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Appraisal and Selection in Moving Image Archives: Legacy and Transformations

Introduction

In July of 2015, the American political news website *Politico* posted an item about the Library of Congress' so-called Twitter Research Access project. In it, the author bemoans the Library's failure to deliver on its promise of making Twitter's entire tweet archive available to researchers – an objective it first communicated in the Spring of 2010. The article quotes a spokesperson for the institution, who blames the delay on the technical complexity of archiving and preserving such an enormous collection, on the effort that goes into making it searchable, and on the interplay of both with the financial restrictions a public institution has to work under.[1]
More than a decade earlier, historian Roy Rosenzweig, aware of the potential research value of the more ephemeral kinds of digital records, already anticipated some of the difficulties of preserving, managing, and above all making accessible large collections of electronic data. While focusing on the threat of data loss, his article draws attention also to the perils of information overload. Fellow-historians, he observes, tend to worry primarily about the scarcity of data, but an abundance of those can prove just as debilitating. For this reason, he urges them to heed archivists' pleas for record selection – a task which, at the dawn of a "Digital Era" in which information is ubiquitous, they consider increasingly urgent. In his view, historians should cease to oppose their efforts and get involved instead.[2]

For moving image archivists, concerns about technical complexity and cost (as highlighted by the Library of Congress Twitter example) and the urgency of archival decisions (as touched upon by Rosenzweig) are hardly new. Film and magnetic tape, the legacy media of audio-visual archives, not only take up a lot of storage space but are also very expensive to preserve – that is, duplicate or migrate – due to the combined cost of the materials involved and the highly specialist, time-consuming work it requires. In addition to this, such media deteriorate a lot more quickly than

[1] N. Scola, 'Library of Congress' Twitter archive is a huge #FAIL', *Politico*, 11 June 2015, http://www.politico.com/story/2015/07/library-of-congress-twitter-archive-119698.html#ixzz45oNqBtQq (accessed 20 April 2016).
[2] R. Rosenzweig, 'Scarcity or Abundance? Preserving the Past in a Digital Era', *American Historical Review* 108:3 (2003) 735-762.
[3] In this article, I alternate the term "moving image" with "audiovisual" (or "AV") archive; I do this primarily for stylistic reasons (i.e. to avoid repetition). Strictly speaking, of course, the two are not synonymous, since sound recordings also are "audiovisual media". In the literature on moving image archiving and preservation, however, the two are often used interchangeably.

paper, the staple of text-based archives, and are subject to the unrelenting laws of obsolescence. Paired with the often very shaky funding status of the institutions that keep them, and non-governmental ones in particular, these factors have always forced onto AV archivists a good deal of momentous choices.[3]
In light of this, it is all the more surprising that historically, the literature on moving image archiving has barely been concerned with the responsibility of governing what enters archives and is kept in there. The late Sam Kula, a long-time AV archivist and one of very few to publish on the topic, has pointed out on several occasions that the tasks of appraisal and selection of moving images have long been performed without reference to explicit (i.e. written) agreements on how they should be done. He attributes this primarily to disagreement among practitioners, on the procedures followed but also the standards or criteria adhered to.[4] Others have drawn attention to the conflicting interests of those producing (and reusing) records and those safeguarding them, in broadcast contexts in particular.[5] In recent years, however, selection has forcefully pushed itself to the forefront of the agenda – also in AV archives.[6] Custodians are confronted with an exponential growth in the production of moving images; in addition, born-digital records exacerbate the problem of obsolescence, which forecloses any sort of complacency in preservation. While a film with no signs of decay, kept in proper storage conditions, can easily wait a few years for a decision on whether or not it should be preserved, digitally produced and distributed ones tend to require immediate action.

The recent interest in matters of selection is accompanied by a number of shifts in the practice of moving image archivists. In this article, I want to discuss the relations between them in an introductory fashion. First, I briefly (and selectively) review the literature on moving image appraisal and selection, arguing that historically, these practices have been carried out in rather "covert" ways, unaffected by profound reflection within the profession at large. Next, I zoom in on the implicit or explicit criteria that have governed those practices, both historically and more recently. In the last section of the piece, I then consider how the transition to digital workflows affects the ways in which appraisal and selection are done today. In particular, I am interested here in where in the archival process selection decisions are made, who gets involved (inside and/or outside custodial institutions) and how the concerns of practitioners are shifting along the way. In light of the article's exploratory intent, I do not seek to make a significant theoretical contribution here – although efforts in this direction are certainly overdue.

To compensate for the relative scarcity of sources on the topic, the last section of the article relies in part on conversations with professionals. Interviews have been conducted with experts at the Netherlands' two main audiovisual archives: the EYE Filmmuseum (abbreviated in what follows as EYE) and the Netherlands Institute

[4] See for instance S. Kula, 'Archival Appraisal of Moving Images', in: P. Walne (ed.), *Selected guidelines for the management of records and archives: a RAMP reader* (Paris 1990), http://www.unesco.org/webworld/ramp/html/r9006e/r9006e00.htm (accessed 13 May 2016) [see also http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0008/000871/087132eo.pdf (accessed 20 March 2018) - ed.], or S. Kula, *Appraising Moving Images: Assessing the Archival and Monetary Value of Film and Video Records* (Lanham-Maryland-Oxford 2003) 35-36, 39, 59-61.
[5] See for instance T. Connors, 'Appraising Public Television Programs: Toward an Interpretive and Comparative Evaluation Model', *The American Archivist* 63:1 (2000) 164, or M. Ide and L. Weisse, 'Developing Preservation Appraisal Criteria for a Public Broadcasting Station', *The Moving Image* 3:1 (2003) 151.
[6] Compare T. Wisniewski, 'Framers of the Kept: Against the Grain Appraisal of Ephemeral Moving Images', *The Moving Image* 7:2 (2007) 2-3.

for Sound and Vision (Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid, henceforth Sound & Vision). Both institutions collect moving images of "national interest", in some cases along with ancillary (paper) records.[7] While Sound & Vision focuses on broadcast materials and non-fiction films, both viewed from the perspective of their cultural-historical significance, EYE looks after the Netherlands' "cinematographic heritage", with aesthetic parameters determining the value of its collections.[8] EYE and Sound & Vision have recently begun to acquire materials in digital form, and are in the process of setting up new workflows to accommodate those – workflows that determine also when, how and by whom decisions on retention and disposal are made. However, the institutions are also considerably different, both in terms of what they collect (which content, but also materially speaking) and in terms of their status as archives and the particular traditions of collection management and preservation they build on.[9]

1. Moving Image Appraisal and Selection: A Tradition of 'Covert' Practice

Moving image archives come in many shapes and forms. In the third edition of his well-known UNESCO paper *Audiovisual Archives: Philosophy and Principles* (2016), Ray Edmondson distinguishes between non- and for-profit ones, between autonomous (specialist, AV) archives and archives that function as divisions of larger institutions (that also keep other kinds of materials) and between institutions with different kinds of status (for example working with a government mandate, or not), users (producers, students, cinephiles, etcetera) or scope (with respect to type of media collected, geographical remit, and so on). In addition, he allows for possibilities in between all these sets of extremes.[10] Some institutions are legal deposit beneficiaries; most however are not, and have collections that reflect the histories of their inception or the particular interests, preferences or tastes of successive generations of curators.[11]

The great majority of moving image archives, in any case, do *not* function as long-term repositories for records that emerged within, and as part of, administrative processes – as do the sort of archives that archival science has traditionally focused

[7] For references to the collections' national interest or importance, see for instance M. Lauwers (ed.), *Collection Policy Sound and Vision* (Hilversum 2013) 4, 22, 25 (online at http://publications.beeldengeluid.nl/pub/386/), and EYE Filmmuseum, 'Collectieplan 2014-2017' (unpublished document, n.d.) 8, which considers "de nationale [...] betekenis van de collectie" (online at https://www.eyefilm.nl/en/file/17264/download).

