Libraries and Archives and the Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage: Defining a Research Agenda

By Maria Bonn, Lori Kendall and Jerome McDonough
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I. Introduction

The Emergence of Intangible Cultural Heritage as a Field

The period following World War II saw a growing international interest in cultural heritage and its preservation. The devastation of the war, including the destruction of many significant cultural artifacts across the world, awakened many to the fragility of cultural heritage and the need to protect it. From the foundation of the International Council of Museums in 1946 and the adoption of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Properties in the Event of Armed Conflict in 1954 through the creation of the Convention on Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property in 1970 and the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the post-war years saw many efforts, both nationally and internationally, to identify significant cultural heritage and protect it.

As significant as these efforts were, they tended to focus on the preservation of material cultural heritage exclusively. The 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, for example, defines cultural property as:

(a) movable or immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people, such as monuments of architecture, art or history, whether religious or secular; archaeological sites; groups of buildings which, as a whole, are of historical or artistic interest; works of art; manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic, historical or archaeological interest; as well as scientific collections and important collections of books or archives or of reproductions of the property defined above;

(b) buildings whose main and effective purpose is to preserve or exhibit the movable cultural property defined in sub-paragraph (a) such as museums, large libraries and depositories of archives, and refuges intended to shelter, in the event of armed conflict, the movable cultural property defined in sub-paragraph (a);

(c) centers containing a large amount of cultural property as defined in sub-paragraphs (a) and (b), to be known as 'centers containing monuments'. (UNESCO, 1954)

Interest in the existence of, and the need to preserve, other immaterial forms of culture also began to develop during this period, but preservation of these immaterial forms was
slower to draw the level of attention, and commitment of resources, that preservation of tangible heritage received. Pioneering efforts to try to preserve intangible heritage certainly existed. Foxfire Magazine (and later Foxfire Museum) was founded in 1966 to try to document Southern Appalachian culture; the Native American self-determination efforts of the 1960’s saw the beginning of coordinated efforts to insure the survival of Native languages, such as the Rough Rock Demonstration School, founded in 1966, in part to insure that Navajo children would educated in their own language (McCarty, 2002). But these initial efforts at preservation of intangible heritage were fragmented and often conducted without significant institutional support.

These early efforts, however, contributed to a growing awareness on the part of the cultural heritage community that while significant efforts had been made towards the preservation of material heritage, there were other forms of endangered cultural expression still in need of protection. The Mondiacult World Conference on Cultural Policies, held in 1982 in Mexico City, marked a turning point in the international community’s approach to the preservation of cultural heritage, with the *Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies* emerging from the conference containing a much more expansive definition of cultural heritage:

23. The cultural heritage of a people includes the works of its artists, architects, musicians, writers and scientists and also the work of anonymous artists, expressions of the people's spirituality, and the body of values which give meaning to life. It includes both tangible and intangible works through which the creativity of that people finds expression: languages, rites, beliefs, historic places and monuments, literature, works of art, archives and libraries. (UNESCO, 1982)

This marked not only one of the earliest formal recognitions of intangible heritage by the international cultural heritage community, the conference also called upon UNESCO to begin developing programs for the safeguarding of intangible, as well as tangible, cultural heritage. This led in 1989 to the adoption by the General Conference of the Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore.

While the 1989 Recommendation generated increased interest in intangible heritage, including the formation of regional seminars on the Recommendation’s implementation, by the end of the 1990’s, expert consensus was that the Recommendation was insufficient protection for intangible heritage. The conference “A Global Assessment of the 1989 Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore,” collaboratively organized by the Smithsonian Institution’s Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and UNESCO’s Division of Cultural Heritage, found the 1989 Recommendation problematic in some respects, including the use and definition of the
term ‘folklore’ and the failure to be adequately inclusive of traditional groups in decisions regarding the safekeeping of cultural heritage. The conference concluded with a call for significantly increasing the protection afforded to intangible cultural heritage, including recommendations to:

1. promote this Action Plan among its Member States by bringing this meeting to the attention of Member States;

2. establish an international, interdisciplinary network of experts to assist Member States in developing, upon request, concrete programs in conformity with the principles of the present Action Plan;

3. establish an international, interdisciplinary mobile working group of legal experts to work as advisors in collaboration with communities to develop suitable instruments for the protection of traditional culture and folklore;

4. encourage the participation and, wherever necessary, the establishment of international nongovernmental organizations with specialist expertise in particular areas of folklore and traditional knowledge to advise UNESCO on the protection of folklore and traditional knowledge;

5. encourage international groups (scholars, cultural professionals, commercial organizations, and legal bodies) to develop and adopt codes of ethics ensuring appropriate, respectful approaches to traditional culture and folklore; (Smithsonian Institution, 1999).

This conference was shortly followed by a report of the Director-General of UNESCO in 2001 which advised that intellectual property regimes provided inadequate protection of intangible heritage, and recommended that the General Conference “continue action aimed at advancing the international regulation, through a new standard-setting instrument, of the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage.” (UNESCO 2001) The UNESCO report also recommended the adoption of several basic principles, including:

(a) that intangible cultural heritage be fundamentally safeguarded through creativity and enactment by the agents of the communities that produce and maintain it;
(b) that the loss of intangible cultural heritage can only be prevented by ensuring that the meanings, enabling conditions and skills involved in its creation, enactment and transmission can be reproduced;
(c) that any instrument dealing with intangible cultural heritage facilitate, encourage and protect the right and capacity of communities to continue to enact their intangible cultural heritage through developing their own approaches to manage and sustain it;
(d) that sharing one’s culture and having a cultural dialogue foster greater overall creativity as long as recognition and equitable exchanges are ensured. (UNESCO, 2001, pp. 5-6)

The combination of increased interest in intangible cultural heritage, and the specific calls for action emerging out of the Washington DC Conference and the 2001 Director-General report, led to the convening of a meeting of experts in Paris for the purpose of drafting a convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage. After several other meetings to resolve issues such as the role of member states and effective methods of safeguarding, UNESCO adopted The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage on Oct. 17, 2003.

The 2003 Convention identifies four purposes that it is designed to address:

(a) to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage;
(b) to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned;
(c) to raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof;
(d) to provide for international cooperation and assistance. (UNESCO, 2003, p. 2)

Most importantly for our purposes, it provides a definition of intangible cultural heritage:

“intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. (UNESCO, 2003, p. 2)

It also identifies major domains in which intangible cultural heritage manifests itself, including oral traditions and expressions (including language as a vehicle of intangible cultural heritage), performing arts, social practices, rituals and festivals, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship. The Convention requires each state party to create inventories of intangible cultural heritage present in its own territory and take measures to safeguard such heritage, as well as engaging in educational and awareness-raising measures with respect to intangible
cultural heritage. It also creates an “Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage” which creates and maintains a representative list of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity, a list of intangible heritage in need of urgent safeguarding, and promotes best practices in the safeguarding of intangible heritage.

To date, one hundred sixty-six countries have ratified the 2003 Convention. Unfortunately, while South and Central America are well-represented in the state parties to the Convention, none of the North American members of UNESCO have ratified the Convention to date. In fact, as neither the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia or New Zealand are currently parties to the Convention, participation by majority English-speaking countries is currently limited to Ireland. Given the significant amount of intangible cultural heritage that exists within these countries, the lack of coordinated and supported efforts to insure its longevity represents a significant problem.

Launching the PICH Initiative

While the English-speaking countries of North America are not signatories to the UNESCO convention, there have been several efforts initiated to preserve intangible cultural heritage within Canada and Mexico, both by the cultural heritage sector and by communities who practice various forms of intangible heritage (see Section II for an overview of some of the more significant efforts within North America to date). An examination of these efforts, however, reveals that while the museum community has had significant involvement in attempting to preserve ICH, libraries and archives have not demonstrated a great deal of interest in intangible heritage’s preservation. Most of the interest that has been expressed has occurred within a small number of the larger research libraries (e.g., the Library of Congress’ American Folklife Center and Libraries & Archives Canada’s sound recording collections of First Nations’ songs), libraries affiliated with museums with significant interest in Native Americans/First Peoples (e.g., the library of the National Museum of the American Indian at the Smithsonian, the Talbot Library & Museum in Oklahoma) and tribal libraries and archives (e.g., The Center for the Study of Chickasaw History & Culture in the Chickasaw Cultural Center). There is little to no coordination among libraries and archives with regards to supporting preservation of intangible cultural heritage.

This lack of coordination produces a variety of problems for those seeking to preserve intangible heritage. As the acquisition of cultural heritage materials by memory institutions are typically driven by the nature of the acquiring institutions (i.e., libraries collect published materials, archives collect unpublished materials, museums collect other artifacts) and the needs of their particular designated communities, there is a dispersion of the tangible aspects of that heritage to disparate institutions with no
interconnections to provide context and ease of access. In addition, libraries, archives, and museums often generate contextual information as ‘backroom’ activities (e.g., field notes generated by those making audio recordings of folk songs (Library of Congress, American Folklife Center, 2016) which they do not tend to see as useful for public exposure or as objects of preservation themselves. So while there are librarians and archivists engaged in scholarly efforts that could directly benefit those seeking to preservation intangible cultural heritage, much of that effort is neither visible nor accessible.

Given the importance of intangible heritage to the cultural and scholarly record, we believe that a more significant research program regarding libraries’ and archives’ contributions to the preservation of intangible heritage would be of benefit to both the scholarly community and to the cultures that are the subjects of study for that community. In order to launch such a research program, we requested and obtained funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to organize a meeting of individuals and organizations with a strong interest in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, with the goal of formulating a research and action agenda, with a North American focus, in this area.

The meeting was held in the Fales Library at New York University, on January 28 and 29, 2016. Attendees included researchers investigating the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, practitioners from cultural heritage preservation institutions that either utilize intangible forms of knowledge in training or that preserve tangible artifacts that may contribute to the preservation of intangible heritage, and scholars working in fields where intangible heritage constitutes one of the sources for their research. The range of participants was selected to try to elicit insights into how intangible heritage is actually perpetuated within certain communities of practice, and into what resources, both tangible and intangible, are necessary to scholarly analysis of intangible heritage. Given that intangible cultural heritage covers an extraordinarily large set of practices, we chose to focus on three forms of practice in particular: performing arts, culinary traditions, and paper conservation as a form of intangible practice. While the status of paper conservation as heritage practice is debatable (it was certainly debated at our meeting), we chose to include it as something of an ‘edge’ case that helps to clarify the boundaries of what might constitute culture, because it has an existing tradition of sustaining itself as a practice through various formal and informal educational activities, and because it is itself dependent on other forms of intangible practice. (For instance, the making of Japanese washi paper, which is utilized in paper conservation, has been recognized by UNESCO as a form of intangible cultural heritage.)

It was our goal for the meeting to create an opportunity for dialogue focused on selected intangible cultural heritage practices and to solicit contributions from the variety of
professional and personal perspectives represented by our participants. Put another way, we wanted our attendees to speak both within and across communities. With this goal in mind, we structured the meeting as a series of group discussions. We first separated into what we termed “homogeneous groups” in which all participants shared a common area of interest; the food studies people gathered together, as did the paper conservators and the performance studies people. Following a period of intense engagement by these groups, the meeting was reconvened as a whole and each group reported on the outcomes of its discussion and new questions that were raised. A second breakout session divided the participants into heterogeneous groups so that we could explore the similarities and differences in the approaches to preserving intangible cultural heritage in different areas of practice. Again, the meeting reconvened as a whole to share the experience of the groups. At the conclusion of this first day, the three PIs retreated to an executive session to review the notes of the day and prepare a summary of emerging themes and questions. This was shared with the entire group the following morning. In addition, we sought advice from the group on the direction of this report, on identifying the most pressing research questions that had arisen in the meeting, and on venues and methods for sharing and continuing the conversation that the meeting had hosted. A fuller summary of the meeting’s findings may be found in Section III of this white paper.

Outline

Section II of this white paper provides a brief literature review of some of the significant documents in the field of intangible cultural heritage, along with an examination of some exemplars of approaches to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage within a North American context. Section III provides a detailed discussion of the New York University meeting on Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage described above. Section IV sets forth suggested policy and research agendas for the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, along with some concluding thoughts on the future of this field and its relationship to library and archival studies.
II. The Story So Far: The Literature and Practice of ICH Preservation

A Brief Overview of ICH Literature

Discussions of intangible cultural heritage in the literature obviously date back many decades, but the passage of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage marked a major turning point in the level of attention devoted to intangible heritage. Reactions to the Convention, both positive and negative, significantly shape the contemporary discourse on these issues. It seems worthwhile to provide a brief review of the Convention's definitions and major provisions, to outline some of the discussions that have arisen regarding the Convention in the past decade, and to discuss its impact (or lack thereof) on research in library and information science. What follows is by no means a complete review of the existing literature on intangible cultural heritage. Such a review would require a far lengthier document. We have instead focused on those items which we believe might most helpfully inform discussions regarding a research agenda for libraries and archives with respect to intangible heritage.

