

News from AVICOM - August 2026





Note from the chair

The New ICOM Code of Ethics: A Shared Responsibility in the Digital Age

On 25 June 2026, during its 41st Ordinary General Assembly, held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris as part of ICOM's Annual Meetings and 80th-anniversary celebrations, ICOM officially adopted the [revised ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums](#). The text was approved with 85.90% of the vote, following a long participatory process led by the ICOM Standing Committee on Ethics, which involved 114 National and International Committees, Regional Alliances and Affiliated Organisations.

The adoption of the revised Code marks a significant milestone for the international museum community. It updates the global ethical framework guiding museums and museum professionals, incorporates the principles of the Museum Definition adopted in 2022 and addresses some of the most pressing challenges of our time, including the climate crisis, the legacies of colonialism and the rapid development of digital technologies.

The Code explicitly recognises digital heritage as an integral part of museums' responsibilities for safeguarding, research, documentation, conservation, interpretation and access. As Chair of AVICOM, I consider it particularly significant that the document calls on museums to use digital technologies consciously and responsibly, assessing not only the opportunities they offer but also their ethical, social and environmental implications.

Innovation does not simply mean adopting new tools. It also requires museums to assess their benefits, limitations and risks, protect data and collections, guarantee the reliability of information and prevent discrimination, manipulation and new forms of exclusion. Respect for intellectual property, privacy, community rights and data sovereignty must accompany every digitisation process and every application of artificial intelligence.

The Code also underlines the importance of accessibility, long-term digital preservation and the security of digital infrastructures. Documentation and databases must be protected against loss, damage and unauthorised access through appropriate security, data recovery and business continuity strategies. Cybersecurity has therefore become an essential component of collections care and of museums' public responsibility.

In the coming months, ICOM will work on guidelines to support the interpretation and practical implementation of the Code's principles. AVICOM will be pleased to contribute to this work in the areas most closely related to its mission, particularly the ethical and responsible use of artificial intelligence and generative technologies.

This commitment follows the direction set by [Resolution No. 3, "Positioning Museums for an Equitable, Ethical, and Sustainable Digital Future through Technologies"](#), adopted by ICOM's 40th General Assembly during the 2025 General Conference in Dubai. The Resolution was developed from proposals submitted by AVICOM, SUSTAIN, ICOM UAE and ICOM Iran. Among other actions, it recommends establishing an ICOM Working Group on Digital Ethics and Artificial Intelligence.

The proposed responsibilities of the Working Group include developing shared tools and guidance, evaluating the social, cultural and environmental impacts of technologies, and promoting accessible digital skills, particularly for museums and professionals working in under-resourced and marginalised contexts.

Artificial Intelligence and Museums: From Experimentation to Responsibility

The responsible use of technologies, particularly generative artificial intelligence, is one of the central issues facing contemporary society. Museums are exploring the opportunities that AI offers for documentation, research, conservation, collections management, accessibility, education and communication. At the same time, they must address questions concerning bias and representation, misinformation, transparency, copyright, personal data protection,

environmental impact and the potential loss of control over cultural content and knowledge.

These issues are particularly relevant to museums. Museums are institutions founded on public trust and have a responsibility to guarantee the authenticity, accuracy and contextualisation of the information they produce and share. A text, image, reconstruction or audiovisual resource generated through AI cannot be used without appropriate scholarly verification, clear disclosure of its origin and careful consideration of its possible effects on the people and communities represented. Human oversight must remain central to every decision-making process.

An essential international reference is the [UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence](#), the first global framework dedicated to AI ethics. It is founded on respect for human rights and dignity, transparency, fairness, environmental sustainability and human oversight. The Recommendation provides an important foundation for the development of museum policies and professional practices.

The significance of these questions is also demonstrated by the [Global Survey on the Use of AI in Museums](#), launched by UNESCO and ICOM in 2026 to collect data, practical examples and information about the training needs of museum professionals. Its results, expected by the end of 2026, will provide a global overview of emerging practices and contribute to the development of shared tools and guidance.

