



Criteria for the Canada Memory of the World Register

These criteria conform to section 4.1.6 of the *UNESCO Memory of the World: General Guidelines to Safeguard Documentary Heritage*, which states:

“Selection criteria for regional and national registers will use the criteria for the international register as a template, making the logical variations, and may incorporate additional criteria appropriate to the regional or national context.”

Preamble

As assessment is comparative and relative, there can be no absolute measure or definition of cultural significance. Selection for inclusion in the Canada Memory of the World Register will therefore result from assessing the documentary heritage item on its own merits against the selection criteria presented here.

The Canada Memory of the World Register is an ever-evolving list of documentary heritage representing Canada’s linguistic, cultural, geographic, gender, spiritual, political, scientific, economic and artistic development and diversity since the beginning of the occupation of the territory. As such, the register includes documentary heritage that records notable events of Canada’s history, from the broadest perspective to regions, communities and individuals. Documentary heritage on the register can range from single items to whole collections.

The register is part of the nation’s documentary heritage and, thus, is owned by all Canadians. There will be no distinction between documentary heritage created in the public or private sector and the documentary heritage owned by people or legal entities.

Documentary heritage consists of both its content and its carrier; properties of each of these individually, or combined, can be considered to imbue documentary heritage with significance.

All forms of documentary heritage and all documentary heritage creators are equal under the Canada Memory of the World Register.

Definition of Canada

The Canada Memory of the World Register defines the word ‘Canada’ as follows:

The geographical area now known as Canada has been inhabited by Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Metis and Inuit) since time immemorial. Indigenous Peoples’ ancestral connections to this land reach back to time and as such are defined by, but not limited to, traditional knowledge, oral histories, kinship, alliances, occupations, travel routes, trade networks, the use and stewardship of natural resources, cultures and languages. Over time, people from all over the world have also made Canada their home.

Recognizing Indigenous Peoples' Memory and Knowledge

The Canada Memory of the World Register recognizes that the Indigenous Peoples of Canada transfer, teach, understand, and share their histories and stories in unique ways. Indigenous Peoples own their histories and stories. They decide when, if and how to submit items to the Canada Memory of the World Register. Cultural sensitivities, including indigenous communities' custodianship of their materials, and their guardianship of access, will be honoured. Inscription on the register does not infringe on Indigenous peoples' ownership, control, access and possession of their histories and stories.

The Canada Memory of the World Register recognizes Indigenous Peoples' rights as articulated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Joinet-Orentlicher Principles.

Recognizing Cultural and Social Diversity

The Canada Memory of the World Register recognizes that in Canada is a highly diverse society composed of communities based on geography, language, ethnicity, culture, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, spirituality and many other factors. The power and influence of these communities have varied over time. Communities that once formed a majority in a specific region or era may now be in the minority. Communities that were once invisible, shunned or persecuted now form part of the mainstream. Other communities still struggle for recognition.

Selection Criteria

Tell us how the documentary heritage you are nominating for inclusion on the Canada Memory of the World Register meets our three criteria: national significance (which incorporates time, place, people and society, subject and theme, form and style, and spiritual and community significance), authenticity, and uniqueness and irreplaceability.

1. Demonstrate the **national significance** of the documentary heritage you are nominating by explaining how it meets at least one of the sub-criteria set out below.

a. Time

Some documentary heritage is especially evocative of its time (which may have been one of significant social or cultural change, or crisis).

b. Place

Some documentary heritage is significant because of the place it was created. It may also contain meaningful information about a site, locality or region, including the people who once lived there, or live there now.

c. Peoples and Society

Some documentary heritage is significant because the social and cultural context of its creation reflects the life or works of a person, people, movement, community or society.

d. Subject and Theme

Some documentary heritage is significant because it documents a particular aspect of our country and its peoples. This could include traditional knowledge, science, the humanities, spirituality, education, culture, communications, politics, ideology, technology, media, business, and sports.

e. Form and Style

Some documentary heritage is significant because it is an important example of a distinctive aesthetic, stylistic, or linguistic form or style; or a typical or key exemplar of a type of visual, oral or written presentation and custom.

f. Spiritual and Community Significance

Some documentary heritage is significant because of its social, cultural or spiritual value for our country and its peoples.

2. Demonstrate the **authenticity** of the documentary heritage you are nominating by explaining that its identity and provenance have been reliably established. Copies, replicas, forgeries, bogus documents or hoaxes can, with the best intentions, be mistaken for the genuine article.
3. Demonstrate the **uniqueness and irreplaceability** of the documentary heritage you are nominating by explaining how its disappearance or deterioration would impoverish our country and its peoples. This can be done by showing its impact over a span of time and/or within a particular area.
4. The following matters will also be taken into account when assessing the documentary heritage proposed to the register
 - **Rarity:** is it a rare surviving example of its type or time?
 - **Integrity:** Is it complete or partial? Has it been altered or damaged?
 - **Threat:** Is its survival in danger? If it is, how is the threat being minimised?
 - **Preservation and access:** Is there a plan in place to preserve and provide access to the documentary heritage?

Please note that inclusion in the Canada Memory of the World Register does not automatically guarantee that provincial or federal authorities will make a determination of significance with respect to any holdings or collection inscribed in the register.