[8] The phrase "cinematografisch erfgoed" is used among others in EYE's most recent collection policy document ('Collectieplan', 6).

[9] Focusing on two large moving image archives, both of which operate on the national level, necessarily implies that I ignore here the specifics of appraisal and selection in smaller institutions, among others regional ones (see also next paragraph in the main text). For reasons of space, I cannot consider them here – but doing so would no doubt force me to refine some of the conclusions I draw.

[10] Freely after R. Edmondson, *Audiovisual Archives: Philosophy and Principles*, 3rd ed. (Paris 2016) 34-39 (online at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002439/243973e.pdf).

[11] Edmondson here emphasizes in particular the role of a "founding personality" (see *ibidem*, 37).

[12] H. Harrison, 'Archival appraisal', in: H. Harrison (ed.), *Audiovisual Archives: A Practical Reader* (Paris 1997), http://www.unesco.org/webworld/ramp/html/r9704e/r9704e0l.htm#4.1%20archival%20appraisal (accessed 13 May 2016) [see also http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001096/109612eo.pdf (accessed 20 March 2018) - ed.].

[13] H. Harrison, 'Selection and audiovisual collections', in: *ibidem*; Kula, *Appraising Moving Images*, 23-24, 47.

[14] *Ibidem* (my emphasis).

on. As Helen Harrison, compiler of a practical reader on AV archiving, observes, such institutions "usually deal with material which has been literally 'collected' and not transferred to the archive in accordance with comprehensive schedules or as a result of a records management programme".[12] Selection therefore centres on what happens to be available – either because it has been deposited at the initiative of a donor or benefactor or because it has been actively pursued by the archive. Also, it tends to be focused on single items rather than (internally more or less coherent) groups of records.[13] For this reason, Harrison chooses to characterise what is ordinarily done in AV archives as "*re*appraisal" ("to rationalise the collection"), as opposed to the sort of appraisal that is applied to entire collections or bodies of material.[14]

A second marked difference between moving image and paper archives is that where appraisal and selection are concerned, the former barely have a tradition of reflection to refer to.[15] Only one publication to date has engaged with the topic in some depth.[16] Kula's 2003 book *Appraising Moving Images: Assessing the Archival and Monetary Value of Film and Video Records* is based in large measure on a RAMP study the author prepared for UNESCO in the early 1980s.[17] Dealing, as the title suggests, with the valuation of moving image collections for both archival and tax purposes, the work is partly a consideration of the nature of appraisal and selection as performed in moving image archives and partly an attempt to bring together the variety of concrete guidelines that have been produced by different institutions and associations, both across the world and in different areas of specialisation (some of those also authored by Kula himself). Since the early 2000s, a few articles have been published that reflect on projects, carried out within specific institutions (often broadcast archives), to develop collection-specific criteria for either retention and disposal or selection in preparation for further archival treatment.[18] "Of necessity", Timothy Wisniewski points out, "this literature is highly practical and technical in its response to specific preservation challenges".[19] As a rule, then, it does not provide much careful consideration of why appraisal and selection are done, and which issues it raises – whether archival, or more broadly socio-cultural or political.

[15] I do not mean to imply here that archivists generally *do* refer to archival theory in carrying out their daily work (for as Eric Ketelaar points out, archival theory, in fact, "is despised and rejected by many practicing archivists"; see his 'Archivistics Research Saving the Profession', *The American Archivist* 63:1 (2000) 324). Rather, I am talking here about the extent to which these practices have been theorised at all.

[16] Moving image preservation and description, in contrast, have garnered much more attention (compare Wisniewski, 'Framers of the Kept', 2) – and they still do.

[17] Kula, *Appraising Moving Images*; S. Kula, *The Archival appraisal of moving images: A RAMP study with guidelines* (Paris 1983) 93 (online at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0005/000576/057669e.pdf).

[18] Examples are Connors, 'Appraising Public Television Programs' (which proposes an evaluation scheme based on criteria common in many broadcast archives, but weighed against each other); Ide and Weisse, 'Developing Preservation Appraisal Criteria' (a piece that came about within the same research project at WGBH broadcast archive that also Connors contributed to and that in part covers the same ground); N. Marelli, 'Archival appraisal and the preservation of audio-visual records at Concordia University Archives, Montreal, Canada' (appendix 2), in: B. Craig, *Archival Appraisal: Theory and Practice* (Munich 2004) 165-186 (a very introductory piece that takes its inspiration from the author's practice in a mixed-media, university archive); M. Ide and L. Weisse, 'Recommended Appraisal Guidelines for Selecting Born-Digital Master Programs for Preservation and Deposit with the Library of Congress' (unpublished report, 2006) (a follow-up for the digital age to the authors' 2003 piece, this time commissioned by the Library of Congress, in which they make an argument for involving production staff in the provision of metadata in order to facilitate appraisal further on; online at http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/partners/documents/pdpt_appraisal_guidelines2006.pdf).

[19] Wisniewski, 'Framers of the Kept', 3.

In the absence of a specialist body of critical work on AV appraisal, some of these reports, books and articles seek recourse in archival theory.[20] Their authors however seem to have a somewhat limited take on what the field has to offer. Many for instance find inspiration in the work of T.R. Schellenberg, dating back to the 1950s and 60s, or the "pragmatic" approaches of later generations of theorists such as Maynard J. Brichford or Frank Boles and Julia Marks Young (all of whom consider also the factor of cost, traditionally key to AV archivists).[21] Meanwhile, their thinking seems hardly affected by post-modern reflection on the role of archives in the construction of (explicit or tacit) narratives about the world, and of the ways in which appraisal and selection specifically contribute to the construction of memories and the representation – and by the same token, silencing – of particular groups, their activities and ideas.[22] Although some authors recognise that archival appraisal and selection are inevitably "skewed", affected as they are by institutional as well as personal bias, a lot of this work still prides itself on the objectivity of trained archivists, assuming, as Wisniewski puts it, that they can function as "neutral keepers" instead of "intellectually and critically engaged framers".[23]

In past decades, authors have attributed the absence of reflection on appraisal and selection in specialist literature on AV archiving to avoidance of such practice in the field itself, arguing that selection was often the result of "benign neglect".[24] While neglect did of course take place, it would be naive to assume that where it occurred, it was uninformed by any sort of valuation. In the case of moving image archives, the lack of a "natural" continuity between record-producing agency and repository implies that choices are always made – whether by the archive, its donors, or both. More decisions are made at the time of allocation of the (scarce) means for active preservation. However, the reality of AV archives is that these choices and decisions are rarely documented the way archival literature would ideally have it.[25] In some cases, there is not even a written policy to refer to in making them.[26] For want of such documentation, appraisal and selection have traditionally been carried out in rather covert ways. Considering how often, in the AV archival process, value-laden decisions are made, this is particularly remarkable.
Reviews of current practice suggest that the parameters for appraisal and selection vary a great deal across types of institutions, between institutions within the same

[20] Several of these authors however remark also that notions advanced by archival theory are in fact of limited use when it comes to the appraisal of audiovisual records. Examples are Kula, *Appraising Moving Images*, 34; Connors, 'Appraising Public Television Programs', 166 (which comments specifically on the usefulness of ideas from what he calls the 'functionalist school'); Ide and Weisse, 'Recommended Appraisal Guidelines', 4 (which speaks of text-based appraisal criteria).