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was created:

(a) To safeguard the intangible cultural heritage;
(b) To ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individual concerned;
(c) To raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof;
(d) To provide for international cooperation and assistance. (UNESCO, 2003, p. 2).

The Convention defines intangible cultural heritage as “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills -- as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith -- that communities, group and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.” (UNESCO, 2003, p. 2). An interesting aspect of this definition is that it recognizes that intangible heritage is inextricably bound up with tangible aspects of heritage. This is explicitly recognized in the Convention’s preamble, which notes “the deep-seated interdependence between the intangible cultural heritage and the tangible cultural and natural heritage” (UNESCO, 2003, p. 1). The Convention also identifies five domains where intangible heritage may be manifested: oral traditions and languages, performing arts, social practices (including rituals and
festive events), knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship.

The Convention also provides its own definition of what is meant by ‘safeguarding’ intangible heritage: “measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage.” This is a fairly broad definition, and given the previously noted intertwining of intangible and tangible heritage, obviously incorporates activities that a number of cultural heritage institutions (including not only museums, but also libraries and archives) typically view as part of their mission.

The Convention defines “state parties” as states which are bound by the Convention and among which the Convention is in force. To date, 167 countries have ratified the Convention. As organized by UNESCO regional electoral groups, this includes 21 states from the Western Europe and North America region (although none actually from North America), 24 states from Eastern Europe, 30 states in Latin-America and the Caribbean, 33 states in Asia and the Pacific, 40 African States, and 18 Arab States. Of major countries considered part of the ‘Anglosphere’, only Ireland has ratified the Convention, although a number of former British colonies in Central and South America and the Caribbean are state parties.

The remainder of the Convention consists primarily of articles which establish a political and administrative framework for carrying out the tasks of the convention (including the establishment of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage), and those which delineate specific actions to be taken by state parties to the Convention and the Intergovernmental Committee to further the cause of preserving intangible cultural heritage. For state parties, these actions include creating inventories of intangible cultural heritage within their territories, adopting policies for the protection of intangible heritage and designating or creating formal bodies to insure its protection, and developing educational, training and awareness programs to raise awareness of intangible cultural heritage and insure its viability. The Convention also calls for state parties to insure that communities, groups and individuals that create, maintain and transmit such heritage are actively involved in its management. The Intergovernmental Committee is charged with creating a Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, a List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Urgent Need of Safeguarding, and selecting and promoting “national, subregional and regional programmes, projects and activities for the safeguarding of the heritage which it considers best reflect the principles and objectives of this Convention” (UNESCO 2003,
pp. 7-8), which it achieves through a Register of Best Safeguarding Practices. The Convention also sets forth various forms of international assistance that the Intergovernmental Committee may provide the state parties in pursuit of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

The 2003 Convention, while providing the foundation of UNESCO’s approach to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, should not be seen as solely defining that approach. The *Operational Directives for the Implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, adopted by the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2008 and revised every two years since, provides further detail and refinement for the objectives and actions set forth in the Convention. It specifies the criteria that must be fulfilled for intangible cultural heritage to be added to the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Urgent Need of Safeguarding, and the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices. With respect to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Urgent Need of Safeguard, for example, it specifies six criteria that potential entries to be added to the list must fulfill:

U.1 The element constitutes intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 2 of the Convention.

U.2 (a) The element is in urgent need of safeguarding because its viability is at risk despite the efforts of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals and State(s) Party(ies) concerned; or (b) The element is in extremely urgent need of safeguarding because it is facing grave threats as a result of which it cannot be expected to survive without immediate safeguarding.

U.3 A safeguarding plan is elaborated that may enable the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned to continue the practice and transmission of the element.

U.4 The element has been nominated following the widest possible participation of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned and with their free, prior and informed consent.

U.5 The element is included in an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage present in the territory(ies) of the submitting State(s) Party(ies), as defined in Articles 11 and 12 of the Convention.

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1 The two lists and the register may be found at UNESCO’s ICH site at http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/lists.
In cases of extreme urgency, the State(s) Party(ies) concerned has (have) been duly consulted regarding inscription of the element in conformity with Article 17.3 of the Convention. (UNESCO, 2014, p. 1)

The above criteria obviously set a high administrative bar that must be cleared in order for a form of intangible cultural heritage to be considered threatened, including its having been entered into the formal inventory of local forms of intangible cultural heritage by the responsible state party, and with the “widest possible participation of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned,” as well as the creation of a safeguarding plan, producing the somewhat paradoxical situation that a form of intangible cultural heritage cannot be recognized as threatened until a plan to insure its survival has already been crafted.

The Operational Directives also specify criteria and priorities for the Intergovernmental Committee to employ in making decisions regarding whether to lend international assistance to state parties to the convention, with priority given to requests concerning,

(a) the safeguarding of the heritage inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding;
(b) the preparation of inventories in the sense of Articles 11 and 12 of the Convention;
(c) support for programmes, projects and activities carried out at the national, subregional and regional levels aimed at the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage;
(d) preparatory assistance. (UNESCO, 2014, p. 3).

The Operational Directive also provides extensive suggestions as to how state parties should insure the participation of communities, groups and individuals, along with non-governmental organizations and researchers, in the implementation of the Convention. It also sets forth mechanisms for state parties to employ in trying to raise awareness with respect to intangible cultural heritage. Of particular note with regards to this last element is that it describes specific roles for museums, archives and libraries in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage:

Research institutes, centres of expertise, museums, archives, libraries, documentation centres and similar entities play an important role in collecting, documenting, archiving and conserving data on intangible cultural heritage, as well as in providing information and raising awareness about its importance. In order to enhance their awareness-raising functions about intangible cultural heritage, these entities are encouraged to:
(a) involve practitioners and bearers of intangible cultural heritage when organizing exhibitions, lectures, seminars, debates and training on their heritage;

(b) introduce and develop participatory approaches to presenting intangible cultural heritage as living heritage in constant evolution;

(c) focus on the continuous recreation and transmission of knowledge and skills necessary for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, rather than on the objects that are associated with it;

(d) employ, when appropriate, information and communication technologies to communicate the meaning and value of intangible cultural heritage;

(e) involve practitioners and bearers in their management, putting in place participatory systems for local development. (UNESCO, 2014, pp. 103-104)

In addition to stating that cultural memory institutions such as museums, libraries and archives have a role to play in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, this passage highlights two important aspects about that role. The first, and perhaps most critical, point is that these institutions should not become so preoccupied with the preservation of tangible aspects of heritage that they lose track of the more important work, a “focus on the continuous recreation and transmission of knowledge and skills necessary for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.” The second is that these institutions must engage in a shared and participatory effort with communities and groups who have intangible heritage to manage and safeguard that heritage. The preservation community has, due to the influence of the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) Reference Model, grown accustomed to a model of preservation that dictates that an archive should monitor its designated community to insure that the archive can adequately fulfill its mission to archive information on that community’s behalf (CCSDS, 2012). The Operational Directives go a step beyond the OAIS Reference Model, arguing that libraries, archives and museums who wish to assist in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage must approach safeguarding such heritage as a participatory design project, with the full collaboration of that heritage’s practitioners.

Some further refinement of both the basic concepts of the Convention and the recommendations set out in the Operational Directives may be found in the capacity-building materials produced by UNESCO to support state parties in their efforts to safeguard intangible cultural heritage. These materials are intended to be used in workshops which will introduce interested parties to the tasks involved in implementing the Convention at the national level, the work necessary to ratify the Convention and become a state party, how to engage in community-based inventoring of intangible
cultural heritage, and how to prepare nominations for additions to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Urgent Need of Safeguarding. The third unit of these materials introduces the key concepts in the Convention, and clarifies some issues that are not explicitly discussed in the Convention itself or the Operational Directives. Notable is this unit’s discussion of authenticity with regards to intangible cultural heritage:

Authenticity is not a concept used in the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention or its ODs; nor do concepts such as integrity or antiquity find a place there. The Convention defines ICH as living heritage that is transmitted yet constantly recreated; thus, present-day forms of ICH are not considered any less authentic than historical ones. The communities concerned should decide what ICH belongs to their cultural heritage and what does not. Those stakeholders other than the practitioners, such as the State, experts or professional performers, are thus not required to make judgements on the right way to practise or transmit a particular element.

In this context it is worthwhile quoting paragraph 8 of the Yamato Declaration, adopted by tangible and intangible heritage experts in Nara (Japan) in 2004:

... considering that intangible cultural heritage is constantly recreated, the term ‘authenticity’ as applied to tangible cultural heritage is not relevant when identifying and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

(UNESCO, Unit 3, n.d.)

This passage, while being perhaps a logical extension of the Operational Directives’ insistence on collaboration with communities, groups and individuals who participate in intangible cultural heritage, nonetheless is revelatory of the degree to which UNESCO believes this mandate should be followed. This section clearly states that state parties and other outside agencies cannot determine what is intangible cultural heritage and what is not; only those who have and practice that heritage can. Taken at face value, this means that state parties and other agencies cannot independently identify, document, or safeguard intangible cultural heritage, because they are incapable of even recognizing its existence without the knowledge and assistance of communities which hold it.

As state parties cannot themselves identify what constitutes intangible cultural heritage, that leaves those parties with one essential question: how, then, do they identify the “communities, groups and individuals” who are in possession of intangible cultural heritage in order to collaborate with them? Unfortunately, the Unit 3 materials are
somewhat less than helpful in this regard, essentially leaving it to state parties to develop their own definitions of what constitutes a community or group:

Communities, groups and individuals are not defined in the Convention….

The Convention does not indicate whether or how to differentiate between ‘communities’ and ‘groups’.

For the purposes of the implementation of the Convention, State Parties define communities according to various criteria, such as administrative, geographical, occupational, religious or ethnolinguistic criteria. Communities, groups or individuals can also be defined – or define themselves – in relation to a specific ICH element or to a group of such elements. (UNESCO, n.d., p. 6)

Although the capacity-building materials from UNESCO are somewhat nebulous in their description of intangible cultural heritage and the communities that practice it, they are a bit more definitive in discussing the relationship between the intangible and the tangible with respect to libraries and archives. In discussing documentation of intangible cultural heritage, the Unit 3 materials both describes the nature of documentation and practices surrounding it:

Documentation consists of recording ICH in its current state and variety, through transcription and/or audiovisual means, and collecting documents that relate to it. The recordings and collected documents are often kept in libraries, archives or websites, where interested people, including community members (ODs 85 and 87), may consult them. Access should be regulated in a way that takes relevant customary practices into account (Article 13(d)(ii)).

Some communities and groups have their own forms of documentation of ICH expressions and knowledge such as songbooks, sacred texts, weaving samplers, pattern books, icons or images. In some cases, access to such records is limited and regulated by customary practices, which need to be respected. In many communities today, people are recording their ICH practices and making them available, often online, to each other and to the public in general. Innovative community self-documentation efforts and programmes to repatriate or disseminate archival documents in order to encourage continued creativity are some of the safeguarding strategies being used today. (UNESCO, n.d., p. 9)

This helps further refine not only UNESCO’s vision of a role for cultural heritage institutions with respect to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, it also provides some
recommendations with respect to practices, including accounting for communities’ preferences with regards to access to documentary material and in working with communities to disseminate library and archival materials as necessary to safeguard intangible heritage. The forms of documentation that UNESCO anticipates will be generated around intangible cultural heritage are reflected in the titles of various units in the capacity-building materials surrounding inventorying (“Audio recording,” “Interviewing,” “Photography,” “Participatory Video” and “Participatory Mapping”), and are more explicitly set forth in the materials for Unit 36: Documentation and Inventorying. They include audio and video recordings, photographs, field notes and transcriptions, as well as traditional forms of documentation which may include images, manuscripts, texts, teachings aids, and others.

UNESCO’s approach to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage has not been without its critics. Both Kurin (2007) and Taylor (2008) have pointed out that there is an innate tension between the 2003 Convention’s emphasis on the preservation of ICH as a living practice within its own community, and a reliance on government agencies for processes of surveying and inventorying intangible heritage. As Kurin notes, “In many countries around the world, minority cultural communities do not see government as representing their interests - particularly when it comes to their living cultural traditions and their vitality as living, dynamic communities” (Kurin, 2007, p. 13). Taylor further notes that in some cases the interests of community, national and international parties with respect to some forms of ICH may actually be in conflict. Kurin also observes that the 2003 Convention promotes the preservation of intangible heritage by conveying recognition and prestige on practices, but if credit for those practices adheres to the government agencies carrying out preservation efforts rather than to the community which originates them, it will actually be of little benefit to maintaining practices as living traditions within their community.

