

## **PROTECTION AND LONG-TERM PRESERVATION OF LIBRARY FILM COLLECTIONS**

### **Abstract**

Many libraries have large film collections, whether they be public, university or national libraries. As soon as DVD technology was introduced, libraries started purchasing films on DVD discs and borrowing them to users. However, regarding the long-term preservation and protection, DVD discs are considerably more susceptible to damage in comparison to some other types of media such as printed documents. Through incorrect handling by librarians, and even more by users, DVD discs deteriorate rapidly and their film inscriptions become permanently unreadable by DVD players. In that case, it is necessary for libraries to purchase new DVD discs. But these films could become unavailable on the market. Film protection and long-term preservation are especially important in case of the most valuable national and international films that are a precious part of the national and international cultural heritage.

In this paper, we explored various aspects of the protection and long-term preservation of films on DVD discs. Using the method of semi-structured interviews, we explored the opinions, practices and experiences of librarians from 18 Croatian public libraries storing large film collections. Some of the topics explored include: the activities for the protection of films on DVD discs; the problems librarians striving to protect films on DVD discs can encounter; the possibilities and limits for film acquisition and substitution of damaged films; the relationship between film acquisition and the possibilities for their long-term preservation. The research results have provided a more comprehensive insight into the protection and long-term preservation of films on DVD discs. Based on the research insights, we have created recommendations for librarians' activities that could help protect films on DVD discs and support their long-term preservation. Additionally, we have presented various relevant theoretical considerations and experiences.

**Keywords:** films, DVD discs, protection, long-term preservation, libraries, cultural heritage

## FILMS IN LIBRARIES

The first film projections took place over a century ago. In 1895, the Lumière brothers showed a series of short, black and white silent films which they recorded and projected with the Cinématographe, a device that was their own invention. The same year, the Skladanowsky brothers also showed films to the Berlin audience. Those were the films they had recorded and projected with Bioskop, a device they constructed independently from the Lumière brothers. During the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, endless amounts of films were made. There were various types of films: feature films, documentary films, animated films, etc. At first, these films were recorded, projected and stored on film strips. However, with the development of technology, the spectrum of film media is widening. The 1980s were especially important for libraries because, during that period, the new VHS technology for film storage was created and widely accepted. This technology enabled the storage of films on videotapes. The devices for the reproduction of those videotapes were available to many libraries and households because of the affordable price and the ease of use. Therefore, the basis for the creation of bigger library film collections was created. At first, the VHS technology had a competitor in the Betamax technology which was also constructed for film storage, but VHS ultimately prevailed. However, at the beginning of the 2000s, VHS tapes were replaced by the new DVD technology, which enabled the storage of films on DVD discs and their reproduction on widely available DVD players, which could be used as independent devices or as parts of personal computers.<sup>1</sup> DVD discs are considerably smaller than VHS videotapes so they take up less space in private or public libraries. Also, the players for the reproduction of DVDs are widespread in households so DVD technology has become very suitable for libraries. Nowadays, in many libraries worldwide, film collections mainly consist of films stored on DVD discs. In Croatian public libraries, this is also the most widespread technology for film storage. A large number of DVD films can be found mainly in bigger Croatian public libraries, and they belong in the category of often borrowed library material. For example, it has been established that the Zadar Public Library users primarily visit the library to borrow books (96% of users), but also to borrow content on CD and DVD discs (about 60% of users).<sup>2</sup> In other countries, films are also popular among library users. D. A. Galby wrote about considerable growth in the number of audio-visual material in public libraries in the USA. He says that in 1990, audio material made up 3% of library collections and films made up less than 1% of library material. In 2005, those figures were considerably increased: the audio-visual material made up about 9% of library collections. In

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1 Janet L. Balas, "Caught in the middle of the format wars", *Computers in Libraries* (April 2007): 24-25.

2 Helena Novak, "Anketno istraživanje Zadovoljstvo korisnika Gradske knjižnice Zadar", *Vjesnik bibliotekara Hrvatske* 53, no. 3-4 (2010): 147.

addition, Galby wrote that, in 2006, the audio-visual documents made up 25% of borrowed library materials in public libraries in the USA.<sup>3</sup>

A considerable user interest for films is certainly a strong motive for libraries to acquire and build film collections. However, there is a question of how justified film procurement and long-term preservation is if the majority of those films are the newest Hollywood feature films. Offering entertaining content and activities to the users is an important and valuable goal for libraries, but helping the users obtain information and education is just as important, to say the least. These goals can be accomplished only if libraries possess quality, diverse collections. Hollywood films are only some of the various important film types. Therefore, libraries should build collections consisting of many other film types as well. For example, M. Kukuljica claims that many Croatian films represent a highly valuable cultural heritage. He says that Croatian cultural heritage is an integral part of the world<sup>4</sup> film and cultural heritage. This is only one among many opinions that support the mission of libraries to provide long-term access to the world and national film heritage. Also, it needs to be emphasized that acquiring and preserving feature films is important, but acquiring and preserving other film types, such as documentary and animated films is equally important. All film types are valuable for the cultural and educational enlightenment of viewers.