[21] Most of the work mentioned in notes 17 and 18 relies on Schellenberg's ideas at least to some extent; the WGHB appraisal project Connors, Ide and Weisse contributed to also explicitly credits such authors as Brichford and Boles and Young (see for instance Ide and Weisse, 'Developing Preservation Appraisal Criteria', 153). The term "pragmatic" is used among others in H.T. Pinkett, 'American Archival Theory: The State of the Art', *The American Archivist* 44:3 (1981) 217-222 (specifically with reference to Brichford's work).

[22] See for instance E. Ketelaar, 'Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives', *Archival Science* 1:2 (2001) 131-141; T. Cook, 'We Are What We Keep; We Keep What We Are: Archival Appraisal Past, Present and Future', *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 32:2 (2011) 173-189.

[23] Wisniewski, 'Framers of the Kept', 9. (In this respect, Wisniewski's piece also stands as an exception to the rule.) For examples of the former, see Kula, *Appraising Moving Images*, 23, 128 (where the term "skewed" is used); Edmondson, *Audiovisual Archives*, 64. In 'Recommended Appraisal Guidelines', Ide and Weisse suggest that this is true in particular for the production archives of operational broadcasters, while film and television archives tend to have more extensive written guidelines.

[24] See for instance Kula, 'Archival Appraisal of Moving Images'; Marelli, 'Archival appraisal and the preservation of audio-visual records', 166-167.

(sub)sector, and in some cases even among the staff members of those institutions. Variation occurs in terms of when those tasks are carried out, by whom, and with reference to which criteria.
With respect to timing, the sources suggest that over the years, appraisal and selection have been done at different points in the archival process and as part of different kinds of procedures – especially in the comparison between film and broadcast archives. In principle, film archive practitioners agree that some measure of delay between acquisition – usually without a formal appraisal step – and selection is beneficial, as the historical distance it entails allows for a better-informed valuation of the material concerned.[27] In practice, such lags do indeed occur, but in many cases, they are the result of backlog rather than a carefully considered choice.[28] In television archives, in contrast, some form of immediate action is generally required as unprocessed material cannot be reused.[29] Appraisal therefore is often done early on, although reappraisal and (de)selection may take place over time.[30]
In terms of who does the appraisal and selection, the sources are highly unequivocal. There is some measure of agreement that while the involvement of outside experts is desirable, the responsibility for decisions ultimately lies with archivists, often specialists in a given area of a collection.[31] The criteria these staff members work with – whether acknowledged or not, and documented or not – are widely divergent also. On the one hand, selection practices in moving image archives tend to observe a few shared principles that are less common in, or even alien to, other kinds of archives. On the other, criteria also vary amongst such institutions, among others along the lines of their specific remits.

2. Selection Criteria in Film and Television Archives: The Cases of EYE and Sound & Vision

As types of institutions, EYE and Sound & Vision differ in a number of ways, and these differences inevitably affect the selection criteria they adhere to. EYE, calling itself a "museum", sits somewhere in between a national film archive – albeit without the specific government mandate that such memory institutions ordinarily have – and a classic *cinémathèque*, in that it invests heavily in curated screenings and

[25] For instance, B. Craig, *Archival Appraisal: Theory and Practice* (Munich 2004) 4, 19, 114*ff*.

[26] Kula, *Appraising Moving Images*, 47, 59; B. Ooghe (with Y.-F. Vandendriessche), 'Selectie voor digitalisering in theorie en praktijk' (unpublished report, 2009) 21 (online at https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/764137/file/764153.pdf).

[27] See for instance Kula, *Appraising Moving Images*, 45, 60 (where he quotes from UNESCO's 1981 *Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images*, adopted after consultation, among others, with FIAF, the International Federation of Film Archives). With respect to broadcast collections, FIAT, the International Federation of Television Archives, advises in the 1996 version of its *Recommended Standards and Procedures for Selection and Preservation of Television Programme Material* that all actuality items, in any case, should be retained for at least five years before any selection takes place, once again in order to allow for sufficient historical perspective (see *ibidem*, 66).

[28] See for instance Harrison, 'Selection and audiovisual collections'.

[29] In spite of this, lags do occur in broadcast archives also (see for instance Ide and Weisse, 'Developing Preservation Appraisal Criteria', 152).

[30] The FIAT *Recommended Standards* advise that selection decisions be (re)considered five years after the first appraisal, then again after another five years, and then whenever migration is being considered (see Kula, *Appraising Moving Images*, 66). Kula however adds that "Very few moving image archivists actively review and reassess the collection on a regular basis, and fewer still deselect on the basis of current acquisition policy and selection criteria" (39).

[31] Harrison, 'Archival appraisal'; Ooghe, 'Selectie voor digitalisering in theorie en praktijk', 26.

other forms of access for cultural or educational purposes.[32] Sound & Vision, while positioning itself as a heritage institution also, functions largely in the manner of a television network archive, although operating independently rather than as part of such a network.[33] It has a government mandate to carry out the combined tasks of production archive for the national public broadcasters and keeper of a Dutch historical audiovisual collection (that includes also materials that do not originate in said production archive).[34]

As mentioned, it is commonly assumed that moving image archives, in terms of their selection criteria, deviate in certain respects from other kinds of archives, especially the kind that focus on "official" records emerging from some kind of an administrative process. The records they keep, Kula argues, are seldom appreciated for their functional or evidentiary value and more often considered in informational terms.[35] In the most conventional sense, moving images derive informational value from the fact that they document historic people, places or phenomena, socio-cultural or political developments, or historically-specific attitudes or opinions. These factors are relevant in particular to AV departments of government-mandated archives and broadcast archives; to the latter, among others, because of the likely reuse value of such material.[36] Another kind of informational value, this one specific to AV archives, derives from the records' status as attestant to the history of an industry and its production technology, or to the development of narrative or stylistic conventions.[37] Here, aesthetic principles, inevitably highly elusive, are often adhered to. Common also are productional frameworks for appraisal and selection. Sometimes, this entails that the work of particular companies, directors or other

[32] I use these categories as they are interpreted by Edmondson, in *Audiovisual Archives*, 37-38. EYE is a non-profit foundation, subsidised by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the city of Amsterdam, the province of North-Holland and various private and public funds. It was established in 2010 as the result of a merger between what was then known as Nederlands Filmmuseum, Holland Film (previously responsible for the international marketing and promotion of Dutch films), Filmbank (which did distribution of Dutch experimental films) and the Netherlands Institute for Film Education.