Taylor also critiques the 2003 Convention for bringing a language of objectification into the discussion of the preservation of intangible heritage that is detrimental to its stated goals. Most obviously, an emphasis on documentation as a preservation strategy may deflect energy from efforts necessary to actually maintain intangible heritage as a practice. More subtly, the approach taken by the Convention may actually reify practices in a community and work against their preservation by making them resistant to the natural change and evolution necessary to any living tradition. Taylor also notes that, unlike the case of some tangible forms of heritage, the 2003 Convention does not address intellectual property rights, leaving those discussions to the World Intellectual Property Organization, leaving intangible heritage more open to misappropriation. Taylor argues that there is a fundamental difference between transmission of heritage through embodied practice and performance within a community and transmission through documentation
and recording outside that community, and that the approaches advocated by UNESCO may end up doing real harm.

To Kurin’s and Taylor’s critiques, we can add that even if the UNESCO approach to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage is well-designed and non-controversial, it is no guarantee of success. Documentation of intangible cultural heritage, particularly oral traditions, performing arts, rituals, festivals, and traditional craft skills, often takes the form of audio/visual recordings, materials which consistently presented some of the greatest preservation difficulties of the last century. Ivey (2004) identifies many of the significant problems associated with preservation of audio/visual documentation of intangible heritage, not all of which are technical. As Ivey notes, much of the early documentation of intangible culture within the United States “exists simultaneously as cultural heritage and corporate asset,” and corporations are not cultural memory organizations committed to the preservation of heritage, as his story of RCA Records dynamiting a warehouse containing four stories of master recordings from their archive dramatically demonstrates. Nor do corporate archives have any commitment to non-commercial public access. And even when audio/visual records are held by libraries, archives and museums, copyright restrictions may place severe limits on access and use.

Ivey also discusses the complicated technological problems adhering to preserving the documentary record of intangible heritage. That record was made on a plethora of now antiquated technological devices and formats which are difficult and expensive to transfer into modern formats (if they can be at all). And modern digital audio/visual formats raise their own host of questions regarding preservation, as those who’ve embarked on large scale preservation efforts have discovered (Jackson & McKinley, 2016; The Science & Technology Council, 2007).

As the preceding should make clear, despite a very large interest in insuring the preservation of intangible cultural heritage globally, both the definition of success in this effort and the best means to achieve it are subject to debate. Underlying many of these debates are fundamental questions of power and agency, manifested in particular in discussions of ownership of intangible heritage, and control over documentation and other preservation activities.

The relationship between intellectual property regimes and cultural heritage generally, and intangible heritage in particular, has been the subject of lengthy discussion and debate both within the United States and internationally. One of the most significant

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2 Similar destruction has been noted in the film industry. The early history of the UCLA Film & Television Archive is memorable for its efforts in trying to prevent Hollywood film studios from dumping their nitrate master prints in Santa Monica Bay (Hansen & Paul, 2017, pp. 85-88).
recent contributions to these debates is Carpenter, Katyal and Riley’s (2009) discussion of the use of intellectual property regimes for the protection of cultural heritage. Cultural appropriation and commodification of traditional knowledge has been a recognized problem in the field of intangible heritage for some time (Shiva, 1999; Slattery, 2006; Torsen, 2008; Wendland, 2004; Ziff & Rao, 1997), and the applicability of intellectual property law as a means of protecting and preserving intangible heritage has also long been a topic of conversation (Reddy, 2006; Posey, 1990; Greaves, 1994). Responding to what they see as a growing body of opinion turning against the use of intellectual property law for the protection of cultural property, Carpenter, Katyal and Riley propose that many of the problems identified in using intellectual property law for the protection of cultural heritage stem from its emphasis on individual rights. They propose that a system of property law that focuses on a people’s stewardship, rather than a person’s ownership, could allow property law to “embrace a broader and more flexible set of interests” (Carpenter, Katyal & Riley, 2009, p. 1002). Brown (2010), in responding to their work, applauds their efforts to extend intellectual property law’s intellectual horizon but notes that their approach has the potential to unnecessarily restrict the public domain while also potentially shutting down essential discussions over use of cultural resources.

For librarians and archivists, the extensive literature on intellectual property law and intangible cultural heritage is obviously of great significance if we are to attempt to assist in preserving that heritage. The museum community’s experience in debates over intellectual property and ownership and repatriation of cultural property should serve as a cautionary tale for other cultural memory organizations as they seek to aid the preservation of intangible heritage. As libraries and archives hold substantial documentation of some forms of intangible heritage, further discussion (and legal scholarship) addressing the rights and interests of communities enacting intangible heritage over such documentation will be essential. While there has been some work on this issue within the archival community (Christen, 2011; Underhill, 2016), much more remains to be done.

Issues of intellectual property with respect to intangible cultural heritage often intersect with issues surrounding documentation of such intangible heritage and how it is generated.3 While the appropriateness and effectiveness of documentation as a preservation strategy for intangible heritage is a subject of debate, it remains the most commonly used strategy. However, in putting intangible heritage in ‘fixed’ form, those documenting intangible heritage are moving that heritage into realms of copyright and other intellectual property questions. When this is done by individuals outside the

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3 ‘Documentation’ refers to efforts to preserve forms of intangible cultural heritage by making fixed records of either forms of knowledge or activities (e.g., dictionaries and grammars for endangered languages, audio & video recordings of performing arts).
community which practices the intangible heritage in question, it raises serious question of ownership of the resulting record and what rights the originating community holds over it. It also raises concerns regarding cultural knowledge and practices, once taken outside the community in the form of a fixed record, being used in ways which the originating community would find objectionable. An ethnographer, however strong their knowledge of a community they’re studying, may not be able to identify uses of ICH which the originating community might find offensive. And if such records are placed within a museum or archives, it may be difficult to restrict uses to which the community would object.

Hollowell and Nicholas (2009) set forth an interesting approach to dealing with the complex interplay of issues surrounding intellectual property, intangible heritage and its documentation employed by the Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage project. This project employed participant action research using ethnographic methods to assist communities in exploring their concerns about the protection and management of cultural heritage, both physical and intangible. In working with the Hul’qumi’num Treaty Group (HTG) (which represents six Coast Salish First Nations located in the Pacific Northwest), they were able to help elicit some fundamental principles and laws which the First Nations in the HTG apply in dealing with their own cultural heritage, including a law of inherited right to care for the dead dictating who should care for the remains of deceased ancestors and their belongings, a law of non-disturbance prohibiting the physical disturbance of ancient human remains and ancestors’ belongings, and a law of avoidance which states that people “should avoid all physical contact with the spirits of the deceased, their skeletal remains, belongings, and burial grounds. For example, people should not go to graveyards at certain times of day, and weak people should avoid them entirely. People who come in contact with human remains should not go near children or other vulnerable people for a time (usually four days)” (Hollowell and Nicholas, 2009, p. 150). This type of ethnographic research simultaneously assists communities in articulating their own desires with respect to management of cultural heritage and intellectual property, while also generating documentation of underlying knowledge and beliefs, intangible aspects of heritage that might easily be lost.

Problems regarding documentation of intangible heritage by external parties can, of course, be somewhat ameliorated by having documentation generated by the community possessing the intangible heritage. Brown & Nicholas (2012) discuss many examples of members of Canadian First Nations and Maori peoples deploying information technology to assist in documenting their own cultural property and in so doing reaffirming bonds between members of those communities. There have also been efforts, most notably Kim Christen’s Mukurtu project (Christen, 2008), to develop digital tools to assist communities in documenting and managing their own cultural heritage. And many tribal
offices and councils within the United States and Canada have developed their own protocols and standards for the protection and preservation of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible (Welch, et al., 2009; Navajo Nation Historic Preservation Department, 2008; Gwich’in Tribal Council, 2004). However, even when documentation is generated in a fashion respecting the community from which it is derived, its use by people outside the community can still be problematic. Graham (2009) documents how for the Yuchi tribe now living in Oklahoma, having documentation of their language residing in an archive on the East Coast with relatively poor access made the material almost useless in their efforts to revitalize their language.

Even this cursory review of literature on intangible cultural heritage reveals that preserving ICH is an incredibly complex enterprise. Any preservation efforts with regards to intangible heritage quickly run up against such questions as ‘how do we define community,’ ‘how is culture constituted,’ ‘how do efforts to preserve cultural practice impinge on and transform practice,’ and ‘who should determine appropriate means of preservation of a culture,’ questions that can be intractable and highly contentious. However, this has not stopped several agencies and projects from trying to make headway in the preservation of ICH. In the next section, we provide a brief overview of some notable projects devoted to preservation of intangible cultural heritage in the North American context.

**North American Efforts to Preserve Intangible Cultural Heritage**

As with our discussion of literature, we will not attempt a comprehensive discussion of efforts to preserve intangible cultural heritage. Certain areas of intangible heritage, such as endangered language preservation, have several funding agencies devoted to enabling preservation activity (e.g., The U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services’ Administration for Native Americans grant program on Native Language - Preservation & Maintenance and the National Endowment for the Humanities’ Documenting Endangered Languages program), and as a result there are a large number of projects within those areas. Instead we have tried to select a number of projects that show some of the history and diversity of approaches which have been taken to preserving intangible heritage, and how they have intersected with libraries.

One of the earlier coordinated efforts to document and preserve intangible heritage in the form of performing arts was the work of the John Lomax and his family working in concert with the Library of Congress’ Music Division. John Lomax was asked to become the head of the Library’s Archive of American Folk Song, created in 1928, and in that role, he and his son Alan traveled extensively, making field recordings of musicians
using an instantaneous disk recorder as well as taking photographs of performers, performance venues and regions they traveled through. The Lomax Family Collections, now housed at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, include over 6,400 sound recordings, 5,500 graphic images (with another 400 housed in the Library’s Prints & Photographs Division) and 6000 moving images. The Lomax family’s work provided vital documentation of American folk music in Michigan and the Midwest, the Appalachians, the Mississippi Delta country and other parts of the South.

In addition to being one of the earlier organized efforts to document intangible heritage, several other aspects of this project are noteworthy. It is certainly one of the earliest projects in North America to involve a library as the lead agency for documentation efforts. Examination of some of the records from the project also show an early awareness by the participants that simply documenting a performance or performances was insufficient; documentation also needed to include contextualizing information to assist people in understanding the performance and the culture from which it was drawn. Alan Lomax, in reflecting on the documentation work, noted,

Learning that the Russians were writing full-scale life histories of their major ballad singers, I then began to take down lengthy musical biographies of the most interesting people who came my way. Thus, Leadbelly’s life and repertoire became a book--the first folksinger biography in English, and unhappily out of print a year after it was published. Jelly Roll Morton, Woody Guthrie, Aunt Molly Jackson, Big Bill Broonzy and a dozen lesser-known singers all set down their lives and philosophies for the Congressional Library microphones. In that way I learned that folk song in a context of folk talk made a lot more sense than in a concert hall. (Cohen, 2003, p. 176)

The Lomax Collection at the Library of Congress thus provides more than simply a repository of musical recordings and photographs; it is a repository of culture, and tries to provide its patrons with musicians’ own interpretation of their performances.

Finally, the work by the Library of Congress and the Lomax family is notable for being relatively technologically advanced for its day. Attempting to make audio recordings of reasonable fidelity in the variety of settings Lomax entered into was not an easy task, and any modern librarian dealing with information technology can feel at least a slight sympathetic twinge on reading Lomax’s justification for having to purchase a new pickup for his disc recorder: “The old pickup or reproducing-head was always the worst feature of the Thompson recorder because it simply would not track on aluminum records. It

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4 The American Folklife Center, Library of Congress (Nov. 4, 2015). Lomax Family Collection. Available at: https://www.loc.gov/folklife/lomax/alanlomaxcollection.html
skipped grooves whenever the total volume in the sound track jumped suddenly and has often caused me to curse the day I ever was born” (Cohen, 2011, p. 16). More importantly, the reliance on such technology demonstrates that using documentation as a preservation technique breeds new preservation problems around the survival of the documentation. The aluminum discs employed for many early field recordings, while highly stable, are also highly susceptible to damage during playback, requiring a pickup stylus made of plant material to avoid scratching the disc. Migrating these audio recordings to other media is obviously a difficult, painstaking process; insuring their continued availability commits the library to either maintaining very antiquated equipment or an expensive conversion process.