Europeana is also promoting reflection on the active role that cultural heritage institutions can play in developing artificial intelligence systems oriented towards the public interest. The paper [“The Case for Public AI: Making it Happen with Cultural Heritage”](#) proposes an AI ecosystem grounded in the values, knowledge and cultural diversity safeguarded by heritage institutions.

Museums should not be considered merely as providers of data for training AI systems. They should be recognised as active stakeholders capable of contributing to the quality, traceability, contextualisation and reliability of these systems, while protecting the rights associated with the reuse of digital cultural heritage.

NEMO – the Network of European Museum Organisations – has also placed artificial intelligence at the centre of its activities. The publication [“AI in Museums”](#) provides an overview of AI applications in museums and examines opportunities and critical issues related to collections databases, curatorial practices, visitor analytics, chatbots, automatic translation and content generation. NEMO’s contribution is particularly important in encouraging dialogue among institutions with widely differing sizes, expertise and resources.

From Statements of Principle to Museum Policies

Alongside international frameworks, some museums have begun to publish statements, guidelines and policies on the use of artificial intelligence. These experiences are still relatively limited, but they are particularly valuable because they demonstrate how general ethical principles can be translated into operational procedures.

The [Smithsonian Institution’s Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence](#) is one of the most significant examples. Its approach to AI is based on three principles: innovation, transparency and responsibility. The Smithsonian recognises the potential of these technologies for research, access and the enhancement of collections, while reaffirming the importance of human oversight, information protection and the verification of results.

The [Amon Carter Museum of American Art](#) has developed internal guidelines accompanied by AI literacy activities for its staff. This approach demonstrates that a policy should not simply consist of prohibitions. It should be a flexible instrument, regularly updated in response to technological developments and the institution’s evolving needs. The museum pays particular attention to content verification, privacy, copyright and professional responsibility.

Another example comes from the Logi Museums in Tampere, Finland, which have developed guidelines for the responsible integration of generative AI. The [Logi Museums’ Ethical AI Guidelines](#) focus particularly on preserving the authenticity of content and maintaining public trust. Their experience shows the importance of creating guidance tailored to specific museum functions, rather than simply applying general models developed for other sectors.

The [AI Policy of Florence Arts and Museums](#) in the United States takes a more restrictive approach, declaring that the organisation does not use generative AI for its texts, graphics or images. This position is also significant: each museum should be able to determine its own level of technological adoption transparently and consistently with its mission, resources and the expectations of its communities.

Although it is not a museum, [Art Fund has published an AI Policy](#) that provides a useful reference for the UK museum sector. The policy clearly distinguishes between permitted and prohibited uses, requires human verification of AI-generated outputs, prevents decisions from being delegated entirely to AI and prohibits entering sensitive information into unauthorised systems. It is a practical example of how an institutional policy can give staff clear and understandable guidance for their everyday work.

Investing in AI Literacy

In Europe, the [AI Act](#) provides an essential framework for regulating these technologies and encouraging their transparent, safe and human-centred use. Of particular relevance is [AI literacy](#): the ability not only to use AI tools, but also to understand how they work, recognise their limitations and risks, and critically evaluate their outputs.

For museums, AI literacy should become a permanent part of professional training and development. It must involve not only those responsible for digital infrastructure, but also directors, curators, documentation specialists, conservators, communication and education teams, designers, external collaborators and service providers. Everyone involved in producing and disseminating museum content must be able to understand when and how AI is being used.

For AVICOM, therefore, the revised Code is not a final destination but the beginning of a new journey. We are committed to supporting museums and professionals in applying its principles by encouraging international dialogue, sharing good practices and developing the necessary skills. The digital future of museums must be built responsibly, transparently and consciously, always placing people, communities, public trust and the safeguarding of cultural heritage at its centre.



Listening to Our Community: The AVICOM Members' Survey

AVICOM conducted this survey to gain a deeper understanding of our community: who our members are, the professional and institutional contexts in which they work, the challenges they face, and their expectations for the future of our Committee.

The survey is part of a broader process of reflection that will inform the development of AVICOM's new Strategic Plan. We believe that a meaningful strategy must be built by listening to our members and by recognising the diversity of experiences, skills and perspectives represented within our international network. The results provide valuable insights into the areas in which AVICOM can offer greater support, create new opportunities for cooperation and strengthen its role within ICOM and the wider museum sector.