Various benefits for libraries are additional reasons to build and preserve film collections. Films can attract new users, increase borrowing and library recognition and reputation in the community.<sup>5</sup> The positive effects are related to the symbolic role of library collections, i.e. to the prestige of possessing certain documents. That is one out of four basic roles of library collections. The other three roles are dissemination, i.e. the provision of adequate access to documents that the community members could seek; advising or the bibliographic role, i.e. the outline of the documents, enabling identification of the required documents; archival role, i.e. long-term preservation of documents in collections for future users.<sup>6</sup> The archival role is particularly important for the topic of this paper because it indicates the vital need for libraries to acquire and preserve films and other documents in the long-term.

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3 Douglas A. Galbi, "Non-book items in US public libraries", *Public Library Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (2009): 65.

4 Mato Kukuljica, "Kulturna politika i film u Republici Hrvatskoj", *Hrvatski filmski ljetopis* 3, no. 12 (1997): str. 85.

5 Becky Harris, "YA Films: Idle entertainment or a valuable part of your collection?", *YA Hotline* 82 (2008): 4.

6 Michael K. Buckland, "The purposes of collections", last modified February 15, 2000, accessed November 27, 2017, <http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~buckland/purpose.html>.

## THE CHALLENGES OF BUILDING AND PRESERVING DIVERSE FILM COLLECTIONS

Long-term preservation of documents has always been a major challenge. The problem of long-term preservation of documents is nowadays especially pronounced since library collections are not only comprised of printed books but can also contain various formats including DVD discs with films. M. Gorman says that modern library collections are a mixture of various document types possessed by a library or even documents that are not in library possession but are available to a library and its users, for example, through interlibrary loans.<sup>7</sup> In the context of building and preserving film collections, Gorman's statement about different sources of library documents raises a series of questions, one of which is if films that are freely available on the web should be a part of library film collections. If the answer is yes, then the next question could be if libraries should be co-responsible for their long-term preservation.

An important precondition for librarians to be able to successfully resolve the challenge of long-term preservation of their collections is that they should be able to acquire a comprehensive education about its various aspects during and after studies. In *IFLA Guidelines for Audiovisual and Multimedia Materials in Libraries and other Institutions*, it is stated that the schools for library and information sciences should make sure their students are able to become familiar with information on how to handle the audio-visual material in libraries and the schools should offer elective courses providing further detailed insight into that topic to the students who decide to specialize in that field.<sup>8</sup> In addition, it is stated in the *Guidelines*, that librarians working with books should know about literature, whereas librarians working with audio-visual materials should be familiar with films, arts, music and the related fields.<sup>9</sup> M. Kukuljica considers being familiar with the national film history and the specifics of the development of Croatian cinematography is vital for being able to estimate the value of films. Being acquainted with the origins and development of the European and world film and the main currents is also necessary, as well as being acquainted with the characteristics of world literature and, also, the fine arts and music as a form of art, which are important elements for the creation of films.<sup>10</sup> However, the problem of film education in Croatia is that students of library and information sciences don't come to the LIS schools with the knowledge of films that they should have acquired during previous stages in ed-

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7 Michael Gorman, "Collection development in interesting times: a summary", *Library Collections, Acquisitions, and Technical Services* 27, 4 (2003): 459.

8 Royan, Cremer et al., IFLA, *Smjernice za audiovizualnu i multimedijску građu u knjižnicama i drugim ustanovama*, trans. Irena Kranjec (Zagreb: Hrvatsko knjižničarsko društvo, 2005), 10, <http://archive.ifla.org/VII/s35/pubs/avm-guidelines04-hr.pdf>.