[33] For evidence of the former, see for instance Lauwers, *Collection Policy Sound and Vision*, 11-12. A. de Jong, *Digital Preservation Sound and Vision: Policy, Standards and Procedures* (Hilversum 2016) calls it a "corporate audio-visual programme archive" for the Dutch public broadcasters (13, or 15 in the online version, available at http://publications.beeldengeluid.nl/pub/388).

[34] Lauwers, *Collection Policy Sound and Vision*, 8, 18; Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid, 'Jaarverslag 2014' (unpublished report, n.d.), 12 (online at https://www.beeldengeluid.nl/jaarverslagen); De Jong, *Digital Preservation Sound and Vision*, 15 (13 in online version). The institute's official mandate as a corporate/production archive is laid down in the Dutch Media Law (Mediawet); its task as keeper of a national historical collection is recognised as part of other agreements, but here the situation is more complex (see J.M. Breemen, V.E. Breemen and P.B. Hugenholz, *Digitalisering van audiovisueel erfgoed: Naar een wettelijke publieke taak* (Amsterdam 2012) 6-26, available online at http://www.ivir.nl/publicaties/download/1043, a text that also outlines how this combination of tasks came about; many thanks to Mieke Lauwers for alerting me to it. Beth Delaney and Annemieke de Jong, in a piece on digital preservation in archives that hold television materials, call Sound & Vision a "hybrid" archive. (In doing so, they distinguish it from broadcast archives "proper", i.e. the kind that function exclusively as production archives for (public) broadcasters, and national libraries, that are much more focused on preservation but tend to adhere to lower quality standards, as they have a reference-only mission.) See Delaney and De Jong, 'Media Archives and Digital Preservation: Overcoming Cultural Barriers', *New Review of Information Networking* 20: 1-2 (2015) 75-79.

[35] Kula, *Appraising Moving Images*, 23-24, 34-35. The author here loosely borrows terminology from archival science (Schellenberg and others).

[36] Evidence of this is the fact that they figure prominently in the 1996 FIAT *Recommended Standards* (as quoted *ibidem*, 67); similar formulations are also used in more recent articles on appraisal and selection in television archives, as referenced in earlier notes. For claims as to the importance of reuse value to television >

contributors is subject to universal retention (possibly along with working materials, i.e. items that document the various stages of production).[38]
The aforementioned criteria in turn intersect with notions of what is nationally – or, in the case of archives with a narrower scope: regionally – significant.[39] Where aesthetic criteria apply, the influence of academy-endorsed canons is often visible.[40] Also scarcity and, due to the fragility of much AV material, age, are important factors: the rarer or older media are, the more valuable they become.[41] Another key factor is cost of retention. Keeping an object or collection, indeed, makes sense only if the archive is prepared to safeguard it from loss due to decay or obsolescence; doing so however has severe financial implications. Therefore, the cost factor, often along with technical considerations (what is the state of an item today, and what does this mean for its future preservation?) has traditionally contributed to the perceived value of moving images as well.[42]

In moving image archives, criteria for appraisal and selection – whether on record as such, or not – tend to closely tie in with institutional mission statements.[43] This is true also for EYE and Sound & Vision, whose collection policies exemplify the above tendencies but place their own emphases as well.[44] In the introduction, I mentioned that both institutions see themselves as repositories for collections of national interest. Sound & Vision specifies this, stating that it does for moving images what the national museums, the National Archive and the National Library do for heritage objects, monuments, documents and books.[45] The institutions share a responsibility for the audiovisual portion of what one of them calls the "Netherlands Collection" ("Collectie Nederland"), however with Sound & Vision

> archives, see Kula, 'Archival Appraisal of Moving Images', or Kula, *Appraising Moving Images*, 68. Ide and Weisse, again, argue that this is true in particular for production archives (i.e. the kind that are part of active broadcasting companies; see 'Recommended Appraisal Guidelines', 3). Karen Gracy in turn observes that reuse value is crucial also to many smaller AV archives, which even prioritise the preservation of materials that are likely to generate licensing revenue (see Gracy, 'Editor's Foreword', *The Moving Image* 7:2 (2007) vi).

[37] See for instance Kula, *Appraising Moving Images*, 44, 59-84 (the latter pages referencing a variety of guidelines and institution-specific policies dating from before 2003). Reception may also be relevant here; Sound & Vision, for instance, particularly values popular and prize-winning works (see Lauwers, *Collection Policy Sound and Vision*, 26; Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid, 'Werkproces Acquisitie Beeld en Geluid', version 2.0 (unpublished document, 2015) 10 (online at http://publications.beeldengeluid.nl/pub/409)).

[38] Kula, *Appraising Moving Images*, 44. Universal retention is common practice especially for feature films (*ibidem*, 45) while sampling is done more often in broadcast archives (Harrison, 'Archival appraisal') - although not for all categories of materials.

[39] Edmondson, *Audiovisual Archives*, 64-65.

[40] E.g. Kula, *Appraising Moving Images*, 59; elsewhere in the book (32, 43-44) the author also discusses some of the issues this raises.

[41] Harrison, 'Selection and audiovisual collections'; Kula, *Appraising Moving Images*, 41; M. Ide, 'Appaising Moving Images: Assessing the Archival and Monetary Value of Film and Video Records' [book review], *The American Archivist* 66: 1 (2003) 200.

[42] S. Kula, 'Selection policy and selection standards for television archives', in: H. Harrison (ed.), *Audiovisual Archives: A Practical Reader* (Paris: 1997), http://www.unesco.org/webworld/ramp/html/r9704e/r9704e0p.htm (accessed 13 May 2016) [see also http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001096/109612eo.pdf (accessed 20 March 2018) - ed.] This factor is highlighted also in many of the articles written since the early 2000s that propose selection guidelines for television archives (as mentioned in earlier notes).

[43] Ide and Weisse, 'Recommended Appraisal Guidelines', 3.

[44] All of the abovementioned criteria are either covered explicitly or alluded to in the institutions' collection policy documents: Lauwers, *Collection Policy Sound and Vision, passim*, and EYE Filmmuseum, 'Collectieplan', *passim*.

[45] Lauwers, *Collection Policy Sound and Vision*, 5.

focusing on broadcast materials and other materials with informational value in the (cultural-)historic sense, and EYE on film productions with cinematographic merit.[46] In carrying out their tasks, both archives build on a long tradition of national and international cooperation aimed at avoiding duplication of efforts as well as loss of potentially significant records.[47] A major difference between the policies of both institutions is that for EYE – which as opposed to Sound & Vision defines Dutch film heritage not only in terms of production, but in terms of what is relevant to the local "film or cinema culture" – the collection consists for a considerable part of non-Dutch materials.[48]
These "international" films constitute one area of the collection where EYE can distinguish itself as an institution. Both archives, in their policy documents, suggest that appraisal and selection are geared towards building a collection with a clear profile, and by the same token, shaping their image as organisations. Sound & Vision strives primarily for representativeness, and characterises collection building as a matter of "filling gaps".[49] The institute's intent here seems to be to ensure that no area of social and cultural life, or no period in the history of (Dutch) television or non-fiction filmmaking, remains undocumented for future generations. EYE, in contrast, aims for completeness in some areas of its collection (Dutch films released in cinemas and Dutch artistic films) but allows itself what it calls "bold" choices in other domains (for example, new international cinema and international classics, and more implicitly, Expanded Cinema works).[50] The criteria here – "artistic merit", "originality", "innovativeness", etc. – leave a great deal of room for interpretation, and even personal preference.[51] At times, a certain friction is also visible between the institute's desire to come off as a trailblazer, shaping canons rather than to follow them, and decisions to invest in high-profile, internationally sought-after "treasures" (which take up a large portion of its restoration budget).[52]

