

AMIA INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH TASK FORCE

MINUTES OF MEETING – AMIA CONFERENCE, AUSTIN, 2005

First session: Thursday 1 December, 6.00 – 7.30

Present: see list below. The meeting was jointly chaired by Ray Edmondson and Sam Kula.

1 **Approval of minutes:** Minutes of the 2004 meeting were approved.

2 **Matters arising:**

- *UNESCO recognition of AMIA:* Status not clear – Board to be asked to progress
- Regional chapters: see subcommittee reports below
- CCAAA: current issues are coordination of training and moves for a new UNESCO international instrument to support the full spectrum of AN archiving. (See documents on www.ccaaa.org) AMIA has offered to host an international symposium on archive management on behalf of CCAAA (see below).
- 2005 conference: an IOTF session was proposed but not programmed for this year's conference
- Subcommittee reports:

(a) *Associate or regional members:* Frank Stark/ Sam Kula/ Kwame Sarpong/ Martin Humphries were to consider this issue. The group concluded there needed to be a full scale proposal on this to the Board so the issue comes back to the IOTF.

(b) *Regional chapters:* Jane Alvey/ Ray Edmondson/ Martin Humphries: the first step towards establishment of a European chapter was expected to be an AMIA workshop. Ray and Jane met in London to discuss a plan for a workshop based at the University of East Anglia, linked to the intended international seminar on archive management. The AMIA Board subsequently decided to delay the seminar for a year so the idea has been put on hold.

3 **Growing international AMIA membership**

There was general discussion in which the following points were made:

- There is potential for hundreds of AMIA members in Europe. There are only a few dozen at present. Many people who know nothing of AMIA so far would respond to active outreach.
- AMIA offers a forum for individuals to relate on equal terms and express themselves as professionals. This is a completely different dynamic to FIAF and FIAT which are essentially forums for organisations. There is a need to be met and if AMIA does not meet it, a new organisation may emerge to fill the vacuum.
- We will not really know what people in other regions want until we provide a forum in which they can express themselves.
- AMIA should look to South America and the needs there. We should think of AMIA presenting itself at the FIAF congress in Sao Paolo, Brazil, in April. AMIA is not a competitor to FIAF: their roles are complementary, and it's a message that needs to be spread.
- The membership fee of \$75 is expensive and out of reach for many people in developing countries. How can this blockage be overcome? Can regional chapters be set up with a different fee structure?

4 European event

A simple one-day event was seen as a first step in breaking the ice in Europe. After discussion the meeting endorsed a proposal put forward by Paul Read, Martin Koerber and Thomas Christiansen for an AMIA technical day, probably arranged to coincide with an existing festival or other event. Paul, Martin and Thomas agreed to act as an organizing group to take the matter further, and further discussion will be pursued by email.

5 CCAAA Management symposium

The International Archive Management Symposium, to be hosted by AMIA, has been postponed to 2007 – date to be set. This is a major strategic event for the profession. Preparations are in the hands of the Board, in consultation with CCAAA, and the IOTF should be a participant in the arrangements. The likely venue of the event is Europe.

6 Status of Task Force

It was noted the IOTF has been in operation for 5 years. It has achieved a refocusing of AMIA as an international association, bringing it firmly into the CCAAA and positioning itself as the successful host of a JTS and the impending management symposium. The IOTF has run conference sessions which connected archivists from other countries, especially third world countries, with the AMIA membership, and opened up other issues such as the conduct of events outside North America and international volunteerism.

By now it is evident that there are ongoing issues in the international arena and the Task Force model is no longer appropriate: a standing committee is needed. There was discussion about whether a Committee of the Board or a Committee of the Membership was the more logical. Since the issues are strategic and ongoing, rather than expressive of particular archival functions, the former was felt to be the appropriate model.

The meeting therefore **recommends** to the Board that a standing committee of the Board to take over the role and functions of the IOTF be established.

