



Image Courtesy of Asian Film Archive



ASIAN FILM ARCHIVE

Implemented: 2016

Customer: Asian Film Archive

Project: Film Collections Management System

Industry: Regional Film Archive

Location: Singapore

Challenge: Modern Integrated MAM Solution To Replace Manual Spreadsheet Tools

“We chose TMD’s Guardian for Collections Management because it gave us the quantum leap forward in our ability to manage our growing collection and increase our ability to catalogue, preserve, and share a barely tapped reservoir of high quality content that deserves to be seen, studied, and enjoyed.”

Karen Chan
Executive Director, AFA

Asian Film Archive Implements Guardian Collections Management Solution

INTRODUCTION

The Asian Film Archive (AFA) was founded in 2005 as a cultural heritage organisation, designed to capture, preserve, and make accessible, the rich and diverse film collection of the region. Based in Singapore, the AFA is now a subsidiary of the National Library Board to continue its mission to preserve and promote Asia’s film heritage.

South-east Asia has a very strong film community but, aside from the obviously commercial, few films from the region reach a broad audience beyond the film festival circuit. Asian films are increasingly hybrids of cross-border and cross-cultural influence, reflecting contemporary political and social issues.

The AFA’s mission is to not only curate films from the region, but also promote scholarly research on film and inspire a wider appreciation of this art form. It also provides a repository for original materials, including film memorabilia of the movies, as well as digital files of each asset. This makes it a highly valuable collection.

THE CHALLENGE

At the time of the project, the AFA collection covered about 2,000 assets, with 100 to 200 new movies, added each year, equating to roughly 100 hours of new digital content. While the collection is not huge, it had far outgrown the in-house catalogue system developed using Excel, which had become increasingly cumbersome and time-consuming.

There was also no simple means for archivists to browse through content. Nor was there the facility for an audit trail, which is part of the organisation's mandate.

What the AFA needed was a proven, fully featured asset management system tuned to the needs of audio visual archives, which would be readily scalable with streamlined workflows to simplify the management of physical and digital assets. At the same time, the system had to be cost-effective, simple to implement and easy to use.

Central to the requirement was a structured data schema that links the physical and digital media. It had to provide a means of supporting archivists through browsing, a simple transition plan to migrate to the new platform, and a comprehensive audit trail of all collection operations.

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

The AFA developed a functional specification for the new collections management system. This was sent to a number of potential vendors as a request for proposal (RFP), in a competitive tender.

The tender specified that the successful vendor should provide a complete turnkey content management system that met at least the following key requirements:

- be scalable
- provide a structured data schema that links physical and digital media
- enable AFA archivists and other interested parties to search the collection
- provide for the enrichment of metadata
- offer a full audit trail of all collection operations

The initial requirement was that it should provide facilities for three concurrent specialist archivists, along with five further concurrent users, each using the search and browse functionality.

SOLUTION

TMD has extensive experience in managing audio-visual archives, up to the very largest collections with assets counted in the millions. It has met these re-

quirements through application-specific developments of its Mediaflex-UMS asset management platform.

Recognising that there are a large number of audiovisual archives, large and small, TMD has used its next-generation Mediaflex-UMS (Unified Media Services) platform to develop a range of media service applications. Each application uses the core functionality of the UMS platform to provide specific workflow solutions. Among these solutions is Mediaflex Guardian, a media service application designed specifically by TMD to provide collections management solution for national, cultural, mixed media television and film archives as well as Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAM).

The scalable solution can easily expand to meet the needs of a growing collection, adding more parallel processing, more users, and more articles over time.



AFA's Archivist, Chew Tee Pao, assessing 35mm film collection. Courtesy of Asian Film Archive
The AFA's mission is to preserve, nurture, and share Asia's rich collection of highly-valued, award-winning and culturally diverse films.

Mediaflex Guardian is a highly configurable, modern collections management solution which has been developed on the back of two highly successful projects TMD have implemented with the National Film and Sound Archives of Australia (NFSA) and the National Archive of Australia (NAA).

Mediaflex Guardian focuses entirely on the requirements of National and Cultural AV Archive organisations including:

- Acquisition of articles into a collection, allowing users to identify containers, describe articles, evaluate articles and make decisions about selection or non selection.