Not all efforts to document intangible heritage within the United States have been conducted with the degree of institutional support and organization that the Library of Congress has brought to its efforts to preserve performing arts. The Foxfire Project, originating as the work of Eliot Wigginton and his students at the Rabun Gap-Nachoochee School in Appalachian Georgia in 1966, can be seen as a case of community-based oral history directed for the most part at the intangible cultural heritage of the southern Appalachians. Wigginton, in an attempt to engage the students in his English class, asked them what might make the curriculum more interesting. They suggested a magazine, and the class embarked on a project to produce a magazine focused on gathering stories from families and friends about the lives and traditions of people in their area. The project continued and expanded (https://www.foxfire.org), and in addition to the magazine (which still exists), the project has published a series of books, and runs a Museum & Heritage Center in the Chattahoochee National Forest. While Wigginton notes that the project was an attempt to take a novel approach to English instruction that would engage his students, he also was clearly motivated by a desire to try to preserve local heritage traditions, and to do so in a particular fashion.

The big problem, of course, is that since these grandparents were primarily an oral civilization, information being passed through the generations by word of mouth and demonstration, little of it is written down. When they’re gone, the magnificent hunting tales, the ghost stories that kept a thousand children sleepless, the intricate tricks of self-sufficiency acquired through years of trial and error, the eloquent and haunting stories of suffering and sharing and building and healing and planting and harvesting -- all these go with them, and what a loss.

If this information is to be saved at all, for whatever reason, it must be saved now; and the logical researchers are the grand-children, not university researchers from the outside. (Wigginton, 1972, pp. 12-13).
Several things stand out as of interest in the case of the Foxfire Project beyond its value as an educational initiative. While the value of documentation in preserving intangible heritage has been debated, Foxfire might be seen as an indicator that above and beyond the documentation itself, there is the act of documenting, and the performance of that act may also contribute to preservation of intangible heritage, depending on who exactly is documenting the culture. For the students, documenting their own cultural heritage meant engaging with community elders with knowledge of that heritage, and thus served not just as documentation, but as continued enactment and transmission of that heritage. By instituting a system in which a community essentially documents itself, the Foxfire Project has both contributed to increased awareness of local traditions and provided a mechanism for that knowledge to be passed on, albeit in a somewhat less than traditional manner.

If the Foxfire Project is an indication that changing the focus from documentation to documenting may give us new insights into the ways in which intangible heritage might be preserved, recent developments within the museum community also demonstrate that there is potential in further altering the relationships between communities with intangible heritage and documentation of that heritage. The Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage has a specific project focused on supporting intangible heritage and improving its own efforts in that regard:

While the Smithsonian Institution is perhaps best known for its vast collections of material art and artifacts, the institution is also a thriving force for cultural work concerning traditions of performance, ritual, music, dance, knowledge, storytelling, and oral transmission—often collectively referred to as intangible cultural heritage. By interviewing and surveying Smithsonian staff about their work with these diverse cultural expressions, and through ongoing engagements with external networks and strategic cultural partners, best practices and challenges emerge to inform the future of cultural heritage policy and practice at the Smithsonian. (Smithsonian Institution, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (2017))

Several initiatives focusing on sustaining intangible cultural heritage have been launched within the Center for Folklife and Cultural heritage. These initiatives focus on achieving three large goals: documenting intangible heritage, enabling enactment of intangible heritage, and achieving bibliographic control over written materials about intangible heritage. Initiatives like Sharing Knowledge (where Alaskan Native experts provide information on use and meaning of cultural heritage objects), the oral history archives, the Smithsonian Folkways Recordings which documents both music and spoken culture, and the Recovering Voices initiative which seeks to improve access to the Smithsonian’s
collections in order to support efforts to document, revitalize and sustain endangered languages are all targeted at helping to preserve the intangible heritage of different communities.

The Sharing Knowledge and Recovering Voices initiatives merit further discussion as attempts to correct a problem seen in many efforts to employ documentation as a mechanism to preserve intangible cultural heritage. Graham (2009) discussed work by Dr. Richard Grounds and others involved in Euchee/Yuchi Language Project\(^5\) to employ archival materials documenting the Euchee language housed at the American Philosophical Society, only to find that the materials were only available for access during very limited hours and that photocopying the linguistic documentation was not permitted. For many communities with endangered intangible heritage who might benefit from access to documentary materials housed in cultural heritage institutions such as museums, libraries and archives, those institutions far too often have seemed like potential treasure troves guarded by rather unfriendly and capricious dragons with a penchant for translating heritage into arcane languages. The Smithsonian Institution has been deliberately trying to change that dynamic. In discussing the Recovering Voices initiative, Joshua Bell (2015, p. 14) from the National Museum of National History (which collaborates with the Smithsonian on the initiative) said,

> Involving staff from NMNH, the National Museum of the American Indian and the Center for Folklore and Cultural Heritage, since 2009 Recovering Voices has been working with communities to document and revitalize language and knowledge traditions. Put another way, this project seeks to transform the museum inside and out by facilitating more direct engagement with collections by communities from which they originated in order to make collections better resources. In the process, Recovering Voices is also about NMNH staff thinking critically through what it is the museum has and what it means for NMNH to have this material. In essence, striving to decolonize the museum and open up our collections to other ways of knowing the world….

Through Recovering Voices, we seek to do this through connecting communities with collections in meaningful ways for them and their heritage revitalization and maintenance work, but also in a way that helps us to rethink rather than re-inscribe old dichotomies (nature vs. culture). We are not always successful in doing this, but we are slowly transforming people’s perceptions of the Smithsonian from being the Nation’s Attic to being the Nation’s Meeting Ground.

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\(^5\) [http://www.yuchilanguage.org/](http://www.yuchilanguage.org/)
An important thing to note about these efforts is that they are not being framed as simply improving access to collections, but fundamentally changing the relationship between museums and communities which are the source of cultural heritage materials to make sure that the museum community is actively supporting those source communities and their heritage practices. To borrow language from the participatory design community, the Smithsonian is trying to change their relationship with the communities they serve to a level playing field, in which all participants are seen as equally important in discussions of handling cultural material. This is a far more difficult mission than simply acquiring, organizing, preserving and providing access to cultural heritage materials, requiring a significantly greater degree of reflexivity on the part of the cultural memory organizations. It also carries with it the implication that documenting intangible cultural heritage is not the same thing as preserving intangible cultural heritage, and that museums have a responsibility to support the preservation of intangible heritage outside their walls, as well as the tangible products of that heritage within.

The relationships between communities with intangible heritage and cultural heritage institutions holding materials of potential value in sustaining that intangible heritage are not always direct. Various mediating actors can and do play a role in connecting communities with libraries, archives and museums. In many cases, these actors are organizations housed within academia. In some cases, such mediating actors may consciously seek to assist in sustaining intangible heritage; in others, this may be an unconscious, or at least secondary, goal. The Hemispheric Institute for Performance & Politics (2017a), for example, does not have the preservation of performance (or indeed any form of heritage) listed in its mission:

The Hemispheric Institute connects artists, scholars, and activists from across the Americas and creates new avenues for collaboration and action. Focusing on social justice, we research politically engaged performance and amplify it through gatherings, courses, publications, and archives. Our dynamic, multilingual network traverses disciplines and borders and is grounded in the fundamental belief that artistic practice and critical reflection can spark lasting cultural change.

As further discussed on the Hemispheric Institute’s (2017b) history page, the “...initial impetus was to create a consortium of institutions that would house scholars interested in the intersection of performance and politics in the Americas, and to build collections of scholarly and artistic materials for research and teaching.” While the Institute’s mission has been primarily defined as a scholarly one, however, it has also committed itself to the documentation of performance in the Americas. In doing so, it has accumulated a large and growing repository of performance materials. Physical materials in this archive (photographs, books and other documents, etc.) are placed within the Tamiment Library.
at New York University, while video materials have been digitized and made publicly available worldwide through the Hemispheric Institute Digital Video Library (http://hidvl.nyu.edu). By enabling global access to the stored material within the Institute’s digital video library, the Hemispheric Institute provides a wealth of material that can contribute to further production of performances and art. The Institute does not see its mission as enabling the preservation of ‘heritage’ (in fact, the founders might very well take numerous exceptions to traditional concepts of heritage and whether intangible heritage can be preserved in documentary form), but it is undeniable that the Hemispheric Institute tries to encourage a culture of performance and provides access to documentary materials that support that. In doing so, it establishes itself as a mediating agent between performance artists in the Americas and documentary material generated by, and which may contribute to, that community.

The oblique intervention of an actor such as the Hemispheric Institute can be contrasted with more deliberate interventions in the preservation of intangible heritage conducted by an agency such as the Alaska Native Language Center (ANLC). Established by the Alaskan state government in 1972 and located at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the ANLC engages in research and documentary activity on all 20 of Alaska’s native languages. The ANLC originally housed all of the documentary material it possessed internally, but in 2009, the Alaska Native Language Archive was established as a separate entity to care for the large and growing collection of materials, including not only linguistic documentation and early recordings of native languages, but nearly all published materials in Alaska’s native languages. The ANLC regularly offers courses in Central Yup’ik, Inupiaq and Gwich’in Athabascan, and offers individual and small group instruction in many of the other Alaskan languages through special topics courses. They also publish teaching and research materials on Alaskan native languages. The Alaska Native Language Archive has also worked with the Alaska Library Association to offer training on digital heritage preservation for Alaskan Native libraries, archives and museums, with sponsorship from the Sustainable Heritage Network, the National Science Foundation and the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

The ANLC/ANLA case is interesting in that it includes efforts to directly intervene in the preservation of intangible heritage by a variety of actors, including the State of Alaska, the University of Alaska Fairbanks (both researchers and academic staff, including library staff), and indirectly by funding agencies supporting their work, including the Institute of Museum & Library Services and the National Science Foundation. What is also intriguing about this case is that it shows how a very complex web of actors has developed around the preservation of Native Alaskan languages, including not only the ANLC/ANLA and the University of Alaska, but local school districts throughout the state, heritage preservation centers such as the Alaska Native Heritage Center, the
Sealaska Heritage Institute and the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, and many others. The interest and support of governmental actors (federal and state legislatures and funding agencies such as IMLS and NSF) in language revitalization efforts has produced a complex social ecosystem around preservation activities centered on Native Alaskan languages, and the ways in which libraries and archives interact with this wide variety of players is something which merits further investigation.

The Alaska Native Language Archive’s workshop on preserving digital heritage highlights the degree to which efforts to sustain tangible cultural heritage include the use of information technology. Given the intertwined nature of tangible and intangible heritage, as well as documentation of heritage, IT obviously can have an impact in the preservation of intangible heritage. There have been a variety of technology projects which have sought to contribute to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, many of them focused on language preservation, including the Talking Dictionaries produced by the Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages, the Kirrkirr project at Stanford University which provides visualization tools for working with indigenous language dictionaries, and FirstVoices Keyboard (a multilingual keypad app for use on Android and iPhone platforms which enables character sets for over one hundred indigenous languages in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States). There are projects creating motion capture software for use in preserving dance and performing arts, such as the i-Treasures project being conducted in the EU, the Dédelo platform for intangible cultural heritage management, and many others.

Two of these projects stand out as being worthy of particular attention. Never Alone (Kisima Inŋitchuŋa) is a commercial game, available on a number of different gaming platforms, including Mac, iOS, Google Play, XBox, Wii and PS4. The game was developed by the Cook Inlet Tribal Council in Alaska, along with a number of tribal elders and storytellers from Alaska, in collaboration with E-Line Media, an entertainment and educational game publishing company located in New York. The game is based on traditional stories of the Inupiat people and narrated entirely in Inuiaq, and was developed in part to help Alaskan Native youth reconnect with the intangible traditions of storytelling and language of their culture. Amy Freeden, the Executive Vice President and CFO for the Cook Inlet Tribal Council, described some of the motivation behind creating the game:

I have two young boys, and they’re teenagers. They’re thirteen and sixteen. And the one thing I knew, growing up Alaskan Native can be very hard. They don’t necessarily have positive images of their people to grasp on to…. For me, I wanted to hear the voices of our youth. Help them reconnect to their culture, but
also really reengage them in how wonderful and how cool Inupiaq culture is.
(Cook Inlet Tribal Council, 2016)

These desires are echoed by those of Aggie (Patik) Kellie (2016), one of the game’s cultural ambassadors:

I have a four year-old grandson, so I’m learning video games. Before this, the last video game I played was an Atari! If Never Alone would touch the young people, no matter whether they are in a village or outside, it will make them want to connect to their heritage and learn more. I did this because of my grandson. I want him to play a game that has the history of where he came from.

The idea of creating a video game celebrating Native Alaskan language and culture originated with the Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC), and led to the development of the first game company owned by indigenous people, Upper One Games, a collaboration between CITC and E-Line media which created Never Alone. The creation of a game company was sparked by a desire to insure that the indigenous community of Alaska enjoyed the financial benefits of the game and that it could contribute to maintain services to the community while also sharing Alaskan Native culture with the wider world. Never Alone thus provides a very interesting example of a community with their own intangible heritage, and a heritage that they saw in many ways as threatened, working to employ information technology on their own to sustain that culture, and in doing so simultaneously working to create a larger set of socio-technical arrangements to allow that work to continue and to support their community, their languages, their traditional knowledges and their storytelling traditions.