9 Royan, Cremer et al., IFLA, *Smjernice za audiovizualnu i multimedijскую građu u knjižnicama i drugim ustanovama*, 11.

10 Mato Kukuljica, "Vrednovanje filmskoga gradiva", *Hrvatski filmski ljetopis* 14, no. 56 (2008): 85.

ucation. Namely, there is a problem in teaching about films because primary and secondary schools don't have the necessary technical conditions. In addition, education in this field is often pushed out due to other mandatory teaching topics.<sup>11</sup>

The problem of not being familiar with the film heritage in all its diversity is also caused by non-availability of diverse films on various media and distribution channels: from television and cinemas to commercial video libraries and public libraries. For example, in the report on the Croatian cinematography, it is stated that many feature films are shown on Croatian national television channels (HRT). However, the majority of them is from the USA (65%-70%), 20 to 25% of films are from Europe and only 10% or less are from non-European countries. Out of the total number of feature films broadcast on the Croatian national television, only 2% were Croatian feature films.<sup>12</sup> The repertoire in Croatian commercial cinemas is even more culturally monolithic than the national television programme: films from the USA make up about 74% to 85% of the repertoire. The rest of the repertoire consists mainly of European films, while only a few films from non-European countries are shown. Also, it is important to point out that the cinema repertoire is dominated by recently made films not older than three years.<sup>13</sup> Since films are unavailable, the viewers, i.e. the library users and even librarians, don't have many opportunities to get used to various film types and develop an interest in them. They are primarily interested in Hollywood feature films and, among them, precisely in those that have been recently made and have a big promotion and distribution campaign. The lack of diverse films in the distribution and media channels is directly connected with the unlikeliness that diverse films can find their ways to libraries and other memory institutions. If memory institutions can't find the films on the national market, they can't preserve them for posterity. Unfortunately, in countries with small markets and low or non-existent financial support of the state or local public budget for the improvement of publishing quality and the procurement of diverse films on DVD discs, such as Croatia, the situation is very unfavourable. The majority of the films published on DVD discs are the recent Hollywood feature films, while films from other countries, older films, as well as documentary and animation films (especially those that are not only for children), are almost unavailable on the market. That is an important reason why these films cannot be acquired by libraries and preserved for future generations.

## COOPERATION BETWEEN LIBRARIES AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

In order to acquire valuable and diverse films in circumstances where publishers don't care too much about publishing films that do not bring enough profit, libraries have to explore the possibilities of cooperation with organisations that have

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11 Vjekoslav Majcen, and Hrvoje Turković, "Kinematografija u Hrvatskoj - Izvještaj o stanju", *Hrvatski filmski ljetopis* 7, no. 27 (2001): 56.

12 Majcen, and Turković, "Kinematografija u Hrvatskoj - Izvještaj o stanju", 70.

13 Majcen, and Turković, "Kinematografija u Hrvatskoj - Izvještaj o stanju", 69.

similar goals: education and providing information, in addition to bare entertainment of the citizens. Those organisations make up important elements of the public sphere, because they enable a free-flow of information and dialogue between diverse ideas, with the purpose of creating a strong and free democratic society. In addition, libraries striving to build diverse film collections should primarily try to establish cooperation with organisations that have film archives, for example, the Croatian National Television (HRT), which has an archive comprised of 350,000 films and 135,000 videos.<sup>14</sup> Valuable films from this archive could be published on DVD discs and offered in public and other libraries. This would be beneficial to citizens because they could borrow and watch the films currently stored in the archive unavailable for viewing outside the HRT premises in Zagreb. Unfortunately, this kind of cooperation has never been initiated between libraries and the HRT.

The Croatian Cinematheque is an institution in charge of preserving, processing and protecting Croatian films and it also has a huge film archive.<sup>15</sup> The films from this archive are partly available to the public. Everyone can watch them, but only if they come to the Cinematheque, located in Zagreb. There, the film(s) can be broadcast for the visitors. The cooperation between libraries and the Cinematheque would help facilitate access to at least a part of these valuable films from the Croatian and world heritage. The chosen films should be published on DVD discs and, afterwards, distributed and preserved in Croatian and even foreign libraries.

There is an interesting example of cooperation in the USA, where the National Public Television PBS (Public Broadcast System) creates documentary films and publishes them on DVD discs and they are then played in libraries. Those films are focused on culturally and socially important topics for USA citizens.<sup>16</sup> There is no information in the description of this project regarding whether the DVD discs of these films stay in libraries after the projections and whether libraries can borrow and preserve them, but it would be best if the films could stay in libraries where they are available to the public.

