and to adequately fund memory institutions.

Long term investment

4.2 At the same time, Member States are encouraged to encourage logical partnerships and cost sharing with other entities in setting up shared facilities.

Cost sharing

4.3 Private and public entities need public encouragement and support to create national directories.

Support private collections

4.4 Member States are encouraged to encourage research on documentary heritage.

Access, education, research

4.5 Through legislative and other measures, Member States should create incentives to support memory institutions in their efforts to improve accessibility and use of documentary heritage in the public interest.

Incentives for supporters  
and investors

4.6 Member States are encouraged to periodically review copyright codes and legal deposit regulations for preservation purposes and to ensure their alignment with the needs of memory institutions.

Legal deposit, copyright  
exceptions

4.7 Where possible, Member States are encouraged to ensure that software and other technologies are unlocked and available to the public.

Provision of needed  
technologies

4.8 In order to encourage the use of open source software and tools, Member States should seek the support of the private sector and content creators, and should aim to develop methods and standards for the preservation of digital content from proprietary technologies. Likewise, their memory institutions should aim to develop methods and standards for the preservation of digital content from proprietary technologies.

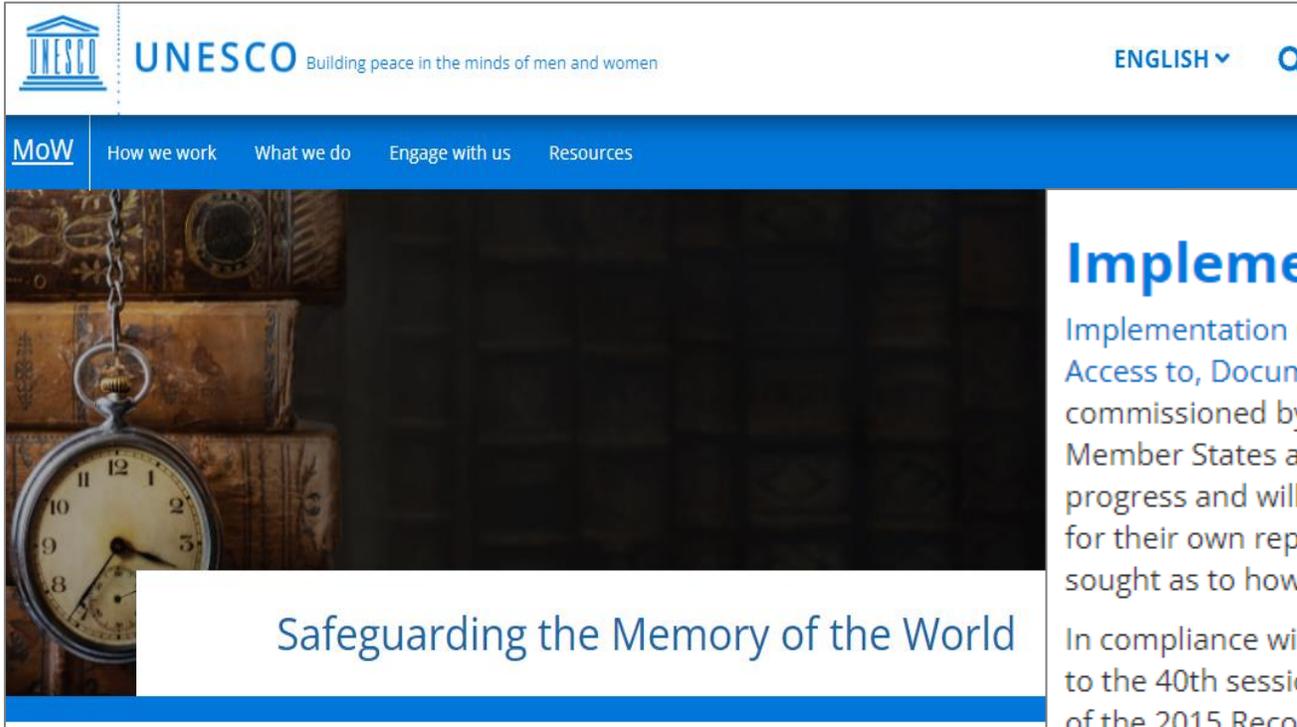
Open source and  
standardized tools

4.9 Member States are encouraged to monitor the status of documentary heritage, including monitoring the status of documentary heritage inscribed in the Memory of the World Register.

Monitoring and status

4.10 Member States are encouraged to ensure coherence between the Memory of the World Register and other international instruments to assure further coherence of actions.

Synergies among UNESCO  
programmes



[2015 mow recommendation implementation guidelines en.pdf \(unesco.org\)](#)

## Implementation Guidelines

Implementation Guidelines for the 2015 Recommendation Concerning the Preservation of, and Access to, Documentary Heritage Including in Digital Form: These Implementation Guidelines were commissioned by the MoW Secretariat in order to provide an initial reporting framework for Member States and other national memory institutions/stakeholders. They represent a work in progress and will continue being reviewed in light of new experiences as Member States pilot them for their own reporting obligations under the Recommendation. Indeed, comments are still being sought as to how this draft can be improved for more effective reporting overall.