- Accessioning of articles into the collection
- Transferring bulk items directly into the collection through rules-based Excel templates or adding them manually.
- Raising of preservation workflows either automatically or manually, providing automated control of media processing tasks such as file copies and moves, checksum creation and validation and as required direct control of third-party devices:
 - Storage and management of digital articles for security and long term preservation
 - Access to articles by cataloguing staff to enhance descriptive metadata
 - Providing full history and audit trails for all articles while part of the collection
 - Reporting
 - Making articles available to a wider audience

The AFA made the decision to select Mediaflex Guardian for its new collection management system.

The transfer of data from the Excel spreadsheets into the coherent Mediaflex Guardian database is a key

aspect of the project. As well as migrating the data, this stage of the project involves validating and cleaning the metadata, and ensuring that links to physical and digital objects are accurate.

A key feature of Mediaflex Guardian is the browse-resolution proxy server system, allowing material to be browsed on the desktop alongside the search facilities. Media migration included the automatic creation of the browse resolution proxy files.

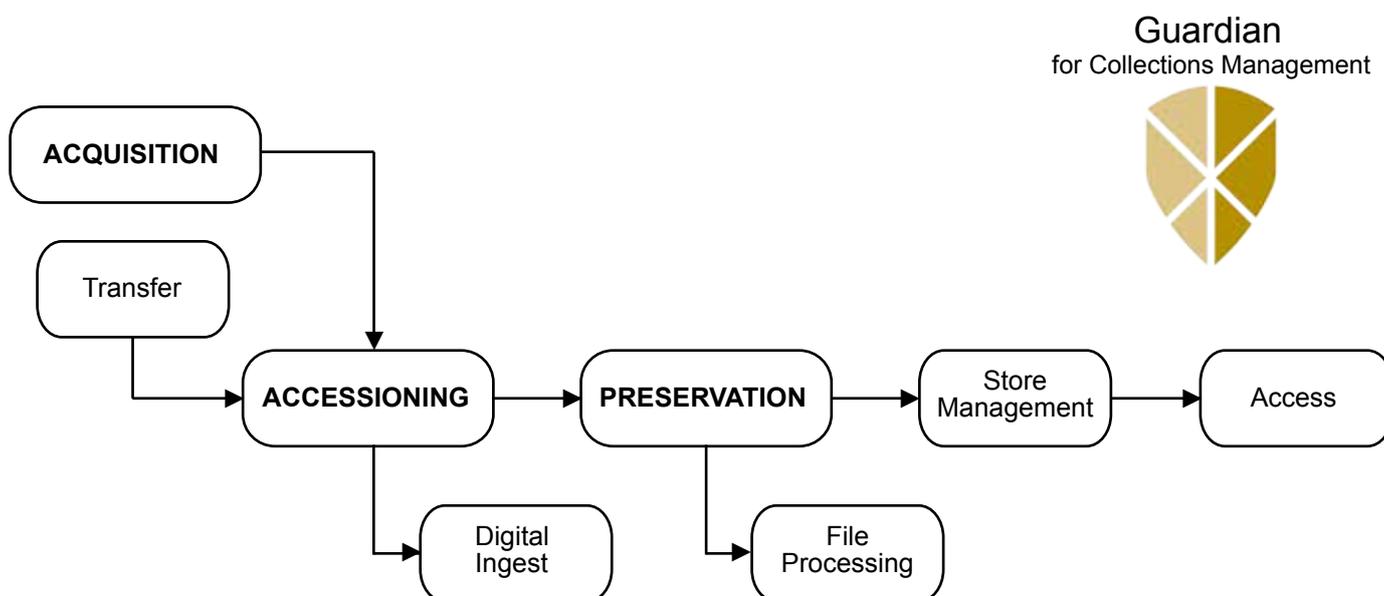
While this sort of small-scale, high value archive is a typical application for Mediaflex Guardian, the system is capable of scaling up to collections numbered in the millions. This, and the ability to add more workstations, meets the future growth potential of the AFA. The project to implement the new collections management suite, including all data and media transfer, was completed within four months, making it a very rapid installation.

KEY FACTS

Go Live: May 2016
 Volumes: 2,000 articles
 Users: 3 concurrent curators; 5 concurrent researchers

KEY TECHNOLOGY PARTNER INTEGRATIONS:

Storage: Quantum SNFS; Quantum Storage Manager
 Transcoder: Telestream Advantage
 LTO Robot: Quantum Scalar i80 Library



Mediaflex Guardian, is a configurable workflow and asset management system for both physical and digital assets that provides acquisition, accessioning, preservation, storage, and access workflows.