Nowadays, thanks to the development of DVDs and other kinds of digital technology, libraries are able to publish films on DVD discs independently, especially the valuable films for which commercial publishers don't have a financial interest. T. Horava wrote about the possibility of libraries taking over the publishing role. He claims that publishing activities can present a unique opportunity for libraries to contribute to science and education.<sup>17</sup>

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14 Alan Bahorić, "Hrvatska televizija - programski i tehnički aspekti", *Hrvatski filmski ljetopis* 5, no. 17 (1999): 64.

15 Kukuljica, "Kulturna politika i film u Republici Hrvatskoj", 23.

16 Anthony Cocciolo, "Public libraries and PBS partnering to enhance civic engagement: A study of a nationwide initiative", *Public Library Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (2013): 2.

17 Tony Horava, "Libraries as publishers; publishers as Libraries - Where do we go from here?" *Against the Grain*, (April 2008): 46.

One of the ways to create better conditions for increasing the amount of diverse and valuable content is for libraries to form consortia so that they can closely work together when negotiating with publishers.<sup>18</sup> Also, cooperation between the libraries in consortia can be of key importance for successful implementation of original, ambitious projects, such as film publishing on DVD discs. By means of such cooperation, the libraries could resolve numerous challenges more efficiently, including technical or copyright issues. If libraries decided to publish films on DVD discs, there would be various advantages for them. For instance, they could make diverse and better film collections by deciding which specific films they wanted to publish and distribute in library networks. Libraries should also publish these films on technically improved DVD discs that are more resistant to external influences and, therefore, more suitable for long-term preservation. Those films could be distributed in the national library network, which would also increase the possibility for their long-term preservation.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research goal was to illuminate the aspects related to the protection and long-term preservation of film collections in Croatian public libraries. The research was carried out by Mirko Duić as an activity for the purpose of a doctoral thesis "Film Collections in Croatian Public Libraries".<sup>19</sup> The research method applied was in the form of semi-structured interviews that are suitable for obtaining insight into the research topic and into the scope of the participants' knowledge of the situation, experiences, perspectives and attitudes. Librarians responsible for film collections in public libraries were interviewed. The questions were prepared in advance. However, during interviews, new questions were also asked in addition to the existing ones, in order to explore the librarians' opinions during the interviews in more detail. Interviews were conducted in 18 Croatian public libraries in December 2014. The interviewed librarians were from the libraries storing large film collections from various regions in Croatia, including the following towns: Benkovac, Osijek, Solin, Split, Šibenik, Rijeka, Zadar, Zagreb and Zaprrešić. The smallest town in which interviews were conducted was Benkovac and the biggest town was Zagreb, the Croatian capital. In Zagreb and Split, the interviews were conducted in central libraries as well as in their branches possessing a large number of films (Zagreb: 7 library branches; Split: 2 library branches). To make the librarians better prepared for the interviews, the questions were sent to all of them in advance. Furthermore, the interviews were anonymous and, therefore, individual libraries were marked by codes from K1 to K18. Anonymity made it possible for the librarians to talk about certain topics more freely.

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18 Ross Atkinson, "Six key challenges for the future of collection development", *Library Resources & Technical Services* 50, no. 4 (2006): 250.

19 Mirko Duić, "Filmske zbirke u hrvatskim narodnim knjižnicama" (Film collections in Croatian public libraries) (PhD diss., University of Zadar, 2015).

## RESEARCH RESULTS

Librarians were asked which of their activities and tasks they considered important regarding the film collections. The majority of librarians said that film acquisition was important (8 librarians). Film procession was in the second place (7 librarians), and film borrowing was in the third place (7 librarians). Film procession and borrowing are not directly related to film protection and long-term preservation, while technical film processing is directly related to the protection and long-term preservation. During film processing, the films are enveloped in protective materials.

Except for this activity, there is only one library in which another activity related to film protection and long-term preservation is performed – the physical state inspection of the film storage media. Therefore, the majority of librarians didn't list any activities related to film protection and long-term preservation. The public libraries aim to protect and preserve documents. However, their main goals are to acquire a large number of documents and ensure these documents are borrowed extensively. That could explain why the librarians didn't mention many jobs and activities related to film protection and long-term preservation.

Also, the librarians were asked which knowledge and skills are needed or desirable for working with film collections. The majority of librarians answered that it is important for the librarian to have an affinity for films and some went as far as to say that those librarians had to be extremely interested in films. Regarding the specific knowledge and skills, only one librarian mentioned the importance of the knowledge more directly related to film protection and long-term preservation, which is the knowledge of audio-visual technology. The majority of librarians considers the following knowledge, skills and experiences important: the knowledge of film and film industry (12 librarians), formal education on films (6 librarians), a wide general knowledge (3), a school of librarianship (3). The above-mentioned knowledge, skills and experiences are indirectly related to the issues of film protection and long-term preservation.