In compliance with 38 C/Resolution 55 and 206 EX/Decision 25.VI, the Director-General submitted to the 40th session of the General conference the first [consolidated report](#) on the implementation of the 2015 Recommendation concerning the preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage, including in digital form, together with comments by the Executive Board thereon at its 206th session. The analysis was prepared on the basis of 38 national reports from Member States received by the Secretariat: Albania - Armenia - Austria - Bulgaria - Canada - China - Côte d'Ivoire - Cuba - Ecuador - Estonia - Germany - Greece - Hungary - Iceland - Iran - Jordan - Korea - Lebanon - Lithuania - Mexico - Myanmar - Netherlands - New Zealand - Oman - Peru - Poland - Russia - Serbia - Slovenia - South Africa - Sweden - Switzerland - Turkey - UK - Ukraine - Uzbekistan.

# What has changed? Why global policies?

## FACTORS

DIGITAL  
REVOLUTION

GLOBAL  
ECONOMY

CONNECTED  
WORLD

- Global adoption of technologies and platforms
- Increased production of documentary heritage in digital form
- Global information and communication infrastructure—Internet
- Content and information beyond national boundaries.

## RISKS & CONCERNS

Rapid technology  
obsolescence

Content diversity

Large scale

Increased cost and  
effort

Lack of content  
control and security

## UNESCO Policy Dialogue: Key Takeaways from 27 October 2020 Discussions

BY UNESCO PERSIST on 6 NOVEMBER 2020 • ( 0 )



### Priority issues:

#### Preservation action

Protecting cultural identity at risk

#### Sustainability

Creating sustainable partnerships for preservation

#### Technology

Preventing loss of documentary heritage due to the rapid obsolescence of technology

#### Legal frameworks

Upholding enabling legal frameworks for effective functioning of memory institutions.



Outcomes of UNESCO Policy Dialogue

## Documentary heritage at risk: Policy gaps in digital preservation

Prepared by the  
Preservation Sub-Committee of the  
International Advisory Committee of the  
UNESCO Memory of the World Programme

5 September 2021

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[documentary heritage at risk policy gaps in digital preservation en.pdf \(unesco.org\)](https://unesco.org)

# UNESCO Policy Dialogue: Key policy gaps

Digital  
trespassing  
Data  
Sovereignty

Governance  
and access  
management

Collection and  
protection

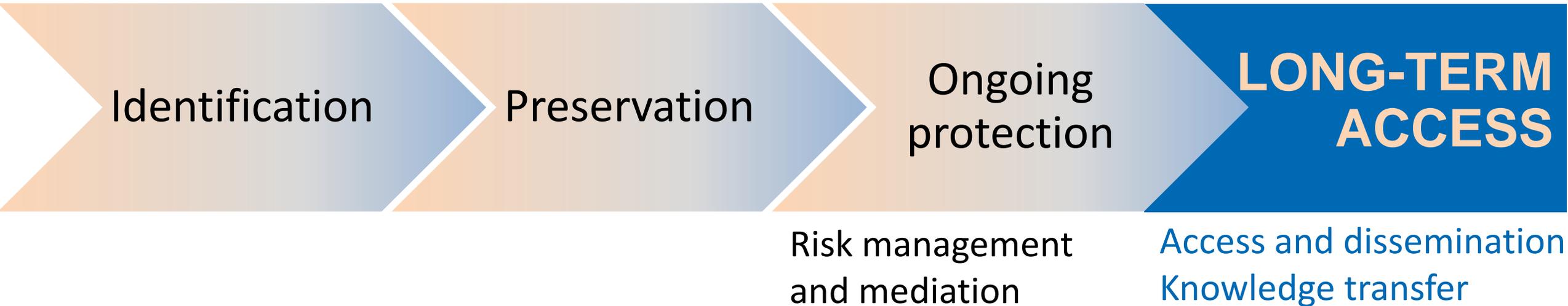
Institutional  
mandate  
Magnetic tape  
collection: awareness  
and collaboration

Scale & rapid  
deployment  
Standards  
and common  
resources

Preservation  
action

Legal and  
ethical  
frameworks

Treaties for  
collaboration  
Sustainable solutions  
and industry  
partnerships.



- Ongoing protection of documentary heritage is key.
- Enabling and managing access are essential to achieve the purpose and impact of the preserved documentary heritage.

# Risks to digital documentary heritage

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- Digital content requires **readers**, i.e., legacy software that can open old files
- Digital requires sophisticated **devices and computing environment**
- Legacy software is non-secure and require **extra security measures**
- **Licenses** of operating systems and software may not be readily available
- New technologies replace old and **user skills** fade over time.



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# Thank you!

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