

DokuFunk

Vienna's Dokumentationsarchiv Funk – The Documentary Archives Radio Communications

By Wolf Harranth, Curator

DSWCI is one of the many Supporting Members of Vienna-based "DokuFunk", has indeed been a great supporter for many years. So it is about time to introduce ourselves – and to invite you to join our ranks, and to perhaps convince you that your personal collection might, some day, be added to the appr. 1.500 we care for, so far.

It is true. Our full name is not that easy to remember: "Documentary Archive for the History of Radio Communication and Electronic Media". But it explains in one sentence exactly who we are, what we do, our aims and ambitions. We're passionate about radio. We're also passionate about ensuring that great radio stories are preserved for future generations. Thanks to global support, we've managed to create a unique place where radio history comes alive. It is an active collection, in constant use.

We were founded twenty-five years ago as a non-profit Institute. We're staffed by a few project-funded full timers and a much greater number of volunteers, many of whom have been professionals in the broadcast and communications industry. And because we know that many people have entrusted their personal heritage to us, we run the institute along professional lines (i.e. a Board of Governors oversees the collection policy and that donations to the work are properly administered.) Our headquarters are on the outskirts of Vienna, Austria. We're proud of our Austrian heritage. But we also stress that our focus is global. We started out as the "International QSL Collection" Foundation. Since then the range of documentation we keep, catalogue and preserve has grown to cover a wide range of broadcast (and amateur) radio history. We thrive on active supported from individuals, amateur radio societies, broadcasters and broadcast listeners, archives, historians, publishers, enterprises etc. from on all continents. We encourage people to visit and use the archives, either in person, or virtually through the Internet. A board oversees our collections and archives, and keeps an eye on all projects.

Media: A Mirror of the World

Little more than a century ago the first signal ignited the age of radio communications. Today a dense information network spans the globe, and we can receive pictures and data by radio from the very frontiers of our solar system.

But technical improvements, stunning as they may be, do not cover the entire story of what happened - and why. Technical solutions are sought and found by people, and people are always part and parcel of their respective societies. The media, in that sense, accurately mirror the world at large, reflecting who decides what we are allowed to know, what we are expected to believe, and whether we are entitled or forbidden to communicate.

In the Documentary Archives we aim to collect apparently "unimportant" items of evidence from these 120 years of radio history, to save them from getting lost and keep them for generations to come – true to our motto: "The future needs a memory".

Our archives and collections

We collect whatever relates to the history of radio (with the sole exception of "hardware": we are not a radio museum!) We

are the world's largest organization of its kind, and the only one with such a wealth of interdisciplinary collections – stored, on 4.800m² in an old warehouse.

The *Documentary Unit* is a unique and gigantic global data base of letters, public and private records, research files and similar archival material, supplemented by a photo collection and a library of books and magazines. This includes the Oskar Czejja Remembrance Funds, named after the founder of Austrian broadcasting, is devoted entirely to the history of radio in Austria.

The *audio-visual archives* consist of thousands of films, videos, private and broadcast tapes and discs – and downloads of the most perishable medium, the Internet. With daily updates of broadcast footage it is always up-to-date.

Most prominent among DXers, however, among our various sections is

The QSL COLLECTION

It manages seven million cards, awards, and logbooks, constituting the world's largest assembly of historical material relating to broadcasting (and amateur radio) –from the earliest days to the present. The contents of the collection are archived, registered, evaluated for basic research purposes, prepared for reproduction in specialist publications, exhibitions and on the Internet. We accept inheritances, convolutes from broadcasting institutions, DXers' associations, historical archives and individuals, and we welcome dedications for realisation in legacies so that the collections can be completed at a later stage.

We do not buy or sell but rely entirely on donations. Individuals have given us treasures unearthed at home, donated parts of their private collections, or, as we prefer, bequeathed material to us during their lifetime. We receive bequests, exchange items of which we have multiple exemplars with other archives etc. All projects and overheads are financed entirely by charitable donations. Whatever we keep is available to the public, and everybody is welcome, at any time, to contact us for an appointment.

If you are interested in our activities, we will gladly give you all the necessary information. Check out our website

www.dokufunk.org (we suggest you should not miss out the German pages, since the English content is still under construction) – or call us at office@dokufunk.org



Our members are invited to consider to donate your QSL-collection to this address: Dokumentationsarchiv Funk, ORF/QSL, Argentinierstr. 30A, A-1040 Wien, Austria, when you no longer need it. You may draw up a will.

Anker Petersen