One of the things discovered during this research is that films are almost completely stored on DVD discs in Croatian public libraries. In the K14 library, they used to use VHS videotapes shelves before switching to DVD discs. The videotapes are now kept in the library storage, and, nevertheless, they can still be borrowed. The mentioned library didn't start using Blue Ray discs because users didn't ask for them. On the other hand, in the K1 library, there are a few hundred Blue Ray discs, because the users ask for them. However, the vast majority of film collections is still on DVD discs there too. Curiously, in the K15 library, it is considered that the films on VHS videotapes were much better than those stored on DVD discs. This is a phenomenon that should be explored in more detail, because it indicates a worrying situation in which the transition to a new film storage and reproduction technology has had a negative effect on the film heritage, making a part of it unavailable or considerably less available: the films on VHS videotapes



were relocated to storages or written-off, while there was no adequate replacement for them on DVD discs.

The librarians working with film collections are confronted with various challenges. The majority of them listed the following challenges: the lack of library space (11 librarians), DVD disc damage (5 librarians), the lack of funds (5), the lack of film diversity on the Croatian market (4).

The issue of DVD disc damage is directly related to the issue of film protection and long-term preservation. The other frequently mentioned challenges are not directly related to the issue of film protection and long-term preservation, but they also have a considerable impact on protection and long-term preservation. For example, if the library doesn't have enough space it must write-off older films or move them to storage in order to be able to place more recent films on the library shelves. In the K1 library, the solution for the lack of space is relocating less frequently borrowed films to library branches or storages. In the K16 library, it is considered that the lack of space cannot be resolved by writing off valuable, but rarely borrowed films, because the users cannot borrow them from anywhere else.

Furthermore, the lack of funds indirectly affects the options for film protection and long-term preservation. Namely, if libraries don't have enough money to acquire films or if money from the library budget is not allocated for that purpose, then the library can't even acquire the films that should be protected and preserved in the long-term. Even if the library possesses a significant collection of films, the lack of money can affect their protection and long-term preservation. Is there enough money to buy film duplicates and the technology and materials needed for film protection and long-term preservation? Is there enough money to pay for librarians' professional training in the area of film protection and long-term preservation?

According to the research results, only a small number of libraries have large film collections and most of those libraries are located in big cities. The amount of financial means for the acquirement, protection and long-term preservation of films depends on the total library budget, but also on the preferences and decisions of library directors.

DVD disc damage is a frequently mentioned challenge directly related to film protection and long-term preservation. The librarians described DVD discs as fragile media, often handled carelessly by users, which is the reason they are often damaged. This is a particularly noticeable problem with discs containing animation films because they are usually viewed and handled by children. After the discs are damaged, there can be a problem with their replacement. In the K15 and K17 library, it was pointed out that it is often not possible to obtain replacement films. Thus, the libraries permanently lose films or have to wait until the same films are published anew on DVD discs. In the K5 library, it was mentioned that the problem is further worsened due to low-quality discs used for films, where the films can be watched only 30 to 40 times before the discs become useless. However,

some librarians also say that there are some publishers that use quality discs on which films can be watched about 150 times. In the K17 library, two DVD discs with the same film used to be bought: one disc for library use and the other for borrowing. However, they quit that practice because DVD discs for library use were not used frequently enough.

One possible solution for the frequent problem of disc damage is for libraries to make copies of each acquired film and use these copies as replacements if the original discs are damaged. However, in order to do that, the question of copyright should be resolved with publishers who should give their written permission in the form of a contract between the libraries and publishers. There is another issue with these contracts regulating the use of films acquired by the libraries. Namely, in the K14 library, it is emphasized that there is a problem regarding the contracts because, according to them, the libraries can use the acquired films within two to five years. After that, the libraries have to pay for the same films again in order to renew contracts and be able to continue borrowing the previously acquired films to the users. This practice greatly increases the expenses of building film collections, and it also jeopardizes the possibility of preserving the films in the long term. Perhaps the main goal in the majority of public libraries is not to preserve films in the long term, but it would be useful if at least one or a few of the bigger libraries tried to preserve films in the long term. Unless this is done, in a few years, the majority of films on DVD discs will be permanently unavailable to the public.

Even if all the necessary conditions for film preservation were fulfilled, a few relevant questions would still remain: Which types of films should be preserved? What kind of quality and diversity of these films would be required? Which ones are particularly valuable and should, therefore, be preserved?