Sam Kula will prepare the appropriate documentation for the Board to support this proposal.

7 **2006 Conference:**

IOTF will propose a session for the 2006 AMIA conference. Possible topics: repatriation, volunteerism, overseas membership issues.

8 **Action**

- Paul/ Martin/ Thomas to pursue organisation of an event in Europe in 2006 (Item 4)
- Sam Kula to prepare document for Board (Item 6)
- Ray/ Sam to pursue ideas for 2006 conference session (Item 7)

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Second session: Friday 2 December, 6.30 – 7.30

Present: see list below. The meeting was chaired by Ray Edmondson .

For logistical reasons (a last minute change of meeting room) and timing reasons (the conference session immediately prior finished late) the meeting was relatively short and in a standing-room-only situation.

1 **Introduction:**

Ray Edmondson explained that the purpose of the meeting was to share information about international volunteering. Several AMIA members had undertaken volunteer projects in developing countries, or were contemplating doing so, but there was not yet a mechanism to facilitate volunteer projects and opportunities in audiovisual archives. While a single conference discussion wouldn't create that, it would open up the issues as perhaps a step towards such a mechanism.

2 **Review of case studies:**

Brigitte Paulowitz had undertaken a personal volunteer project at the National Film Archive of Thailand in May/June 2005, with some financial assistance from FIAF and SEAPAVAA. Brigitte's report had been circulated before this conference to a mailing list of those who had expressed interest.

Andrea McCarty had undertaken a volunteer project at the national cinematheque in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso helping to set up a database. She related her experiences, noting that she was unsure whether what she began has been continued, the problem of lack of infrastructure at the archive, and her uncertainty about whether the archive is still linked to FIAF [Post-meeting note: it is listed in the 2005 FIAF directory as an associate member]

Paula Felix-Didier spoke of the difficult conditions for film archiving in her home country, Argentina, where even if appropriate laws are adopted to support archiving they are not necessarily implemented.

3 Review of structures

Nancy Marelli described the "Archival Solidarity" scheme being developed by ICA (International Council on Archives). Currently there are about 120 projects in the data base, although there is not yet a formal structure. Some insights that have so far developed:

- Some projects work, some don't. These conclusions can be drawn from experience.
- Ongoing relationships are important. One-off exercises with no follow up and no continuity don't achieve much.
- A volunteer shouldn't go in with a "missionary" attitude. It's a two way relationship and the learning and benefits happen in both directions.
- "Twinning" works: one archive "twinning" with another, as cities do. Institution to institution, individual to individual: adoption, mentoring. AMIA uses this model for new conference attendees
- AMIA could set up pilot projects – you have to start somewhere – and give its seal of approval to them.
- Equipment surplus in one archive can meet another archive's needs.

There was general sharing of ideas and experiences. The "personal" element was recognized: the volunteer needs a high level of motivation and commitment and sometimes a project arises out of the personal contacts he or she has made. A project may grow naturally out of a relationship which already exists between two institutions.

Among the obvious limitations are questions of finance (who will pay for the project?) and time (how much staff time is an institution willing to commit to sustain a relationship?)

In other spheres, formal “volunteer” organisations do exist. They provide a structure within which projects can proceed, meet the expenses of a project, provide for personal security and health care of volunteers, match the individual to the need and encourage follow through. These are models that can be studied in developing something workable for the AV archiving field.

4 Outcomes

Given its brevity and in the exploratory nature of the meeting, specific resolutions did not emerge or seem appropriate, but there was a general view that the subject is a vital one which must be pursued. The “Archival Solidarity” structure is still forming, there is more research to be done into the way established volunteer organisations work, and more information needs to be exchanged.

The attendance at the meeting is taken to represent a forum of interested people. Ray Edmondson undertook to devise a method of continuing the discussion, perhaps with a core group drawn from those attending the meeting, with the intention of leading to a concrete scheme which AMIA could support.

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Attendance at 1 December session (38)

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Attendance at 2 December session (34)

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