Another tendency that transpires in these documents is that selection decisions are informed increasingly by the needs of reuse – both in the short and the long term, and by various types of users. At Sound & Vision, which has a history as a production archive, reuse value is key also to the development of a heritage collection.[53] In this case, it could either mean the repurposing of a broadcasters' assets by producers, or

[46] EYE Filmmuseum, 'Collectieplan', 8; Lauwers, *Collection Policy Sound and Vision*, 11, 12. The latter publication uses the phrase "Netherlands Collection", introduced in the early 1990s as part of the government's Deltaplan for Cultural Management.
[47] An example at the national level is EYE's decision, after consultation with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, to take over (part of) the archival and presentation tasks of NIAf, the Netherlands Institution for Animation Film (Nederlands Instituut voor Animatiefilm) after its demise in 2013 (see EYE Filmmuseum, 'Collectieplan', 23). Internationally, the institutions cooperate within UNESCO (both), FIAF and ACE (the Association of European Cinémathèques) (EYE) and FIAT and IASA (the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives) (Sound & Vision), among others for purposes of relocation or repatriation of materials that are (more) significant to institutions elsewhere.
[48] EYE Filmmuseum, 'Collectieplan', 5-6 (the phrase "film- of bioscoopcultuur" is used on p. 5). The document also specifies here that 60% of the collection is in fact "international" (5). Sound & Vision in contrast only keeps non-Dutch materials if the "broadcast of the production or program had a great influence [presumably, on Dutch practice] and might be very difficult to get hold of otherwise" (Lauwers, *Collection Policy Sound and Vision*, 21). In the conversation referenced further on in this article, Frank Roumen, Sector Manager Collections at EYE, notes that these non-Dutch materials do in certain cases show signs of local appropriation (F. Roumen, personal interview, 11 May 2016).
[49] Lauwers, *Collection Policy Sound and Vision*, 19 (quote), 20. Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid, 'Werkproces Acquisitie Beeld en Geluid' also speaks in this context of target "coverage levels" ("dekkingsgraden") for materials on specific topics or with specific features (10).

the retrospective study or educational or entertainment use of these and other materials (whether by the institution itself or by external parties). But EYE as well suggests in its collection plan that acquisition and selection are done with reuse in mind – although the emphasis here lies with its own programming. In calling itself a "museum", it implies that it sees presentation as one of its core tasks, and this makes for certain priorities in collection building – priorities inevitably inspired by concerns of the present and immediate future. As presentation is subject in turn to copyright regulations, the latter inevitably affect selection decisions also – as they do at Sound & Vision. EYE even states that films are retained *only* if this includes the right to show them on its own premises.[54]

Overall, the collection policies of both institutions confirm the observation by Thomas Connors, in a piece on public television archives, that relevant documents, where they exist, tend to contain a great many criteria for appraisal and selection, which are often formulated so inclusively that they do not provide very firm guidelines for disposal and retention. In daily practice, archivists need to be more selective than those policies suggest, if they wish to maintain manageable collection sizes.[55] This inevitably implies that in the workplace, decisions are also made that those policies do not allow an outside reader – or one with a retrospective interest – to infer.

3. Practices of Appraisal and Selection in the Transition to Digital Archival Workflows

In recent years, moving image archives, like other collection institutions, have increasingly been acquiring records in digital form. In a 2006 instalment for the *DCC Digital Curation Manual*, Ross Harvey anticipated some of the challenges this would present for appraisal and selection. In his contribution, he identifies among others "questions of definition (for example, of *significance, continuing value*), scope (what do we need to select in addition to the data?) and process (what needs to be decided when?)".[56]

[50] EYE Filmmuseum, 'Collectieplan', 7, 18, 23 (but see also p. 6, 9, etc., where the term "eigenzinnig" is consistently used). "Expanded Cinema" is the term the institute uses for materials on the intersection between film and (media) art. I should point out here that it is not always clear how much freedom of choice EYE allows itself exactly. For example, while it seeks to make 'bold choices' in its selection of Expanded Cinema works, it also strives for a 'representative collection' here – which suggests that there is some kind of a reference for representativeness to reckon with (23). Roumen points out that some of these choices are also made during reselection (interview).
[51] *Ibidem*, 6, 17-19 (quotes). Kula argues that this is an issue in fact with *most* criteria for AV appraisal, including also socio-historic ones (see *Appraising Moving Images*, 83).
[52] Compare for instance *ibidem*, 18, 21 (where the term "parels" is used). On p. 9, the document claims that it "examines and adjusts existing canons" ("bestaande canons onder de loep neemt en bijstelt"); on p. 22 it states that it "(re)writes the avant-garde canon" ("de canon van de avant-garde (her)schreven"). Evidence of this also is the fact that EYE sometimes commissions new work, based on its collections (9).
[53] Lauwers, *Collection Policy Sound and Vision*, 18 (which calls it one of three key 'perspectives'). The organisation actually suggests that its attempts establish a representative collection (by "filling gaps") are inflected by the needs of users (20).
[54] EYE Filmmuseum, 'Collectieplan', 17; Lauwers, *Collection Policy Sound and Vision*, 21.
[55] Connors, 'Appraising Public Television Programs', 165.
[56] R. Harvey, 'Appraisal and Selection', in: S. Ross and M. Day (eds.), *DCC Digital Curation Manual* (Glasgow 2006) 9 (online at www.dcc.ac.uk/webfm_send/121).

Questions of definition, in the digital realm, seem to elicit at least in part the same sorts of answers they did when archives were dealing mostly with analogue materials. Commentators assert that "What is suitable for retention and what is not hasn't radically changed in being digital".[57] When asked, staff at EYE and Sound & Vision agree that in terms of the content they are interested in, their outlook is largely unchanged – even if the range of media they deal with has expanded[58] (Sound & Vision, for example, has recently begun to collect websites and games).[59] Yet at the same time, professionals these days are forced to consider the significance of their materials also in more technical terms. If a television item, for instance, has had a life as an online video as well, which file(s) should be retained?
Technical issues are at least as relevant when it comes to Harvey's questions of scope. Today's archives, indeed, can no longer just select AV content or "data"; they have to consider also the conditions that need to be in place in order for this content to remain legible and operational, which requires the maintenance of relevant metadata. An urgent task for AV archivists in particular is to define the most "significant" properties of the different types of records they keep: the kind that need to be preserved when format migration takes place.[60] Questions of process – in Harvey's words: what to decide when – are equally pressing. In light of the volumes of data that repositories currently take in, the development of mechanisms for their appraisal and selection, and especially, determinations as to where to fit these practices into archival workflows, are matters of grave concern.[61]

In the following pages, I want to develop further some of the abovementioned issues. In doing so, I consider not only actual, procedural changes – transformations in terms of how appraisal and selection are done, when, and by whom – but also how these tasks are perceived by practitioners, and which are their main preoccupations. I do this on the basis of a number of interviews conducted with staff at EYE and Sound & Vision.[62] Both institutions have recently reorganised their workflows in

[57] T. van der Werf and B. Van der Werf, 'The paradox of selection in the digital age', *presentation held at the IFLA World Library and Information Congress, Lyon, 19 August 2014* (quote from p. 14 of the online version, available from http://library.ifla.org/1042/). Many thanks to Annemieke de Jong for drawing my attention to this text.