While Never Alone provides an excellent example of a community trying to use information technology to sustain their own intangible heritage, it is in many ways a highly situated example, in which the Native Alaskan communities have worked to create a social, legal and economic infrastructure around computer game development in support of their own heritage. While it is a model other communities might copy in part, it is not a model that other communities could copy in total, as aspects of it are unique to the communities and culture within Alaska. The Mukurtu Content Management System, managed by the Center for Digital Scholarship & Curation at Washington State University, has taken a slightly different path. In its origins, the Mukurtu CMS has some similarity to Never Alone. It arose out of efforts by the Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation to create the Nyinkka Nyunyu Art & Culture Center at Tennant Creek, North Territory, Australia. Kimberly Christen (2008), who was working with the Warumungu community in Tennant Creek during the creation of the Nyinkka Nyunyu Art & Culture Center, assisted them in identifying critical features for a digital archive to support the
growing mass of digital images coming into the Center. The developed system included traditional CMS features such as flexible metadata support and content search and retrieval, but also included unique user access control and metadata features to insure access to content was in line with Warumungu cultural protocols and support dynamic changing relationships between a user and content in the system based on kinship networks, ancestral country and community status.

While initially developed as a system for a specific community, the Mukurtu team has continued the development of the CMS system, and it is now an open source, community archiving system with the ability for communities to define and build into the system their own cultural protocols, as well as a far more flexible and extensive metadata model that allows for the incorporation of indigenous knowledge at both the item and collection level (Christen, Merrill & Wynne, 2017). Mukurtu now provides management for cultural heritage materials for a variety of communities, including driving the Plateau People’s Web Portal (with materials from Spokane Tribe of Indians, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Coeur d’Alene Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation), providing the basis for the Digital Atlas of Native American Intellectual Traditions project⁶, and is now providing a hosted service that communities such as the Musqueam community near Vancouver⁷ are using to document their heritage.

Several things about Mukurtu are of interest. It was developed with a great deal of attention to issues around definition of cultural protocols governing access and use of cultural materials, and as a result, it is at least in part a mechanism for formalizing (and perhaps reifying) forms of traditional knowledge. Its model of operation requires at least some degree of documentation of cultural norms which dictate control over and use of tangible heritage (and documentation of that tangible heritage); more simply, it specifies control over access and use of tangible assets through a reified form of intangible heritage, the norms governing use. Forms of knowledge regarding use of heritage materials which formerly resided within the minds of tribal members are now given formal, recorded expression in the metadata structures and access control mechanisms within the Mukurtu software. In the case of the Warumungu community that Christen (2008) worked with, for example, the system encoded cultural protocols which dictate limits on access to materials based on a user’s family, gender, ancestral country, and community status (e.g., whether one is an elder or not). This documentation of intangible heritage in the form of cultural protocols governing access and use is not necessarily problematic, however it does inevitably change the dynamics through which

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⁶ http://danait.wordpress.amherst.edu  
⁷ https://musqueam-fetzer.mukurtu.net
intangible heritage is reproduced and sustained within a community. And if such intangible heritage is itself changing, insuring that Mukurtu’s definition of intangible cultural heritage is kept up to date will require a continual process of re-examination of the community’s cultural protocols in order to update their formalization within the Mukurtu system. By making access to tangible cultural dependent on a documentary form of intangible heritage, the cultural protocols governing use, Mukurtu also demonstrates the very close interdependency which exists between intangible heritage and tangible heritage. In any living culture, the two exist in a reciprocal and mutually constitutive relationship, and adequately sustaining one cannot happen without the other.

Mukurtu differs somewhat from Never Alone in that, while it was originally developed in conjunction with indigenous communities in Australia and its developers have continued to be actively engaged with those communities and indigenous communities in North America, its sustainability as a project is not directly vested with the communities using the software. As an open source, community(ies)-based project, it is subject to the vagaries of fluctuating economic and technical support to which all small, open source projects are prone. Socio-technical systems must all engage in a process of translation in which they seek to configure their own context to insure their vitality and growth, or they will inevitably fade (Callon, 1986). The Cook Inlet Tribal Council recognized this in their approach to creating Never Alone and deliberately sought to create a set of institutions and relationships that would allow the approach to sustaining intangible heritage pioneered in Never Alone to continue into the future. While the Mukurtu project is also deliberately pursuing a path towards maintaining itself as an open source project, it is following a path used by most open source software projects which is highly informal and depends on relatively loose affiliations between those developing and using the software.

The projects described above demonstrate that attempts to preserve intangible cultural heritage have a long history, and libraries have played, and will no doubt continue to play, a role in preserving tangible aspects of heritage (including tangible documentation of intangible heritage). As libraries reflect on how they might better contribute to sustaining intangible heritage of communities they serve, the examples above provide several lessons:

- Documentation of intangible heritage without information about the cultural context in which that heritage is created is of questionable value. This has clear implications for selection guidelines for libraries seeking to aid in the preservation of intangible heritage.
- As Taylor (2008) noted, “Unlike the archive that houses documents, maps, literary texts, letters, archaeological remains, bones, videos, films, compact disks -
all those tangible items supposedly resistant to change -- the acts that are the repertoire can be passed on only through bodies.” Intangible heritage is embodied practice, and sustaining intangible heritage means sustaining a community’s ability to practice, not simply recording its practices.

- Libraries, archives, and museums, as well as the information systems they create and use, are complex sociotechnical systems with complicated relationships between their constituent actors. Bringing intangible heritage into these types of cultural memory organizations can subject that heritage, wittingly or no, to a variety of mediating forces which can have impacts on the heritage and the community which practices it.

- Intangible heritage belongs to the community which creates and sustains it. Efforts by libraries to assist in sustaining intangible heritage should empower the communities with that heritage, and doing so successfully requires enabling those communities to drive decisions regarding preservation of intangible heritage.

- Many communities are engaged in their own efforts to sustain intangible heritage. Libraries seeking to support those efforts need to engage with those communities to determine whether and how they might be able to assist.

- Sustainability of preservation practice is as important an issue with respect to intangible heritage as it is with all other forms of library preservation. Efforts to contribute to preservation which are not themselves sustainable may have negative consequences for communities seeking to preserve their heritage.

Many of these lessons are ones which libraries, archives, and museums have already learned in other contexts. The question that remains is ‘what other lessons do libraries need to learn to support preservation of intangible heritage?’
III. The Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage (PICH) Workshop

In order to explore the potential research issues regarding how libraries might contribute to efforts to preserve intangible cultural heritage, the principal investigators in the Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage (PICH) project convened an invitational workshop of researchers, practitioners, and members of the library community to gather expert opinions on defining a research agenda in this domain (for a list of attendees, see Appendix I). The meeting was held in the Fales Library at New York University on January 28 and 29, 2016. As intangible heritage covers an extremely wide range of knowledge and activities, participants invited to the workshop were limited to individuals working in one of three specific types of intangible heritage activity: cuisine/food studies, performing arts, and paper conservation.

At first glance, paper conservation may seem something of an outlier with respect to intangible heritage. Several of the workshop participants actually questioned whether paper conservation could be called a form of intangible heritage at all, as it quite clearly begs the question of, ‘exactly whose heritage is this?’ The selection of paper conservation as a topical area to consider was in part because of its atypical community. Issues surround the definition of community are implicated in all discussions of cultural heritage. The case of paper conservation highlights how the definition of what constitutes a community, and indeed what constitutes heritage, is not necessarily a simple or easy one to answer.

The meeting began with an introduction on the part of the principal investigators, laying out our interests and goals and encouraging group exploration of key questions, as well as allowing time for all participants to introduce themselves and their areas of interest and work. We then launched the discussion with a keynote address delivered by Dr. Perla Innocenti, of the department of Computer & Information Sciences at Northumbria University, on Safeguarding Living Heritage in a Digital World, an address tied together by a recurrent thread regarding the preservation of authentic spaghetti Bolognese. Delivered with attention to the context of the UNESCO operational directives for the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, this keynote allowed us to begin developing a shared vocabulary and set of issues for the rest of the meeting.

Dr. Innocenti’s talk summarized on-going work within the European Union to attempt to preserve intangible cultural heritage, including efforts to aggregate and disseminate

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8 The Bologna chapter of the Accademia Italiana Della Cucina provides what they consider the definitive, official recipe for Ragù alla Bolognese at http://www.accademiaitalianacucina.it/en/content/ragù-alla-bolognese.
collections of documentation of intangible cultural heritage (e.g., the European Collected Library of Artistic Performances (ECLAP)\(^9\) and Europeana’s Food and Drink collection,\(^{10}\), and experimental efforts at motion capture of performative aspects of intangible heritage such as those at the i-Treasures project.\(^{11}\) Looking over the European Union efforts to date, Dr. Innocenti noted several key challenges: involvement of communities of practice in these efforts is often extremely marginal, solutions for capturing/documenting, storing and disseminating ICH are frequently not scalable and have significant problems with interoperability, intellectual property concerns abound with respect to ownership and control of ICH, and standards for both documenting and describing intangible heritage are almost entirely lacking. Given these issues, as well as existing research needs in the field of digital preservation more generally, Dr. Innocenti proposed several areas for future research with respect to intangible cultural heritage:

- Developing methods for analysis of ICH context, including issues of intellectual property and ethical handling of materials, establishing community standards of authenticity and acceptable variation, and engaging in risk assessment;
- Investigating sustainable models for institutional collaboration around the preservation of ICH, including approaches to collaborative selection and appraisal, and more generally achieving a better understanding of the dynamics of institutional collaboration and their impact on efforts to sustain intangible heritage;
- Developing sustainable models for community engagement;
- Creating standards and guidelines for collecting, managing and providing access to ICH collections in digital form, including multilingual vocabularies and technologies for storage and visualization; and
- Developing technologies to assist in documenting, analysing and transmitting forms of intangible heritage, including body/gesture recognition, novel technologies for learning forms of intangible heritage, and simulations and virtual environments to try to augment presentation of intangible cultural heritage with additional contextualizing information.

Following the keynote and subsequent discussion, the group viewed video presentations from each of the areas of intangible heritage represented in the room. Reba Snyder, Conservator at The Morgan Library & Museum, presented a video documenting the desilking of the manuscript of A Christmas Carol, an act of conservation requiring tactile

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\(^{9}\) Available at http://www.eclap.eu/portal/?q=en-US.

\(^{10}\) A project which aggregates information on the domestic and community aspects of food and drink along with information on commercial aspects of food and drink production. Available at http://foodanddrinkeurope.eu.

\(^{11}\) Available at http://www.i-treasures.eu.
knowledge and specialized hand skills. Scott Barton, Executive Chef and Culinary Consultant, as well as a doctoral student in the Food Studies program at NYU, showed a video that explored the cultural and religious stakes of production of Acaraje (a sort of fritter) for indigenous traditions in Brazil. Diana Taylor, Professor and Director of the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics at NYU, shared a video of an artist’s performance that involved aerial bombing in which the “weaponry” consisted of printed poetry. With these in mind for provocation and reference, we moved into the discussion intensive phase of the meeting.

It was our goal for the meeting to create an opportunity for dialogue focused on selected intangible cultural heritage practices and to solicit contributions from the variety of professional and personal perspectives represented by our participants. Put another way, we wanted our attendees to speak both within and across communities. With this goal in mind, we structured the meeting as a series of group discussions. We first separated into three groups based on participants’ areas of shared interest and expertise: food studies, paper conservation, and performance studies. Each group had the same set of questions and discussion prompts (see appendix II). Following a period of intense engagement by these groups, the meeting was reconvened as a whole and each group reported on the outcomes of its discussion and new questions that were raised. A second breakout session divided the participants into heterogeneous groups so that we could explore the similarities and differences in the approaches to preserving intangible cultural heritage in different areas of practice. Again, the meeting reconvened as a whole to share the experience of the groups. At the conclusion of this first day the three PIs retreated to an executive session to review the notes of the day and prepare a summary of emerging themes and questions. This was shared with the entire group the following morning. In addition, we sought advice from the group on the direction of this report, on identifying the most pressing research questions that had arisen in the meeting, and on venues and methods for sharing and continuing the conversation that the meeting had hosted. What follows are the major issues and themes which emerged from those discussions.

The Four P’s of Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage

As might be expected with a group of participants whose areas of expertise and interest included paper conservation, cooking, and performance, the conversation during our two day meeting was wide-ranging. Despite the diversity of perspectives, we found that certain themes of importance to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage emerged, in both heterogeneous and homogenous discussion groups. These themes suggest areas of investigation and possible pilot projects that would contribute to the development of a collective North American understanding of investment required for preserving such
heritage. As we talked about how best to transmit such embodied knowledge, a transmission that creates living repositories of cultural heritage and thus helps ensure its survival, all of our communities expressed some common needs and concerns. As discussions progressed, we began to collectively refer to these as the “four P’s” of preserving intangible cultural heritage: Practice, Places, People, and Policies.

