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Digital archiving at e.tv: embracing change in the pursuit of archiving merit and training

In 2008, e.tv implemented a digital archive system in preparation for the launch of enews, South Africa's first 24-hour television news channel. This system would facilitate conversion of e.tv's tape-based archives, processed on analogue workflows, to a file-based computerized system, supported by a digital library and workflows. The system would facilitate simultaneous organisation of digital footage, as well as effective search and retrieval - a major advantage in the fast-paced 24-hour news environment.

Three years since implementation, e.tv Archives has not only made that transition but is fully immersed in the business of digital archiving and its accompanying strategies and workflows. During this period the archive has undergone major changes, from massive physical renovations to the re-structuring of tasks around digital systems and workflows. We have evolved from servicing a single channel to a multi-channel company, fast becoming a global player in the industry. The challenges we face as an operating division servicing the company's diverse needs has become the driving force to always seek innovative ways of accessing and delivering archive content to users using the digital technologies at our disposal. The myriad of changes brought on by the implementation of the digital archive has allowed us to maximize our capabilities as an archive service operation and to participate in the digital archiving international community of practice, sharing and exchanging expertise and experience in the pursuit of archive excellence. These broader changes within the digital archive domain also have specific implications for developing formal training programmes for practicing and future audio-visual archivists in South Africa in terms of addressing the gap between present academic curriculums and the workplace skills required.

Within the above context, this paper will focus on the dramatic changes e.tv Archives has undergone since the introduction of the digital archiving system in terms of the following aspects:

- The work culture, moving from an analogue to a digital environment
- The skills required to do the job, traditional skills evolving within the digital domain
- Internal training measures for trainees and interns
- The need for more targeted and structured tertiary training feeding into specialized libraries, specifically audio-visual archives such as e.tv archives.

This presentation would be of interest to all information professionals who have to deal with technological changes implemented within their work environments. It could potentially offer valuable insights in dealing with the associated challenges of adapting to new digital domain work cultures, a robust and evolving skills-set and, developing relevant internal and external training programmes in the interest of building productive and relevant information professionals for the future.

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