[58] A. de Jong, personal interview, 10 May 2016; Roumen, interview. EYE, when it comes to the acquisition of born-digital materials, maintains its inclusive approach for Dutch productions (masters), but continues to document Dutch cinema culture also (in this case, acquiring only the compressed files shown in cinemas, the so-called "Digital Cinema Packages" or DCPs – a choice that inevitably affects their status as archival objects).

[59] De Jong, interview. As these constitute a new area of interest for the institute, selection criteria for them are still in development. (For example, a pilot project centring on games is currently being carried out; M. Lauwers, telephone conversation, 1 June 2016).

[60] De Jong, interview.

[61] Compare Ooghe, 'Selectie voor digitalisering in theorie en praktijk', 18-19.

[62] The interviewees are Anne Gant, Head of Film Conservation and Digital Access, and Frank Roumen, Sector Manager Collections (EYE); Annemieke de Jong, Digital Preservation Officer, and Mieke Lauwers, Senior Policy Officer (Sound & Vision). Gant and De Jong have been contacted on account of their pivotal roles in implementing digital (preservation) workflows at their respective institutions; Roumen en Lauwers because they act as liaison between, respectively manager of, the staff involved in the tasks of collection building and preservation. All interviewees reflect on their own experiences and speak from their own, personal perspectives. Together, they do not constitute a representative sample of practitioners at their institutions, but colleagues refer to them as experts on the topics discussed.

[63] See for instance T. van Exel et al., *Beelden van het verleden: 7 jaar Beelden voor de Toekomst* (n.p. 2015) (online at http://www.beeldenvoordetoekomst.nl/). As Ide and Weisse point out, digitisation also requires appraisal decisions ('Developing Preservation Appraisal Criteria', 3). In the cases of EYE and Sound & Vision, an important criterion here was the reuse potential of the materials (seeing as the project was meant among others to enable monetisation of the collections) (A. Gant, personal interview, 3 May 2016; De Jong, >

order to deal with the influx of digital materials, or are in the process of doing so. Between July 2007 and December 2014, they participated in the large-scale, government-funded digitisation project Images for the Future (Beelden voor de Toekomst) which channelled large numbers of previously analogue items into a digital preservation cycle.[63] At the same time, both have been acquiring also born-digital items. EYE does this primarily as part of an agreement with the Netherlands Film Fund (Nederlands Filmfonds, the agency that subsidises Dutch film making on the government's behalf) which stipulates that master materials for all funded productions are deposited with the institute once production has wrapped.[64] Sound & Vision, for this purpose, builds on its long-term cooperation with the public broadcasters (its main content providers) with whom it now shares a digital infrastructure that allows for daily ingest of all aired radio and television programmes.[65] Capitalising on its extensive experience with migration of media assets, it positions itself as an expert in digital preservation, providing services also to other keepers of AV collections.[66]

A first pattern that emerges from conversations with practitioners is that while they perceive the selection of born-digital materials as a particularly important task – if only because of the long-term financial commitment that keeping those entails – they are only beginning to consider how to fit it into their acquisition and preservation workflows. As the ingest of digital films and television programmes took off, EYE and Sound & Vision were confronted with a technical reality that imposed a number of immediate procedural changes, but that also raised questions that needed more time and experience to answer.
On the one hand, the acquisition of digital records, due to their inherent fragility and susceptibility to obsolescence, required action right away. At EYE in particular, this entailed profound shifts, both procedurally and conceptually. Effectively, a collaborator states, the historical distinction between "passive" and "active"

> interview). Later on, the rate at which digitisation was performed, for Sound & Vision in particular, became increasingly important, and this entailed that the development of factory workflows based on carrier type took precedence over a careful but also time-consuming selection of materials on the basis of content (M. Lauwers, personal interview, 10 May 2016). A large portion of the institutions' holdings has not yet been digitised (for instance, EYE states that around the completion of the Images for the Future project, about 15% of the collection had been digitised) and while both continue to transfer items, this is now happening at a much lower pace (see EYE, 'Collectieplan', 11; De Jong, *Digital Preservation Sound and Vision*, 16, or 14 online).

[64] Gant, interview. In addition, Roumen adds, the institute also pursues works of makers who do not receive such funds, but those constitute a small minority of what is ingested (interview).

[65] Lauwers, *Collection Policy Sound and Vision*, 9; De Jong, *Digital Preservation Sound and Vision*, 15 (or 13 online). The digital infrastructure was in place in 2007.

[66] For this reason, Sound & Vision is currently in the process of acquiring certification as a Trusted Digital Repository (TDR); to De Jong's knowledge, it is the first large public (and media) archive to do so (see her *Digital Preservation Sound and Vision*, 4, or 6 online; De Jong, interview). Currently, EYE also makes use of Sound & Vision's storage and back-up services, although it is planning to acquire its own digital repository in the next few years. In those cases where Sound & Vision provides storage and preservation services, the task of selecting material usually remains in the hands of the institutions that deposit them – although the distribution of responsibilities here is not always clear-cut. (For instance, one of the reviewers for this article points out that the National Archives have deposited AV materials at Sound & Vision for a long time, on the basis of some sort of a lending agreement. However, this practice is not in line with the 1995 Public Records Act, which stipulates that all materials should be assessed and selected before being transferred – as opposed to lent – to a public archive, and subsequently, become part of the preservation cycle there. Moreover, it also means that AV and other materials originating from the National Archives are administered in different ways. However, a pilot is currently being carried out that involves reviewing responsibilities and procedures for appraisal and selection, which might ultimately lead to more coherence in this area.)

preservation – cold, dry storage as opposed to copying or migration, the long-term strategies – ceased to be relevant, as the former was no longer an option.[67] On the other hand, caution was in order, as it was difficult to foresee how technology would develop. The question arose for instance whether over time, storage space might cease to be an issue, so that the task of selection could eventually be eliminated. (These days, this is no longer considered a feasible option, whether practically or financially. An interviewee at Sound & Vision argues that it is not desirable either, as one of the defining features of a public archive is precisely that it cares for a carefully composed and proportioned body of work.[68]) Especially with regard to technical selection, or the decision as to which components of AV objects to keep and which to dispose of, the assumption was that delaying it would eventually allow for a practice informed by a better understanding of its consequences, and perhaps even for automation of some of the work involved.[69]

