

EXPANDED DEFINITION OF DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

A **document** is an object comprising analogue or digital informational *content* and the *carrier* on which it resides. It is preservable and usually moveable. The content may comprise signs or codes (such as text), images (still or moving) and sounds, which can be copied or migrated. The carrier may have important aesthetic, cultural or technical qualities. The relationship between content and carrier may range from incidental to integral.

Documents are the result of a deliberate intellectual act and come in numerous forms:

Text items such as manuscripts (of any age), books, newspapers, posters, correspondence, business records, computer files etc. The textual content may be recorded in ink, pencil, paint, digits or other medium, The carrier may be paper, plastic, papyrus, parchment, palm leaves, bark, stone, fabric, hard disk, data tape or other material.

Non-text items such as drawings, maps, music scores, plans, prints, diagrams or graphics. The recording medium and the carrier may be similarly diverse.

Audiovisual items such as sound discs, magnetic tapes, films, photographs – whether in analogue or digital form, however recorded and in any format. The physical carrier may be paper, various forms of plastic or celluloid, shellac, metal or other material.

Virtual digital documents, such as websites, which may be an assemblage of data from a variety of sources on a single or multiple computers, or from one or more data carriers on a single computer.

Documentary heritage comprises those single documents – or groups of documents – of significant and enduring value to a community, a country or to humanity generally, and whose deterioration or loss would be a harmful impoverishment.

Documentary heritage is a collective term used by MoW to refer to a *single* document of any kind, or a number of documents that form a logical and coherent *group* (such as a *collection*, a *holding* or an archival *fonds*). The size of the group does not matter; what holds the group together does. A *collection* is a self-contained group of individual documents that have been brought together by a particular circumstance, reason or purpose (for example, subject matter, character, provenance, or historical relationships). An archival *fonds* is the whole group of documents made or received by a person or organization in the course of their normal activities and kept for future reference, and in which the administrative context and relationships between records is preserved. A *holding* is a set or larger grouping of defined collections and/or fonds. It is possible that collections, fonds or

holdings may have become split between two or more institutions in the same or different countries, over time, for various reasons.

MoW defines a *document* as having two components or aspects: the information *content* and the *carrier* on which it resides. *Both may be of great variety and, in the context of inscribed documents, of different degrees of importance.*

Generally, in traditional (analogue) text documents, content and carriers form a unit which is usually considered as the *original*. Such documents may owe much of their importance to the specific nature of the carrier (for example, an illuminated manuscript or a photograph recorded on a particular kind of paper) or its circumstantial associations (for example, a music score written by a famous composer or a collection compiled or owned by a renowned person).

In the case of machine-readable or reproducible documents – that is, all audiovisual documents except analogue photographs, and all digital documents – the carrier, although necessary to physically contain the information, is sometimes of lesser or even no importance in the context of MoW. This is because digital and audiovisual information is generally preserved by migration from one storage platform and carrier to the next. However, this is not always true. There are cases where the particular carrier on which the content is stored could be the reason for a document's inscription (for example, a phonoautogram, or the oldest data on punch cards). Motion picture film may have characteristics (such as an obsolete colour process) which give the carrier a particular importance.