One of the most prevalent motifs was an emphasis on the importance of practice. Our invited participants acknowledged that the heritage under discussion is embodied knowledge, expertise that is developed through sensory and tactile education as well as theoretical knowledge transmitted through documentation. Such embodied knowledge must be repeatedly expressed and enacted with the body through both rehearsal and repetition, often with increasingly higher barriers to success, starting with safe/low risk activities and building toward accrued and applied expertise. One of our culinary experts talked about chefs practicing at staff meals before being given responsibility for the paying customers, as well as pointing out the restaurant tradition of soft opening. He also asserted that a new chef gets to cook a cheap white fish before being given a lobster. Likewise, the paper conservators explained that craft is first practiced on low value, common materials before new practitioners are given the opportunity to work with rare books and first editions. Not surprisingly, the performance studies participants were emphatic about the need for rehearsal, and the importance of moving from private rehearsal to dress rehearsal to “off Broadway” before performing in the riskiest high profile public venues.

Venues were also a recurrent topic of discussion throughout our meeting. Those who are immersed in these intangible cultural heritage practices call out the importance of places for learning and for knowledge transmission. Such places are not simple classrooms but rather environments that are equipped with tools, with assisting documentation, and with trainers. Whether they are kitchens, laboratories or studios, these spaces most effectively serve the transmission, and thus the preservation, of practices that make up intangible cultural heritage if they are relatively protected environments where students and apprentices can learn without being economically or emotively vulnerable.

Throughout our conversations, we inevitably returned to the importance of people as part of preservation, people who instruct, model and evaluate intangible cultural practices. Depending upon both the community of practice being discussed and the individual speaking, we heard terms like teacher, coach, mentor advisor, student, mentee, apprentice, but whatever term used, it was clear that access to experts and established practitioners is a key component of the transmission of embodied knowledge. Our participants identified different kinds of models for this human element. The paper conservators described a long standing professional practice of apprenticeship and
learning in conservation labs. Performance studies specialists identified studio classes as integral to their culture, and food studies people reminisced about those who had taught them to cook and about their mothers’ kitchens. There was also some discussion of more innovative models. One participant pointed us to the “The Human Library”\textsuperscript{12} in which humans have been reimagined as books, and circulate in special hosted events so that these people with special kinds of experience (as refugees, as abuse victims, as single mothers, as naturists, to name just a few) can be “borrowed” for a conversation in order for the borrower to gain access to that experience. Another participant described “The League of Kitchens”,\textsuperscript{13} “an immersive culinary adventure in NYC where immigrant woman teach intimate culinary workshops in their homes.” In sum, it was a clear conclusion of the conversation that human to human transmission is a key component in passing on intangible heritage.

In the opening keynote, Innocenti cited two important guidelines integral to the UNESCO approach to preserving intangible cultural heritage: “involve practitioners and bearers of intangible cultural heritage when organizing exhibitions, lectures, seminars, debates and training on their heritage,” and “introduce and develop participatory approaches to presenting intangible cultural heritage as living heritage in constant evolution.” In raising these principles, she gave first voice to what became a chorus of opinion, concern and questions throughout the meeting: how do we study, represent and capture the cultural practices of communities not our own? How do we assure that the community voice is welcomed and heard and registers in our preservation practices? While such ethical questions date back at least as far as the British appropriation of the Elgin marbles, they are vital, in the literal sense of the word, when engaging with living communities. Our participants agreed that at the least, questions of ownership and appropriation should be raised in approaching the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, and that, beyond that, there may be a need for international codes of conduct and structures attached to funding sources that serve and protect the native voices of the communities in play.

The Interplay of Tangible and Intangible Heritage

As mentioned, participants at the meeting felt that a key aspect of intangible cultural heritage is its existence as a form of embodied knowledge. This raises a number of questions about the exact relationships between intangible heritage, the physicality of practicing forms of heritage (including tangible artifacts and physical places involved in practice), and physical documentation of intangible heritage. Our participants called out

\textsuperscript{12} See http://humanlibrary.org/.

\textsuperscript{13} See https://www.leagueofkitchens.com/.
the importance of textual resources such as cookbooks, textbooks, wikis and electronic mailing lists, as well as representation in visual media, but they also widely acknowledged the importance of hands-on activity in conjunction with expert practitioners for the most comprehensive transmission of heritage practices. Put simply, while you can cook from your grandma’s recipe, only by her side, in her kitchen, can you really learn to make ravioli that tastes like hers; while you can read about the double fold test, you won’t instinctively understand brittle paper until it breaks in your hands; you can study a dance captured on video, but won’t fully grasp the emotive response elicited by its steps until you’ve seen it performed in front of a live audience.

Somewhat ironically, then, our discussants found that intangible cultural heritage is inherently and inextricably physical. The idea of preserving intangible heritage as something separate and distinct from tangible heritage implies that they are somehow separable and distinct, but this is not the case. Intangible practices and knowledges are grounded in physical spaces (in some cases, very specific physical spaces), and are often connected to certain objects and artifacts. Preserving either one without the other is neither feasible nor desirable.

Complicating this situation further is the fact that various forms of intangible heritage are themselves linked. Scott Barton in his discussion of the Afro-Brazilian street food acarajé noted that it is not simply a food item.\(^{14}\) The majority of acarajé street vendors are also filhas-de-santo, initiates of the Candomblé religion which originated in Bahia as a syncretic mix of traditional West African beliefs, and acarajé is one of several food items which figures prominently in Candomblé religious practices. Considered as intangible heritage, then, acarajé is simultaneously a culinary tradition (and part of a larger set of culinary traditions transported from Africa) as well as a religious tradition, bound up with the other religious practices of Candomblé.

The multiple and complex links which exist between intangible and tangible forms of heritage, as well as between intangible forms, are not surprising for those with a grounding in studies of culture. Traditional knowledge, practice and materials are mutually constitutive and provide each other with context which informs our understanding of each. What is obvious and unsurprising to an anthropologist, sociologist, or cultural historian, however, looks somewhat more daunting from the perspective of a preservationist. What emerged from our discussion was a general agreement that in seeking to preserve intangible cultural heritage, part of the mission of a preservationist is to preserve context, to insure that the associations between knowledge, practice and material are made clear and can be sustained. Librarians have some familiarity with the idea of trying to provide a mutually supportive interpretative context;

\(^{14}\) For further details see Barton (2016).
collection development is at least in part the art of creating a localized body of knowledge in which some materials provide background knowledge or interpretative guidance for other items in the collection. But these concerns for insuring interpretative context have not typically been seen as the job of the preservation department. And library systems, particularly standards for metadata and description, are not well-suited to recording the multiple, varied and complex links between various forms of tangible and intangible heritage.

The meeting’s participants were also in general agreement that issues of power and authority are constantly in play in any discussion of intangible cultural heritage and efforts to preserve it that involve agencies other than the community which created it. At a fairly simple level, there are issues around what a community accepts as appropriate intrusion into its own practices, and whether documenting practice is even feasible, and even if it is, whether documentary practice potentially alter the forms of heritage it seeks to capture. Recalling Alan Lomax’s earlier comment, “I learned that folk song in a context of folk talk made a lot more sense than in a concert hall,” it is fairly easy to see that the decisions about what will be documented and what will not can have a significant impact on our understanding of intangible cultural heritage, and hence on any efforts to preserve it.

In some instances, documentation as practice may be incompatible with intangible heritage practice. The Diné people, for example, have as part of their traditional practices a strong injunction against documenting certain ceremonies, such as the Yei-Bi-Cheii healing ceremony. The Yei-Bi-Cheii is a nine-day long ceremony involving sweating the individual for whom the ceremony is held, along with a number of chants and dances. The Diné’s cultural norms preclude even drawing or painting the dancers in a Yei-Bi-Cheii ceremony (Faris, 1996); one can only imagine their reaction if someone were to suggest trying to employ motion capture on the dancers to record an entire ceremony. Even if one were to accomplish such a recording, it’s value for the preservation of the Yei-Bi-Cheii ceremony would probably be extremely limited. Medicine men are unlikely to view watching a 3D visualization of part of a ceremony as an appropriate means of learning their traditions.

Another issue with respect to libraries and other cultural memory organizations attempting to assist in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage relates to the matter of the power of selection. As a matter of the ethical standards of the profession, librarians are adamantly opposed to censorship; the second principle of the American Library Association’s (2008) Code of Ethics states, “We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.” But libraries are not supplied with infinite resources to acquire materials, and selection and purchasing
decisions inevitably mean that certain written works will appear within a collection and others will not. There is a relatively extensive literature at this point on the power which libraries and archives wield with respect to representing history (e.g., see Hamilton et. al (2002), Jimerson (2009), Schwartz & Cook (2002)). Libraries engaging in selection decisions regarding what forms of intangible cultural heritage they will attempt to help preserve runs a real risk of valorizing some communities’ cultural practices over others, as well as contributing to a reification of forms of intangible cultural heritage through establishing ‘canonical forms’ which may ultimately work to the detriment of preserving forms of heritage that change with their culture of ownership.

But the elephant in the room with regard to power and preservation is the question of why intangible cultural heritage needs preserving at all. Cultural practices develop over time, are connected to other aspects of a culture, and change for a variety of reasons, including in response to contact with other cultures. If a culture still exists, it’s somewhat problematic to say that its intangible cultural heritage needs preserving; the cultural practices themselves are preservation. The issue of preservation arises in situations such as colonization, when a culture is taken over by another group. When the colonizers themselves suggest that the colonized culture should be preserved, it is worth considering motives and asking questions about who benefits.

Other kinds of power imbalance give rise to similar suspicions and tensions. In the case of many of the forms of intangible cultural heritage on the UNESCO list, the urge to preserve practices in danger of being lost can be considered to arise from the guilty conscience of capitalism. It is the homogenization of culture that accompanies globalization, along with the imbalance of power between different cultures, that threatens many forms of intangible cultural heritage around the world. In attempting to preserve such practices, do we seek to benefit the cultures in question, or merely to create Disneyland-like simulacra, or “seed banks” of techniques that eventually benefit the bankers rather than the seed-providers? Avoiding these latter possibilities requires that working with communities in possession of intangible cultural heritage deemed in need of preservation comprise more than merely asking permission to record.

Problems in Seeking to Preserve Intangible Heritage

Unsurprisingly, the participants in our meeting were all in agreement that there are a large number of complex problems involved in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. Moreover, while we can identify discrete areas of difficulty, these different problematic aspects are all interwoven. In any discussion of intangible cultural heritage and its preservation, we are talking about extremely complex sociotechnical arrangements in which it is impossible to make a change in one area without subsidiary
and potentially unforeseeable impacts in others. The following tries to set forth not only individually problematic aspects of preserving intangible cultural heritage, but interconnections between those problems identified by the attendees at the workshop.

As highlighted in Section II, issues of ownership, intellectual property and control over intangible heritage are well discussed in the literature on cultural heritage, including intangible cultural heritage. While many of the discussions in the scholarly literature on intellectual property and intangible heritage are somewhat theoretical, they are sparked by real world conflicts over control of heritage. Political protests by farmers in India over what they saw as a power grab by industrialized countries over control of traditional knowledge and local genetic resources have been followed by legal disputes pitting India against the United States and the European Union before the World Trade Organization (McManis, 2003). Attempts to afford legal protections to Navajo ceremonial dances in New Mexico (Smith, 2016) actually drew objections from the Navajo for establishing restrictions on performances outside of reservations that limited Native American rights in their own sacred spaces. The indigenous Ami people of Taiwan found themselves without legal recourse when their traditional songs were recorded without their knowledge or consent and then incorporated into the work of the German musical group Enigma (Riley, 2000). Clashes between Native American groups and American museums over ownership and control of Native American culture stretch back over many decades (Blair, 1979).

While these are frequently framed as legal issues within the scholarly community, there are other aspects to these cases which merit examination. They are fundamentally about control over a culture and who is allowed to exert that control, and how. The communities which create intangible heritage do so within a localized contextual frame with which those participants are familiar and which they active in constructing. As heritage moves outside of that originating frame, whether into the intellectual property frameworks of the global music industry or biopharmaceutical corporations, or the standards and practices of the museum community, the communities which produced that heritage have often found themselves powerless to dictate the use of their own material and immaterial culture. For many communities, these past experiences have bred a profound distrust of working with those outside the community on issues of preservation of heritage. Issues of trust across communities of practice are potentially quite problematic for attempts to preserve intangible heritage, and clearly are tightly bound up with issues around legal ownership and control over both intangible and tangible forms of heritage.

