Preamble

The United Nations recognizes on their Universal Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 11) that the world should “strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage”, making cultural heritage a key component in the development of mankind. The former Declarations of the ICOMOS General Assembly (Xi-An in 2011, Quebec in 2012, Paris in 2013 and Florence in 2014) have all contributed to issues such as broadening the vision of cultural heritage conservation, re-recognizing the spirit of the place, and making cultural heritage a driver of development. Community participation and communication are two emphases among the “5Cs strategies” derived from the Budapest Declaration and the following document of UNESCO. To obtain understanding between experts and the general public, the above-mentioned concepts and strategies require clear and profound information as well as a prompt and convenient medium.

The overwhelming development of digital technology has become a significant achievement for mankind in the 21st century. It has provided significant assistance in improving the identification, documentation, maintenance, protection and conservation of cultural heritage. Nowadays, cultural conservation almost always relies on digitized media and information systems.

To promote integration, however, we need participation of experts in different fields, especially the communication and mutual understanding among experts, as well as stakeholders and the general public. Two issues need to be stressed:

1. First and foremost is the joint collaboration of professionals in cultural heritage conservation.

   “Filling the Gaps” was announced as major strategy in promoting cultural heritage conservation in the 2004 ICOMOS General Assembly. Operation Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention announced in 2005 clearly states the necessity of integration of cultural diversity, tangible and intangible cultural heritage. We have been witnessing quite an impact and achievements which resulted from these actions over the past 10 years but still regrettable incidents recurred. Man-made disasters such as wars or volunteering destructions as well as natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunami or volcano eruptions cause irrevocable damages to cultural heritage. It shows that gaps of cultural heritage conservation between races, cultures and regions remain and great efforts should be made in filling those gaps.

2. Collaboration and cooperation between experts in cultural heritage and digital technologies are needed.

   An overwhelming amount of information is being collected nowadays, ranging from research, professional works and social media. Significant numbers of conservation projects are using digital technologies in their conservation of cultural heritage resources. Unfortunately, the lack of clear guidelines and knowledge between heritage
and digital technologies experts has caused significant miscommunication which results to reluctance in producing relevant and appropriate results. Many UNESCO, ICOMOS, and ICCROM documents as well as important international research projects or international organizations such as ISPRS are intending to provide guidance and prevent or even bridge these gaps between experts.

CIPA has dedicated much effort towards integrating digital technologies with cultural heritage documentation, conservation and preservation for many years. Following the RECORDIM initiative (“Bridging the gap between users and providers”, R. Letellier 2002), the topic of CIPA 2015, was held in Taipei, Taiwan from August 31st to September 4th, 2015, is “filling the gap between professional expertise in cultural heritage and digital technologies”. CIPA members have gathered in Taipei, discussed extensively and in depth the issue, before announcing the Taipei Declaration on “Integrated Documentation and Management of Cultural Heritage”.
Taipei Declaration
“Integrated Documentation and Management of Cultural Heritage”

In order to further promote the integration of the digital technologies with cultural heritage preservation, the 25th CIPA Symposium (CIPA 2015) adopted the Taipei Declaration on the Integrated Documentation and Management of Cultural Heritage. The declaration concerns the following four main issues:

1. The importance of documentation and management for cultural heritage.

1.1 Documentation and management is the foundation of all cultural heritage preservation (*Venice Charter, 1964*). Sufficient documentation will provide cultural heritage professionals with authentic information, including literature, pictorial, audio, video, and digital materials. The archives, in individual or multiple formats may become available for use during different processes of cultural heritage preservation, conservation, and adaptive reuse.

1.2 The scope of documentation and management should meet the needs of not only those of the tangible cultural heritage, but also the intangible cultural heritage. The most appropriate method should be studied and developed by all experts involved in an interdisciplinary way.

1.3 The consequences of the long term deterioration processes, the natural and man-made disasters as well as unavoidable wars are becoming increasingly serious day by day, causing unprecedented damages to cultural heritage. The entire world must face these threats. Adopting various effective strategies for the documentation and management is the best response.

1.4 In addition, being a reservoir for information of cultural heritage records, complete documentation and management could be value-added for diverse use and an important resource for people’s participation in cultural heritage and educational promotion.

2. The diversity, interdisciplinarity and pluralism of documentation and management.

2.1 The diverse aspects of cultural heritage should be recognized and fully respected during the process of documentation and archives’ management.

2.2 The information related to all possible cultural heritage should be properly
understood and responded with appropriate interdisciplinary strategies before any documentation and management process. This includes terrestrial, underground and underwater tangible cultural heritage as well as oral, behavioral, musical, dancing, craftsmanship, and other forms of intangible cultural heritage.

2.3 Cultural and digital experts should practice interdisciplinary cooperation in the most effective way for the benefit of cultural heritage. Based on the needs of documentation and management, they should work with local communities and stakeholders with integrated ideas and methods to develop appropriate strategies and instruments for practices as a whole.

2.4 The advancement of digital and internet technologies results in an avalanche of information in terms of its sources and complication. The research of appropriate management analysis tools and application technologies to handle the above-mentioned information should be encouraged.

3. The compatibility and accessibility of documentation and processing of cultural heritage information.

3.1 Those who participate in the documentation should approach it with open-mindedness. Characteristics of different historical periods, regions, and cultural contexts should be unbiased, respected and recorded.

3.2 Besides substantial objects of tangible cultural heritage, related environment and information of intangible cultural heritage should be valued. Indication of authenticity and integrity should become important reference for documentation.

3.3 The processing and exchange of information recorded by different documentation tools and information formats, especially the digital information, should be more convenient and compatible.

4. The integration and availability of effective and prompt tools and open platforms.

4.1 This issue responds to the ICOMOS “2014 Florence Declaration on Heritage and Landscape as Human Values”, especially to article 5.3.

4.2 Besides their specialties, the experts of cultural heritage and digital technologies should cooperate in the documentation and management of cultural heritage,
including their record, processing and application.

4.3 The gaps and obstacles of documentation and management caused by the existing differences in culture, knowledge and technology should be removed and common ideas and extensively applicable methods should be re-established.

4.4 In addition to the preservation of the cultural heritage, the experts’ research should be able to serve the general public on an open platform where the documentation of cultural heritage could be exchanged at a low-cost and prompt way. This is a goal for every expert in the future to achieve.

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