At Sound & Vision, the shift to digital ingest of broadcast materials essentially entailed that selection for those records was no longer performed at the time of acquisition (as it used to be). Appraisal is still done up front: each item that enters the archive – whether directly from the broadcasters, or as deposited for long-term safekeeping – is assigned a category (A, B, C or D) that reflects its "cultural-historical value".[70] For short-term reuse purposes, all materials are preserved at the highest service level. Further retention and disposal decisions, the assumption is, will be taken when a first format migration is up (so in other words, technological developments will determine its timing). How the assigned values will factor into this is still unclear, as staff are just beginning to develop the policies and procedures to support the task.[71] EYE in turn takes in and preserves everything that arrives as part of the Film Fund agreement.[72] On the title level, this practice is in line with its policy of inclusiveness for Dutch-produced features and documentaries (a policy that predates the digital era). In addition, the volumes dealt with are more modest than those at Sound & Vision, which entails that there is less of a sense of urgency here. Yet even so, staff are aware that current practice delays certain curatorial decisions – decisions that will need to be confronted in the end (presumably, in preparation for the 2018 collection policy review).[73]

In terms of their *timing*, then, the appraisal and selection of born-digital moving images differ from those practices as applied to analogue materials. Appraisal is done early on in the records' life cycle and immediately followed by an active form

[67] Gant, interview.
[68] De Jong, interview. With respect to feasibility, some of the concerns are that records not only need to be stored, but also managed and made accessible (both of which involve IT and manpower, and the attendant cost). Even if some of these processes can be automated, humans still need to devise and supervise them. Moreover, the ever-increasing volumes of data kept will need to be migrated to new technological environments. See *ibidem* and A. de Jong, 'Selection Revisited', in: FIAT/IFTA Media Management Commission (ed.), *Selected Papers from the FIAT/IFTA Media Management Seminar 'Changing Sceneries, Changing Roles IV: Keeping Your Best Content and Metadata', Stockholm 13-14 May 2009* (n.p. 2010) 15-19.
[69] Gant, interview.
[70] De Jong, interview; Lauwers, interview. The categories were developed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in the 1990s, as part of its Deltaplan for Cultural Management (see note 46). According to Sound & Vision, they are used throughout the Dutch heritage sector (Lauwers, *Collection Policy Sound and Vision*, 25). For an explanation of the categories, see the appendix to this article.
[71] De Jong, interview; Lauwers, interview. This contrasts sharply with the institute's pro-activeness in matters of preservation, which is the focus also of the service agreements that are drawn up when materials are deposited at the archive.

of preservation – the latter being a novelty, in particular, for film archives.[74] Selection, in contrast, is generally delayed. For EYE, which is used to acquiring materials up to decades after they were made, this is common practice. For Sound & Vision, however, it entails a profound shift, both in terms of how it organises its activities and in terms of how it views its own collection. Since 2007, the institute makes a sharper conceptual distinction between its dynamic production archive (consisting of reusable assets, which it maintains as a service to the public broadcasters as determined by the relevant Ministry) and its long-term cultural heritage archive (a service to society at large, in the manner of other national archives and libraries).[75] Items that belong to the former may eventually end up in the latter, but this is not decided until later (even if, indeed, initial appraisal decisions are made early on). Employees expect that the time lag the new procedure entails may actually have its advantages, as it will allow for selection decisions to be taken with some historical distance (a long-time ideal also for broadcast archivists, but not always realised in practice).[76]

Yet many questions still remain as to *how* the task should be performed. The assumption is that it will no longer be possible to do it by hand, on a case-by-case basis. Selection of content, the Images for the Future project has highlighted, is expensive, primarily because of the man-hours involved.[77] Sound & Vision, therefore, is trying to devise procedures to automate the process at least to some extent. But it stresses that human intervention will always be necessary – if only to allow the institution to benefit from the hindsight that delayed selection affords (among others so initial appraisals can be reversed if need be).[78] An additional concern however is that working with digital records inevitably entails that beside content, other factors need to be considered during selection. One of those is completeness, which is understood in terms of the presence of key metadata as well as a record's various components. Items with insufficient information about their provenance or the technical environment they require to be viewed, or without elements that can help ascertain their integrity and authenticity over time, are undesirable, as they are destined to become inaccessible and therefore unusable (or as a Sound & Vision collaborator puts it: they are doomed to become "dark archive").[79] So, while technical aspects have always played some role in the selection decisions which AV archives make, criteria unrelated to the material's content seem to be progressively gaining importance.

[72] Exceptions here are the work templates (programme files) which sometimes reside on the hard disks with finished films that are submitted for preservation.
[73] Gant, interview; Roumen, interview.
[74] At EYE, arguably, appraisal is done even *before* production takes place, as the funding decision made is crucial here.
[75] Lauwers, *Collection Policy Sound and Vision*, 27-28. Remarkable here is that Harvey, in his instalment for the *DCC Digital Curation Manual*, argues that in the context of data curation, "the traditional distinction between records and archives, in which records become archives only when their active use has ceased and after their value has been ascertained as significant for the future, can no longer apply" (Harvey, 'Appraisal and Selection', 13). In the case of Sound & Vision, this observation clearly does not hold.
[76] De Jong, interview; Lauwers, interview. Compare note 27.
[77] See note 63.
[78] Lauwers, interview; De Jong, interview.
[79] De Jong, interview.

As far as the *who* of appraisal and selection is concerned, other tendencies emerge beside the partial automation of tasks, now and in the future. For example, practitioners also notice a trend towards the dispersal of, very specifically, technical selection tasks over the various stages of ingest, storage and dissemination of records.[80] This means in practice that in addition to curators (those who set and/or interpret the criteria for content selection) staff with other specialties are now involved in decisions as to what to retain and what to dispose of.[81] Furthermore, choices as to how to preserve items – which metadata to add, how to store them, which formats to migrate them to, etc. – may affect selection decisions that are taken further down the line.

A related development, due in part to the centrality of the data life-cycle model to preservation workflows, is the streamlining of documentation practice (as mentioned, an area of limited attention in AV archives historically). As objects pass through various systems, a record is created of the "events" they are subject to (for example: moving, copying or changing their technical features), the "outcomes" of those events, but also the systems, organisations or people responsible (the so-called "agents").[82] The assumption is that once a first format migration takes place, retention or disposal actions will be logged in similar ways.[83] Whether or not the resulting records will shed light also on agents' motivations for those actions will depend among others on the level of automation with which decisions are implemented.[84]

Finally, it has been argued that the responsibility for appraisal and selection is shifting not only within archival institutions, but also in relation to their external stakeholders. On the one hand, authors claim that the archive process is beginning to encompass aspects of media production.[85] Staff at EYE and Sound & Vision confirm that within their digital workflows, they tend to cooperate more closely with depositors, instructing them among others on how they should supply their records. The result of this is that some of the work that used to be performed internally – for instance, the labelling of objects or the structuring of technical information – is now done as part of the (post-)production chain.[86] However, at the institutions consulted, the decision as to what to keep or discard in the long run is kept in-house – even if the conditions for keeping something are sometimes met elsewhere. On the other hand, authors also note (or more often, foresee or advocate) a shift of these responsibilities towards so-called "designated