More subtle issues of control over heritage also arise with respect to issues of authenticity of intangible heritage. It should be noted at the outset that discussions of authenticity
with respect to intangible cultural heritage are fraught. Some of our meeting participants felt that the concept of ‘authenticity’ has no place in discussion of intangible cultural heritage, as it is closely aligned with archival notions of authenticity which presume the existence of some original entity which has had its identity and integrity maintained over time, and there is no ‘original’ for many forms of intangible heritage. Some also felt that the idea of labeling some cultural practices as ‘authentic’ can be part of a larger dialectic which defines those practices as ‘heritage,’ and in so doing works to alienate them from their community of origin. However, authenticity, and its cousin term identity, do come up with respect to intangible heritage, but more often with respect to the community that performs that heritage than to the heritage itself. Russell (2011) discusses how the Smoki performance group associated with the Wild West rodeo held in Prescott, Arizona worked to deny the authenticity of actual Hopi performances which they had drawn upon by defining the Hopi as a ‘dying race,’ and their own performances as efforts to maintain an ancient tradition of a dying people. Battles over authenticity in the realm of intangible cultural heritage are thus not so much over whether a particular expression is possessed of an innate authenticity, but whether it has originated with an authentic member of the community of practice which originated the tradition. Identity here is not that of the archival world; there is no document with an identity to verify. What is at question is the identity of the performer.

These questions of authenticity and identity come down to issues of who is considered legitimately allowed to express and perform intangible cultural heritage. Being legitimately allowed to express intangible heritage also means having the authority to engage in variation in performance and to determine what is acceptable variation of intangible cultural heritage. Variation of practice over time, or variation over place, can be accepted depending on whether the practice is seen as emerging from a legitimate source. This obviously raises a tremendously difficult question for questions of intangible cultural heritage: who has the authority to decide whether someone is a member of a community with intangible heritage or not. More broadly, who within a community of practice can speak on behalf of that community with respect to maintaining the integrity of intangible heritage?

Questions around who speaks for a community have obtained a new prominence in the literature of library and archives preservation during the past decade. The CCSDS’ (2012) Reference Model for Open Archival Information System’s requirement that information be kept in a form readily interpretable by the designated community that an archive serves placed the job of determining that community’s level of knowledge firmly upon the archive. It provides little practical guidance on how an archive determines that

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15 These ideas are explored with respect to one country’s efforts to define intangible cultural heritage in Skounti (2009).
level of knowledge for a community, however, particularly for complex and large user communities served by agencies such as the National Archives & Records Administration. The concept of ‘significant properties’ of a digital object (Hedstrom & Lee, 2002) also has raised questions about the interrelationship of preservation activity and communities of practice, as it begs the question of ‘Significant to whom?’ Bettivia (2016) has argued that significance in preservation is highly situational, and what properties of a preserved object are significant will depend on who one asks. For any librarian attempting to engage in preservation activity with respect to intangible cultural heritage then, the issue of determining who will speak for a community of practice with respect to what is acceptable preservation practice is critical, unavoidable, and difficult.

A related, overarching question for librarians is ‘what communities of practice shall they seek to engage with at all?’ As any practicing librarian knows, neither public nor research libraries have sufficient funds to engage in all of the projects they would like to pursue. If libraries do begin to engage with communities of practice to try to assist in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, their decisions on engagement will in all likelihood be based on issues such as to what forms of intangible heritage their existing collections relate, what expertise exists among their staff with respect to particular forms of intangible heritage, with which communities of practice they already engage, and most critically, what financial resources, particularly external funding resources, can be brought to bear in seeking to preserve intangible heritage. Any library is already entwined in its own web of relationships with patrons, government agencies, other cultural heritage institutions and funding agencies. The various influences exerted across these connections will influence which, if any, preservation efforts a library chooses to pursue.

The difficulty here lies in whether autonomous decisions by various libraries and other cultural heritage institutions regarding assisting in the preservation of intangible heritage will yield optimal results for society. Such decisions are unlikely to be made solely on the basis of an immediate and critical need for intervention to preserve a form of heritage, and the cumulative decisions made by various libraries reacting to various pressures upon them are not necessarily the best way to guide preservation activity. As an example of external forces which may drive preservation decisions, the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities have a collaborative grant program at the moment, Documenting Endangered Languages (NSF 16-576)\textsuperscript{16}, which “seeks to develop and advance knowledge concerning endangered human languages,” a critical form of intangible cultural heritage, and one which is endangered in many Native American, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian communities. There is no equivalent

\textsuperscript{16} See https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?WT.z_pims_id=12816&ods_key=nsf16576 for details regarding the grant program.
federal grant program funding preservation activity with respect to Native American performing arts, or to preserve ethnobotanical/ethnopharmaceutical knowledge. Given libraries’ need to obtain additional funding to support any new service commitments on their part, we can anticipate that grant-funded projects on endangered languages will be a more attractive possibility to most libraries than unfunded projects with respect to performing arts or other forms of traditional knowledge. Communities with intangible cultural heritage which they need to preserve may find libraries unreliable partners, with their willingness to cooperate driven by external funding agencies’ decisions.

Funding presents other, more mundane difficulties for libraries with respect to preservation of intangible heritage. We have discussed the interrelations between tangible and intangible heritage, and between various forms of intangible heritage. Both tangible and intangible heritage may have documentation associated with them, and the relationships between all of these, tangible and intangible, may require a variety of different forms of metadata that does not fall within the realm of traditional bibliographic, archival, or museum cataloging if sufficient context is to be provided to users to allow them to successfully interpret these heritage forms and their relationships to each other. There are very few public or research libraries that do not experience some level of backlog in their cataloging of works using existing systems and standards. Adequate description of materials related to intangible cultural heritage would require not only new standards of description (Mukurtu is already beginning to explore these issues with respect to access control for cultural materials), but significant new resources to support description (and systems capable of recording such description and making it useful to patrons).

These issues of description highlight another problem for libraries working in the field of intangible cultural heritage. Libraries, archives and museums all employ different bibliographic record formats. They all employ differing rules of description for cataloging materials. There have been experimental and theoretical efforts to promote interoperability between the systems of these various cultural memory organizations (Doerr, 2003; Elings & Waibel, 2007; Timms, 2009; Snydman, Sanderson & Cramer 2015), but to date these have seen only limited practical application, as most cultural memory organizations rely on commercial software systems which are slow to adopt new approaches, particularly with respect to systems interoperability. Support for preservation of intangible cultural heritage will require associating information across different classes of institutions (and in some cases non-institutional players) employing different forms of description. As a simple matter of technology, we are only beginning to explore how this might be feasible.
Moreover, we don’t at this point really understand the requirements necessary for implementing systems to support preservation of intangible cultural heritage. There have been numerous different efforts within different communities to try to sustain forms of intangible cultural heritage, but comparative studies of how these efforts are similar and how they differ, how requirements for sustaining different forms of intangible heritage (e.g., religious ceremonies versus endangered languages) differ, how the nature of individual communities impacts efforts to sustain intangible heritage, are all unknowns. Even if we had a better understanding of these issues, we confront the reality that any attempt to capture associated tangible heritage, documentation and contextualizing information with respect to intangible forms is going to be incomplete, and we have a poor understanding of what forms and degree of tangible information might assist in preserving intangible heritage. This makes active work on systems development for helping to sustain intangible heritage, whether organizational or technological, extremely difficult.

Finally, we must confront perhaps the most fundamental difficulty. Our ideas of what exactly intangible cultural heritage is are rather unclear. The case of the paper conservators at our meeting demonstrates at least some of the potential problem. The conservators agreed that they are a community, for some definition of community, with standards and practices (and at least some jargon, if not a complete language) in common. They equally agreed that the work of paper conservation is something that of necessity involves intangible components; there is not only the aspect of conservation activity that consists of tacit knowledge regarding the feel and characteristics of different types of paper and how to actually engage in certain preservation treatments, but also a type of thinking about conservation activity that does not actually get taught through texts but through confronting real world problems with the assistance of a more experienced conservator. When asked which aspects of training a new conservator focused on learning intangible aspects of the practice, one of the conservators observed, “My first thought is looking and thinking. I can’t teach what the properties of an object are that can be destroyed. How does the medium sit on the surface, etc.? What are the qualities that are unique about a work of art that I as a conservator have to recognize?” Paper conservation is, then, per those in the profession, as much as anything else a way of knowing. In short, we have a community with common practices, language, ways of knowing and means of passing on intangible skills to new members of the community, and a written history of practice that goes back well over a century (Bonnardot, 1858), if not further (Ellis, 2014). And yet, the conservators at our meeting insisted that their work is not any form of intangible heritage, although the construction of the handmade Japanese paper they use in their profession has already been entered in the UNESCO
Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity,\textsuperscript{17} making their profession at least somewhat dependent on intangible heritage. We are not convinced that the conservators are wrong in their assessment. However, it is clear that the very meanings of the terms ‘intangible’, ‘cultural’ and ‘heritage’ are all subject to contention and dispute. Without a better understanding of what intangible cultural heritage is, how do we help preserve it?

IV. A Library & Information Science Research Agenda With Respect to Intangible Cultural Heritage

"Just because it’s impossible doesn’t mean you shouldn’t do it."\textsuperscript{18} — Diana Taylor

Given the wide range of problems outlined in the previous section, we might reasonably question whether attempts by the library community to seek to aid in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage are really such a good idea. However, it is undeniable that intangible cultural heritage is of critical importance to a number of communities within the United States, and that existing library holdings may be of great value in supporting those communities in their efforts to preserve their heritage. There are also already libraries actively engaged with communities in seeking to preserve intangible cultural heritage. Libraries have always sought to obtain a better understanding of the uses that patrons might make of their materials. Given the potential applicability of library materials to helping sustain forms of heritage ranging from endangered languages and performing arts to ethnobotany and traditional Navajo weaving techniques, a deeper understanding of how these materials might better support communities of practice seems extremely desirable.

We also believe that the issues surrounding the potential for libraries to assist in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage highlight structural issues for libraries and related institutions that need deeper consideration. Information and communication technologies and widespread dissemination and consumption of digital information have had a profound impact on libraries, archives and museums over the past three decades, and while ICT’s impacts have led to changes in these institutions’ internal operations and mechanisms for interactions with patrons and other institutions, they have yet to result in any serious, widespread institutional restructuring or fundamental reconsideration of institutional mission. While the nature of materials the three classes of institution has changed radically, we still expect to see libraries handling primarily published documents (for a wide definition of document), archives primarily handling unpublished documents, and museums handling artifacts and non-literary objects. At least in the case of intangible cultural heritage, it is relatively easy to see the institutional barriers this potentially places between materials that might help sustain ICH. These barriers provoke the question of whether the institutions to which our society has committed the task of preserving knowledge and memory are, in fact, well-designed for that task in the modern era.

\textsuperscript{18} Taylor, Diana (Jan. 28, 2016). Personal Communication.
Both to assist communities in sustaining their heritage, and to help explore and reflect on their own mission and purpose, we believe libraries should become more involved in preservation of intangible cultural heritage. Doing so successfully, however, will require a much better understanding of intangible heritage itself and libraries’ relationship to that heritage and communities which possess it. To further that understanding, we believe a committed program of research in the field of library and information science is called for, one which will explore the following issues.

The Relationship Between the Tangible and the Intangible -- As noted by many of the participants at our meeting, intangible heritage does not exist independently of the tangible world; it is rooted in real world places and experiences and often employs tangible materials and artifacts. If we are to sustain intangible heritage, we need to more fully understand its relation to the tangible, including:

- How do various communities employ tangible materials in both performing and teaching/learning of intangible heritage?
- Do communities with similar intangible heritage vary significantly in their use of tangible materials?
- How do different major forms of intangible heritage (e.g., oral traditions, performing arts, rituals and festivals, knowledge and practices concerning nature, knowledge and skills employed in crafts) vary in their use of the tangible?
- How do tangible materials which are not considered part of a community’s heritage contribute to sustaining that heritage?

Transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage -- Ultimately, the preservation of intangible cultural heritage is an issue of successful education. Intangible heritage is sustained by those who know and perform that heritage passing it on to others. To assist in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, we need to better understand the teaching and learning processes involved in passing on intangible heritage, including:

- Who bears responsibility for transmitting intangible heritage in different cultures and communities? Who is expected to learn intangible heritage, and under what circumstances? How are these responsibilities allotted?
- How are differing forms of intangible heritage passed on? What media/mechanisms are employed in that process, if any?
- What are community metrics of successful learning of different forms of intangible heritage? How is acquisition of knowledge/performance evaluated?