Those questions don't necessarily have unambiguous answers, and trying to obtain the answers could raise additional questions and discussions. We explored the related topics in more detail in interviews with the librarians. We discussed the topic of film collection diversity. That is an important topic because if the film collections are not versatile, then the current and future users do not have the opportunity to borrow and become familiar with diverse films. The research results show that the diversity of films in collections is low. Although many librarians emphasize the need to acquire and offer diverse and quality films to the users, the librarians can't find such films on the Croatian DVD market. That's an important reason why the collections can't be more diverse. For example, in the K5 library, film collection duplication was discussed, in the sense that all the libraries primarily possess commercial films which are the most frequently offered on the market. A librarian at the K5 library described a situation when students had been looking for some Croatian feature films. However, they were not in the library collection because they were never offered on the Croatian DVD market. In the K5 library, the lack of diversity in the film market is partly compensated by building an internal collection of anthology films. However, these films are not borrowed

to the users, they can only be watched at the library. Although films from this internal, unofficial collection are described in most film encyclopaedias, they cannot be found on the Croatian DVD market. The library obtained those films thanks to user donations. For instance, the users donated old Croatian films stored on VHS videotapes. At the library, those films were transferred to DVD discs. A librarian from the K5 library considers this internal collection the most important part of the entire library film collection. Additionally, the internal collection has symbolic value because it shows that it is possible to preserve and provide those parts of the cultural heritage that are officially unavailable and neglected by the publishers guided primarily by the profit possibilities. At the K5 library, it was emphasized that, although many Croatian documentaries were made in the last few years, those films are not available on the DVD market. Furthermore, at the K6 library, it was pointed out that not many Croatian feature and documentary films are published on DVD discs. They used to obtain Croatian documentaries from the film studio and publisher Zagreb film, but the users had complaints regarding the technical quality of those films.

The offer of foreign films on the Croatian market is also problematic because it mainly consists of Hollywood feature films. In the K15 library, it is considered that the publishers are primarily guided by the sale potential of films, but librarians don't consider this to be an adequate indicator of film quality. In the K5 library, it was mentioned that two or three years ago, there was a noticeable decrease in the number of films published on DVDs. Regarding this situation, it is important to note that, in 2015, the Croatian film publishers were interviewed and they also confirmed the trend of a decreasing number of films published on DVD. Discovery, one of the few publishers working on the Croatian DVD market, completely abandoned publishing films on DVD discs. Publishers claim that the reasons for the decrease in the number of films published on DVDs are the advancement of digital television, Video on Demand platforms and high levels of piracy. Certainly, this trend presents a challenge for the librarians working on film collections. If the number of films published on DVD discs continues to decrease, the possibility for further development and long-term preservation of diverse film collections will come into question. Therefore, we asked the librarians what they thought about the idea of the libraries publishing valuable, diverse films on DVD discs. There are already many libraries that started publishing books a long time ago. Based on that fact, it could also be possible for libraries to publish films. This is particularly achievable nowadays that information and audio-visual technology are much more available to a wide circle of users.

The vast majority of librarians agree with the idea that libraries could start publishing films. However, all of them pointed out the problems they would need to solve beforehand. Primarily, they mentioned the lack of funds. For example, in the K1 library, it is considered that libraries should start publishing valuable films on DVD discs in order to promote culture and improve the library reputation. However, the librarians also claim the implementation of this project would be

limited by the lack of funds and cooperation between libraries. In the K6 library, librarians have rich experience in book publishing. They think that they could also start publishing films. However, they emphasized the following problems related to film publishing: the lack of finance, copyright issues and the lack of librarians qualified for that activity.

## DISCUSSION

Thanks to the research, we have obtained valuable insight into film protection and long-term preservation in Croatian public libraries. Some important points to be noted are:

- DVD discs storing films are frequently susceptible to damage.
- The replacement of damaged DVD discs is often impossible because those films are not available on the market anymore.
- Some libraries have a problem with the lack of funds.
- The majority of libraries have a problem with the lack of library space, especially those libraries that have enough money to continually acquire new films.
- At some libraries, it was pointed out that the market doesn't offer sufficiently diverse films and there is also a problem with the quality of films offered on the Croatian DVD market.
- At one library, it was noted that there is a problem with contracts signed between libraries and film publishers. The contracts are valid for just a few years. After that, libraries have to pay again to renew them in order to be able to continue borrowing the films.
- The majority of librarians reckon that libraries should start publishing films on DVD discs so that they could offer better access to valuable films, but they also emphasize various problems related to the implementation of this activity, such as the lack of finance.
- In Croatia, there are no library laws or statutes determining the minimum amount of library budget dedicated to building film collections. The amount of money reserved for that purpose depends on various factors, including the library directors' preferences.