[80] *Ibidem*.
[81] The function of curator, in this case, is specific to EYE; at Sound & Vision, content selection is the responsibility of the Media Managers in the Ingest department (afdeling Instroom).
[82] De Jong, *Digital Preservation Sound and Vision*, 30-31 and 42 (or 32-33, 44 online).
[83] Sound & Vision's collection policy document states that already, when a file is disposed of, metadata for said item are retained for documentation purposes (Lauwers, *Collection Policy Sound and Vision*, 29).
[84] De Jong, interview. The interviewee points out that although digital preservation workflows do enforce a more careful and systematic documentation, the task remains a precarious one, as it continues to involve a good deal of manpower (if only for the management of processes that are themselves automated).
[85] Ide and Weisse, 'Recommended Appraisal Guidelines', *passim*; Ooghe, 'Selectie voor digitalisering in theorie en praktijk', 19.
[86] Gant, interview; De Jong, interview. See also E. Verbruggen, 'Monitoring Designated Communities: Wat we willen weten over de gebruikersgroepen van Beeld en Geluid', version 1.0 (unpublished document, 2016) 10 (online at http://publications.beeldengeluid.nl/pub/406). De Jong stresses in her interview that for Sound & Vision, this is important also from its perspective as a service provider: putting certain tasks in the hands of depositors helps clarify the responsibilities of all parties involved.

communities" of users.[87] Again, the institutions discussed exemplify these developments only to a certain extent, and in the technical domain primarily. While EYE and Sound & Vision increasingly gear their activities, including also the selection of content, towards the needs of users, they rarely involve those directly in the decisions they make (rather, they study their users and draw conclusions for daily practice).[88] However, Sound & Vision does point out that in defining the significant properties of the objects it holds, the perceptions of its designated communities will definitely be key.[89]

Conclusions

In a 2014 conference paper, Titia and Bram van der Werf, speaking from the perspective of heritage professionals, claim that the selection of records is a major challenge of our time, one "that [keeps] practitioners awake at night".[90] For many years, they argue, memory institutions have focused on digitising historical archives to make them easily accessible; meanwhile, they have neglected the Herculean task of appraising and selecting daily accretions of digital records.[91] While the authors' plea for swift action is inspired primarily by environmental concerns (digital preservation may be technologically complex and expensive, but it also leaves an increasingly large ecological footprint) the underlying concern is shared by many, also in moving image archives. However, as my conversations with practitioners confirm, the challenge has barely been met, although plans as to how to do so are beginning to be made.

Confronting experiences at EYE and Sound & Vision with literature on appraisal and selection in textual archives suggests that in the digital realm, the practices and concerns of the different types of institutions are converging. For example, archival literature also notes that working with electronic records involves shifts in the timing of certain tasks (for instance: appraisal, of necessity, is done early on) and makes for increasingly fluid boundaries between traditionally distinct responsibilities (since appraisal and selection decisions get dispersed over the archival process, even exceeding the confines of archival institutions).[92] Issues that used to be relevant primarily to AV archives (for instance, the perpetual resource implications of selection decisions, both technical and financial) are gaining importance also at institutions previously concerned with paper records.[93] Inversely, moving image archivists, following the lead of colleagues elsewhere, are

[87] E.g. Craig, *Archival Appraisal*, 96-98; Harvey, 'Appraisal and Selection', 13, 19.
[88] Verbruggen, 'Monitoring Designated Communities' attests to this approach.
[89] De Jong, interview. Compare Harvey, 'Appraisal and Selection', 19. De Jong sees this as a necessity, if the long-term preservation of digital assets is to remain affordable.
[90] Van der Werf and Van der Werf, 'The paradox of selection in the digital age', 16 (quote) and *passim*.
[91] *Ibidem*, e.g. 13, 14.
[92] See for instance Craig, *Archival Appraisal*, 75-76, also 10, 32-33 (on the timing of appraisal decisions); E. Ketelaar, 'The Art of Appraisal', a partial rendering of a presentation held at the 'Archives, Documentation and the Institutions of Social Memory' conference, Michigan, 31 January 2001 (see 3-4 of the online version, available from www.uu.nl/wetfilos/wetfil02/programma/files/ketelaar.pdf) and E. Ketelaar, 'Archives in the Digital Age', *Archives and Social Studies: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Research* 1:0 (2007) 181-182 (on the various topics touched upon).
[93] Compare for instance Harvey, 'Appraisal and Selection', 9, 10.

professionalising their documentation practice, producing so-called "audit trails" (thus making themselves accountable towards their depositors).[94]

Meanwhile, discrepancies are still visible in terms of the criteria for appraisal and selection that the different types of institutions adhere to. According to Harvey, there is ample evidence that in this digital age, further sectorial differentiation will be necessary here.[95] With respect to moving image archives, it is to be expected that in determining their criteria, they will be increasingly inspired by the needs of (various kinds of) users. For as a Sound & Vision interviewee points out, the expense of an AV archive's core activities requires cost recovery in order to be sustainable.[96] Archival theorists sometimes object to a selection practice that is focused too much on the present or anticipated needs of users (in their case, researchers); AV archivists, in contrast, more often act in the assumption that it is imperative that they follow such trends closely and amend their priorities accordingly.[97]

[94] De Jong, interview (in which she claims that Sound & Vision has a lot to learn here from the national archives). In this respect, their practice is approaching more closely what Luciana Duranti, in a well-known piece from the mid-1990s, considered the core task of archivists: to guard the authenticity and integrity of the records in their care (Duranti, 'The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory', *The American Archivist* 57:2 (1994) 328-344). Yet at the same time, AV archivists continue to attribute value in a manner that this piece does not condone (because their practice clashes with some of the basic tenets of archival theory).
[95] Harvey, 'Appraisal and Selection', 11.
[96] De Jong, interview.
[97] Compare for instance Cook, 'We Are What We Keep', 179-180 (where he discusses among others the legacy of Gerald Ham) with De Jong, interview.

Appendix: Extract from Sound & Vision's Collection Policy, outlining the categories used for initial appraisal of collection items

Source: M. Lauwers (ed.), *Collection Policy Sound and Vision* (Hilversum 2013) 25 (document to be retrieved from http://publications.beeldengeluid.nl/pub/386/)

Cultural-historical value
Cultural-historical value and grading categories were developed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research in the 1990's [sic] as part of the Delta Plan for Cultural Preservation. They have, in general, been used by the heritage sector in the Netherlands since that time.

There are four categories, A to D.
Categories may be assigned to a subcollection or a percentage of material within a sub-collection. This allows one to assign an exceptional category to material within one collection.
The category awarded determines the material's future management level. Thus, in principle, only material with an A or B value receive [sic] the highest preservation treatment. Productions and collections assigned a category C receive passive conservation (analogue) or a lower service level and level of description. The value assigned is also influenced by its reuse value, one of the selection criteria.

Briefly, the four categories could be described as:

- Category A, all the audiovisual productions and collections that fall within the organization's mission statement and the Dutch cultural landscape that are considered irreplaceable and indispensible.
- Category B is assigned to material considered a part of an institution's core collection. This includes material with a high entertainment or exhibition value or a very high, cultural historic, documentary value.
- Category C includes audiovisual material that fits within the organization's selection policy but does not necessarily have an exceptional cultural-historical value. Digital collections with a C value undergo long-term preservation processes such as migration but are often made accessible at a lower service level. This material can be recognized by its level of description.
- Finally, category D is assigned to audiovisual productions that offer little or no additional value to the organization's collection. They fall outside the collection profile and are therefore considered irrelevant to the institution. This material is also considered ripe for deaccessioning. It could possibly have a cultural-historical value for another institution.