Risk Assessment -- As successful transmission of intangible heritage is critical to its preservation, failures of that process of education are the primary threat to its existence.
We need to achieve a much better understanding of what moves intangible heritage from being self-sustaining to endangered. While some interesting work has been done in this field, much remains to be learned, including:

- In what circumstances and how do changes in climate and environment threaten intangible heritage?
- How do demographic changes in communities influence the maintenance of intangible heritage?
- How does geographic and social mobility affect efforts to sustain intangible heritage?
- Under what conditions do cultural changes within a community threaten forms of intangible cultural heritage?
- To what extent and in what manner are intangible forms of heritage dependent on tangible materials for both expression and transmission/education? What impact does lack of access to these materials have on efforts to sustain intangible heritage?
- How do interactions with people and organizations outside the community contribute to or impede the maintenance of intangible forms of heritage?

**Inventories Relating to North American Intangible Heritage** -- Thanks to the efforts of UNESCO and various state parties to the 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 365 forms of heritage have been added to UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity with another 47 added to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. Additionally, 17 efforts aimed at sustaining intangible cultural heritage have been added to UNESCO’s Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. However, as the map below, indicating the number of additions countries have made to UNESCO’s three lists on intangible heritage, shows, none of the countries considered part of Northern America by the United Nations is represented on any of those lists. As neither the United States nor Canada is a signatory to the 2003 Convention, this is not terribly surprising. Unfortunately, with the countries of North America failing to make any contributions to the largest formalized effort to inventory the world’s intangible heritage, we are left with a dearth of knowledge regarding what forms of intangible heritage exist within North America.

*Figure 1 - Entries by Country in UNESCO ICH Registries*
what communities possess intangible heritage, which forms of intangible heritage are imperiled, and what efforts are already underway to try to preserve intangible heritage. Within particular communities, there have been some efforts to try to share knowledge about approaches to preserving intangible heritage and to identify particularly endangered instances, particularly with respect to language traditions (see Simpson, 2013), but there is no central location for obtaining information about intangible heritage within North America generally. Without some idea of what is out there, we have no idea of the scale or nature of the problem of preserving intangible heritage in North America. An essential research project, then, will be trying to develop inventories which allow us to know:

- What communities possess intangible cultural heritage, and of what forms;
- Which instances of intangible heritage are currently endangered, and;
- What preservation efforts already exist with respect to various forms of intangible heritage.

In addition to, and perhaps in connection with, the preceding inventories, it would be helpful to have some idea of what resources exist in libraries and archives that might assist efforts to preserve endangered instances of intangible heritage. But given that this is a rather massive project in bibliography (and inventories of intangible heritage are themselves huge undertakings, as UNESCO and the signatories to the 2003 Convention have discovered), what may be needed is a research project aimed at harvesting and organizing distributed information regarding North American intangible cultural heritage and preservation efforts. Experiments in targeted web crawling aimed at collecting information on particular forms of intangible heritage, and data mining against resources such as HathiTrust to identify bibliographic materials corresponding to such forms, might be a valuable line of research to pursue.

**Organizational Information on Intangible Cultural Heritage** -- One of the critical contributions of the Mukurtu project is the creation of a new type of access control mechanism for materials housed within a Mukurtu repository that supports community-defined protocols for access to and use of cultural materials. As previously discussed, there are complex inter-relationships between intangible heritage, tangible heritage, the communities which create and sustain that heritage, and bibliographic resources which may document one or more of these. We need new languages to ease access to and management of information resources regarding intangible cultural heritage, including:

- Classification systems for characterizing different types of heritage materials, both tangible and intangible; and
- Vocabularies for expressing relationships between intangible and tangible heritage materials, people (communities and individuals) and documentary material.
In addition to new forms of metadata, we will obviously need systems which exploit this information to improve access to materials and to assist in their management. The existence of enhanced information describing intangible and tangible aspects of cultural heritage will itself spawn a new research area, examining how new forms of metadata (and digital forms of tangible heritage and documentation) regarding intangible cultural heritage can be integrated into systems of learning intangible heritage successfully. As part of this, we will clearly need to examine what amount and types of contextualizing information regarding intangible heritage are necessary to support its preservation, and how this new metadata can be most cost effectively produced. As with inventoring intangible heritage and documentation, lowering costs for metadata production may depend on developing computer-assisted means of generating new metadata.

**Matters of Policy and Process** -- In our discussions with participants at the PICH workshop, some points were made that, while not specifically research issues, were ones that we felt deserved further dissemination and discussion. Most of these relate to either policy issues relevant to intangible cultural heritage or to the current institutional structures around intangible heritage research or preservation efforts. Participants at the workshop felt that:

- Issues surrounding intellectual property, ownership of cultural materials and intangible heritage are critical. There is already a significant amount of research and discussion on these issues, but more is needed, and there appears to be a gap between suggesting solutions and implementing them that has been difficult or impossible to span. Leadership in trying to highlight problems and solutions regarding ownership and intangible heritage, and working to try to take practical steps, is badly needed.

- Even a cursory examination of endangered intangible heritage within North America will reveal that there is more heritage at risk than any institution has the resources to try to preserve. In the face of limited resources, decisions need to be made about how those will be allocated to preserving multiple forms of intangible heritage held by various communities. Whatever flaws the UNESCO process may have, it provides a venue for highlighting forms of intangible heritage which are at risk and seeking resources to do something about that. No such venue exists within the North American context, and without it, there is a real risk of wasting scarce resources, and letting various forms of institutional bias influence decisions on resource allocation.

- Overlap between the individuals attending conferences and meetings relating to heritage studies and those relating to libraries are extraordinarily small. Libraries, archives and museums also are somewhat balkanized, and while there are
individuals who inhabit more than one sphere of the various cultural memory organizations’ conference and other discussion spaces, those spheres are still quite distinctly separate. These professional, academic and organizational divisions are an impediment to preserving intangible heritage, which could benefit from coordinate contributions from all. Funding organizations may wish to encourage greater cross-fertilization and interaction across these ‘invisible college’ lines in support of work on preserving intangible heritage.

**Conclusion**

Intangible cultural heritage is an essential part of people’s lives, woven throughout our daily routines in various forms: our religious practices, the traditional recipes passed down through our families, ghost stories told around campfires, our music and dancing, and many other practices and beliefs. Intangible heritage not only gives joy and meaning to people’s lives, it can in some instances save them from peril; ethnobotanical and ethnopharmaceutical knowledge has proved valuable in identifying leads to new drug treatments for various diseases (Heinrich & Teoh, 2004; Lubbe et al., 2012). There are more than sufficient cultural, economic and humanitarian grounds to pursue its preservation.

Libraries have long been involved in trying to document some forms of intangible cultural heritage, as well as working to store, disseminate and preserve documentation generated by others. But as participants in our workshop pointed out, documenting intangible heritage is not the same thing as preserving it. The museum community has responded to this critique, and we now see major museums like the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian including significant performance spaces for enactment of intangible cultural heritage and creating funding programs such as the Artist Leadership Program to support indigenous artists bringing their unique voices to the museum while also doing research in the NMAI collections to support their work. Lorcan Dempsey (2005), in a highly influential blog post, argued that, “the library needs to be in the user environment and not expect the user to find their way to the library environment,” and that libraries need to insure their resources are “in the flow” of users lives rather than asking users to come to the library to dip into our carefully guarded reservoir. With respect to intangible cultural heritage, unfortunately, libraries are very far from being ‘in the flow’ of people’s lives.

Getting there will not be an easy process. There is much about intangible cultural heritage and its preservation that is not well understood. The relevance and applicability of library collections to sustaining intangible cultural heritage also needs exploration, and
the current systems of describing and managing library material (and archival material) have proved on many occasions actively hostile to efforts to employ them in pursuit of sustaining cultural heritage. There is a great deal of research, learning and experimentation that needs to be done before libraries can make a substantial contribution to preserving intangible cultural heritage. We hope that we have helped clarify at least what questions need to be answered for libraries to help their communities in sustaining intangible heritage. Because even if difficult (or perhaps impossible), working to sustain communities’ intangible heritage is something that libraries should do.
## Appendix I
### List of Attendees, PICH Meeting, NYU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institutional Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maria Bonn (Co-PI)</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer</td>
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<td>School of Information Sciences</td>
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<td>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign</td>
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<td>Lori Kendall (Co-PI)</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
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<td>School of Information Sciences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign</td>
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<td>Jerome McDonough (Co-PI)</td>
<td>Assoc. Professor</td>
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<td>School of Information Sciences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign</td>
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<td>Marvin Taylor (Local Host)</td>
<td>Head Librarian</td>
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<td>The Fales Library &amp; Special Collections</td>
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<td>Bobst Library</td>
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<td>New York University</td>
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<td>Nancy Ash</td>
<td>Charles K. Williams, II, Senior Conservator of Works of Art on Paper</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Conservation Department</td>
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<td>Philadelphia Museum of Art</td>
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<td>Scott Barton</td>
<td>Doctoral Candidate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nutrition &amp; Food Studies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>New York University</td>
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<td>Jessica Bitely</td>
<td>Director of Preservation Services</td>
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<td>Northeast Document Conservation Center</td>
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<td>Margaret (Peggy) Ellis</td>
<td>Eugene Thaw Professor of Paper Conservation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Institute of Fine Arts</td>
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<td>New York University</td>
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<td>Director</td>
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<td>Thaw Conservation Center</td>
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<td>The Morgan Library &amp; Museum</td>
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<td>Maria Fredericks</td>
<td>Drue Heinz Book Conservator</td>
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| Nancy Friedland    | Librarian  
Butler Media, Film Studies & Performing Arts  
Columbia University  
President  
Theatre Library Association  
Visiting Assoc. Professor  
Pratt Institute School of Information and Library Science  
Visiting Assoc. Professor  
Palmer School of Library and Information Science |
| Jessica Harris     | Professor  
Department of English  
Queens College, CUNY  
Professor, Ray Charles Chair  
Dillard University |
| Jon Holtzman       | Assoc. Professor  
Western Michigan University  
Department of Anthropology |
| Perla Innocenti    | Sr. Lecturer  
iSchool  
Northumbria University  
Honorary Research Fellow  
University of Glasgow |
| Joan Irving        | Paper Conservator  
Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library  
Assistant Professor  
Art Conservation Program  
University of Delaware |
| Michael Lee        | Director of Paper and Photograph Conservation  
Northeast Document Conservation Center |
| Lois Olcott Price  | Director of Conservation, Senior Conservator of Library Collections  
Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library  
Affiliated Assistant Professor  
Art Conservation Program  
University of Delaware |
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<th>Name</th>
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| Krishnendu Ray        | Department Chair & Assoc. Professor  
Nutrition & Food Studies  
Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development  
New York University |
| Doug Reside           | Curator  
Billy Rose Theater Division  
New York Public Library of the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center |
| Reba Fishman Snyder   | Conservator  
Thaw Conservation Center  
The Morgan Library & Museum |
| Michelle L. Stefano   | Asst. Professor  
University of Maryland, Baltimore County  
Department of American Studies  
Asst. Director  
Maryland Traditions  
Maryland State Arts Council |
| David E. Sutton       | Professor  
Southern Illinois University  
Department of Anthropology |
| Diana Taylor          | University Professor  
Performance Studies and Spanish  
Tisch School of the Arts  
New York University  
Founding Director  
Hemispheric Institute of Performance & Politics |
Appendix II
Questions for Group Discussions

1. Homogeneous Groups (Performing Arts, Food Studies, and Paper Conservation)
   a. What is the intangible cultural heritage for this group?
   b. What does it consist of?
   c. How is it preserved? Should it be preserved?
   d. Is there broad consensus in their field about the terms and stakes of preserving intangible heritage?
   e. Where are there points of disagreement and debate within the community regarding intangible heritage?
   f. What is the level of knowledge regarding intangible heritage and what are the perspectives from both within and outside the field on that heritage?

2. Heterogeneous Groups
   a. What skills and training are needed to preserve intangible heritage, with respect to:
      i. media
      ii. people
      iii. relationships/roles/sites (schools, professional organizations)
   b. With respect to the relationships between tangible and intangible heritage:
      i. Where do museums, libraries, and archives fit?
      ii. What tools and materials provide access/should provide access to tangible culture?
      iii. How do we deal with issues surrounding documentation of context (social) in preservation of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage?
      iv. How do intangible practices rooted in specific locations differ in terms of preservation requirements from those relying on specific tangible objects?
   c. With respect to preservation & practitioners of intangible heritage:
      i. How do practitioners learn about ICH practices?
      ii. How does practitioner knowledge get shared/preserved?
      iii. How do we think practitioners’ engagement with preservation of ICH might be enhanced?
Citations


Christen, Kimberley, Merrill, Alex and Wynne, Michael (May/June 2017). “A Community of Relations: Mukurtu Hubs and Spokes.” *D-Lib Magazine* 23(5/6). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1045/may2017-christen


Cook Inlet Tribal Council (2016). *The Making of Never Alone*. Available at: https://youtu.be/d9ndBVFrc2U