In the following part of the paper, we will present and discuss some insights acquired through research in more detail. Some activities that could help libraries overcome difficulties regarding the film collections will be proposed.

In a considerable number of libraries, librarians emphasized that the insufficiently diverse offer of DVD films on the market is a significant problem, as well as the decreasing number of films being published. At one library, we were told that, nowadays, there are mostly commercial films on the market. At some libraries, it is

believed that before the advancement of DVD technology, there were many more quality films on VHS videotapes. The unavailability of diverse, quality films limits the possibilities of building film collections, which consequently has adverse effects on the possibility of protecting and preserving valuable, diverse films. To increase the number, diversity and quality of the films published on DVD discs, we proposed one solution to the librarians: libraries should start publishing valuable, diverse films on DVD discs cooperatively, particularly the films that would otherwise never be published by commercial film publishers. This could be very useful for building better film collections and it could be very beneficial to the library users interested in diverse films and open to new film types, as well as new approaches and cultures presented in diverse film collections.

Libraries should also try to initiate and develop cooperation with organisations that have rich film archives, for instance, the Croatian National Television (HRT) and the Croatian Cinematheque. If published on DVD discs, the films from these archives could be disseminated through public libraries. Currently, those films are unavailable to the public or their availability is very limited. This is one way in which libraries could join forces with other organisations responsible for the protection and long-term preservation of valuable films. The responsibilities of the libraries in the cooperation of memory organisations would be the protection and long-term preservation of films in the DVD format, which is a very popular and widely accessible technology for libraries and their users.

In addition, during the interviews, many librarians mentioned the lack of Croatian documentaries on the DVD market, as well as considerable user interest in these documentaries. If libraries started actively locating the old and new Croatian documentaries and if they started publishing or buying these films on DVD discs, they could improve their collections, making them more diverse and interesting to the users and potential users. Nowadays, the number of films created in Croatia and in the whole world has vastly increased thanks to the wide availability of digital film production and distribution technologies. These technologies have democratized the process of film production and distribution. However, small independent film production companies have difficulties obtaining viewers or buyers for their films, distributing films outside of portals such as YouTube, and protecting and preserving their films. These are all important reasons why libraries could be a very desirable and dependable platform or sanctuary for film promotion, distribution and long-term preservation. The current and future library users would finally have a chance to discover and view many films presenting their society that can hardly be obtained and watched at other places. Also, another significant challenge is the fact that DVD discs for film storage are very susceptible to damage. The replacement of damaged DVD discs is often impossible because there are no more identical films on the market or libraries have to wait a long time before the same film is published again. The aforementioned solution could also be helpful in dealing with this problem. If libraries published valuable films, they would have the replacements for damaged films ready at any given moment. Indeed, many

libraries would be willing to take to publishing films on DVD discs, although there are various difficulties in the implementation of this activity. For instance, the lack of finance and specific knowledge and skills of librarians. Interlibrary cooperation in film publishing could help alleviate those problems. Regarding the knowledge and skills needed by the librarians, it would be sufficient if at least one of the cooperating libraries had librarians with the required knowledge and skills needed to create DVD discs and if at least one library had the necessary equipment to create and multiply DVD discs (this part of the publishing process could also be designated to a specialized private company). Also, the resources needed for film publishing could be funded by all the cooperating libraries. Finally, the consortium of libraries could influence the state and local authorities more effectively in order to get them to fund this project.

The problem of contract renewal was pointed out in libraries where the contracts with publishers have to be renewed after a few years. Namely, if a contract expires, then the library has to stop borrowing films until the contract is renewed and the library has paid for the rights to continue borrowing the same films again. The contracts expire after two to five years. This kind of regulation can further lower the number of libraries that are building and preserving film collections. Libraries could profit from the interlibrary exchange of information related to this issue in order to ensure a better position in negotiations with publishers. Libraries should, also, join forces and create a library consortium for this purpose.

The majority of librarians working with library collections mentioned the importance of being familiar with different kinds of films. The majority of librarians stated that, during their studies, they didn't have an opportunity to learn enough about films. They mainly acquired their film knowledge through independent learning, following their interest in films. Based on those insights, it can be concluded that the librarians working with film collections should attend courses about film heritage, compiling film collections, as well as film protection and long-term preservation. Furthermore, it would be great if they could be offered a chance to enhance their film knowledge and skills after they have started working in libraries.

For some libraries, the lack of finance is a great challenge. If they don't have enough money, it is difficult for them to build, protect and preserve the film collections. Unfortunately, there are no library laws or statutes determining the minimum funds for those activities. Librarians who work or want to work with film collections have to convince library directors to set aside a certain fund for this purpose if the directors don't have an affinity for films and don't understand the importance of film collections. The unpredictable, volatile situation regarding film collections could be stabilised and improved with the creation of required standards for all public libraries in Croatia. Some standards for film collection management should be prescribed, defining the minimum size, diversity and the conditions for the protection and long-term preservation of film collections.

## CONCLUSION

The number of diverse valuable books published in Croatia was greatly improved by using cultural policy measures. Unfortunately, there are no similar measures to support the publishing of diverse valuable films, which could be borrowed from public libraries and preserved for future generations of viewers. It seems that there is no public interest in this topic. The result of this indifference is not encouraging for librarians and their users who are interested in collecting, watching and preserving diverse valuable films. N. Gilić wrote about the perception of the hierarchy between different branches of culture and education:

“(...) in the cultural hierarchy, literature has a higher position than films and similar media, while in the educational hierarchy, the knowledge of literature and languages has a considerably higher role than the knowledge about films and videos”.<sup>20</sup>

Maybe this misperception of various cultural, art or educational fields has something to do with the minimal or non-existent support of state and local administrations for publishing diverse, valuable films. However, it is hard to accept that there can be any valid value hierarchy between the branches of culture and education. All kinds of texts and all elements of culture and education are potentially equally valuable and suitable for library collections. The value of certain texts, whether they be books, movies or musical compositions, and whether they be primarily about science, art or entertainment, depends primarily on the quality of their authorship and content. They also depend on various other factors, such as their relevancy to the audience in a certain situation, and the “eye of the beholder”. However, it is really impossible and incorrect to say that there is a pre-defined hierarchy between various types of texts, depending on which cultural or educational branch they originate from.

If we accept M. Kukuljica’s position that many anthology films from the Croatian cinematography are the most valuable part of the cultural heritage and that the Croatian cultural heritage is an integral part of the European and world film and cultural heritage, then we have a strong and justified foundation to remain persistent in the activities that support the creation of diverse film collections in libraries, their protection and long-term preservation. Diverse, quality films in libraries, whether they be foreign or domestic, could help broaden the users’ cognitive, emotional or spiritual horizons. The creation of quality, diverse film collections and their protection and long-term preservation also have extra benefits for libraries: the film collections could increase the number of material borrowed, attract new users, and improve the reputation and recognition of libraries in the community. For all these reasons, it is important for librarians to keep being engaged in the creation of quality, diverse film collections and their preservation for future generations.

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20 Nikica Gilić, “Sustav medijskog obrazovanja”, *Hrvatski filmski ljetopis* 9, no. 36 (2003): 53.

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## Summary

### Protection and Long-Term Preservation of Library Film Collections

Many libraries have large film collections, whether they be public, university or national libraries. As soon as DVD technology was introduced, libraries started purchasing films on DVD discs and borrowing them to users. However, regarding the long-term preservation and protection, DVD discs are considerably more susceptible to damage in relation to some other types of media such as printed documents. Through incorrect handling by librarians, and even more by users, DVD discs deteriorate rapidly and their film inscriptions become permanently unreadable by DVD players. In that case, it is necessary that the library purchase new DVD discs. But these films could become unavailable on the market. Film protection and long-term preservation are especially important in case of the most valuable national and international films that are a precious part of the national and international cultural heritage.

In this paper, we explored various aspects of the protection and long-term preservation of films on DVD discs. Using the method of semi-structured interviews, we explored opinions, practices and experiences of librarians from 18 Croatian public libraries which store large film collections. Some of the topics explored include: the activities for the protection of films on DVD discs; the problems librarians striving to protect films on DVD discs can encounter; the possibilities and limits for film acquisition and substitution of damaged films; the relationship between film acquisition and the possibilities for their long-term preservation. The research results have provided a more comprehensive insight into the protection and long-term preservation of films on DVD discs. Based on the research insights, we have created recommendations for librarians' activities that could help protect films on DVD discs and support their long-term preservation. Additionally, we have presented various relevant theoretical considerations and experiences.