Thanks to the commitment of AVICOM Board members, the questionnaire was translated not only into ICOM's three official languages—English, French and Spanish—but also into other languages spoken by members of the

Board. This collective effort helped us reach a broader and more diverse audience and reduce some of the linguistic barriers that can limit participation in international networks.

We warmly encourage members to translate this report into additional languages and to share it within their professional and institutional networks. Every new translation can help make the results more accessible, foster wider participation and strengthen dialogue across countries, regions and cultures.

The survey confirms that AVICOM's members are looking for training opportunities, knowledge exchange, international networking and practical guidance on audiovisual heritage, digital media, artificial intelligence and emerging technologies. It also highlights the importance of accessibility, inclusion, ethical responsibility, digital preservation, sustainability and balanced global representation.

These findings are particularly meaningful as AVICOM celebrates its 35th anniversary. Over the past thirty-five years, technologies, museum practices and patterns of communication have changed profoundly. AVICOM has grown and evolved alongside these transformations, expanding its areas of interest and bringing together an increasingly diverse international community.

Looking ahead, we want AVICOM to become an even stronger global hub for museums, cultural institutions, researchers, professionals and organisations working with audiovisual heritage, media, social media and new and emerging technologies. We aim to create a space where experiences can be shared, projects can be developed collaboratively and different forms of expertise can meet across institutional, professional, linguistic and geographical boundaries.

This survey is therefore not the conclusion of a process, but the beginning of a new phase of dialogue and collaboration. We are open to ideas, proposals and partnerships and would be delighted to work with members, institutions, other ICOM Committees and international networks.

Please do not hesitate to contact us, share your experiences or propose new opportunities for cooperation. AVICOM's future can only be built together with its community.

For more information visit [our website](#)



AVICOM 2026: Save the Date, Travel Grants and Call for Experiences

As AVICOM celebrates its **35th anniversary** and the **30th anniversary of the F@IMP Festival**, we are pleased to announce a series of activities bringing together museum and cultural heritage professionals to reflect on the history and future of digital technologies.

Save the Date: AVICOM Annual Conference and General Assembly
From Memory to Innovation: Archives, Audiovisual Heritage and the Future of Museum Technologies

Paris, 24–25 November 2026

Organised in collaboration with the **Bibliothèque nationale de France** and **ICOM France**, the AVICOM Annual Conference will bring together museum professionals, archivists, librarians, researchers, educators and technology specialists.

The conference will explore the evolution of museum technologies, from analogue audiovisual installations to websites, digital collections, multimedia, social media, immersive technologies and artificial intelligence. It will also consider how the memory of technological innovation can help museums address current challenges and shape their future.

The programme will include the main conference, a roundtable, anniversary celebrations and the AVICOM General Assembly on 24 November, followed by professional visits on 25 November.

Further information about the keynote speakers, detailed programme and registration will be announced soon.

AVICOM Members' Travel Grant Programme 2026

AVICOM is committed to building an inclusive, diverse and internationally representative professional community. To support participation in the Annual Conference and General Assembly in Paris, AVICOM is offering:

- two travel grants;
- three conference registration fee waivers.

The programme is specifically addressed to young and early-career AVICOM members.

Priority will be given to first-time applicants, members from underrepresented regions, members residing in countries belonging to ICOM Membership Categories 3, 4 and 5, and applicants with limited access to other sources of funding.

Application deadline: 31 August 2026

[\[Find how to participate \]](#)

International Call: My First Digital Experience in a Museum

What was the first digital technology you used professionally in a museum or cultural heritage institution? What worked, what proved difficult and what did you learn from that experience?

AVICOM invites museum and cultural heritage professionals from around the world to share their first experiences with websites, databases, digital catalogues, digitisation projects, audiovisual productions, multimedia and interactive installations, mobile applications, social media, virtual and augmented reality, artificial intelligence and other digital technologies.

Our aim is to build a shared and internationally diverse history of digital transformation in museums through the voices of those who experienced it.

Selected contributors will be invited to give a **10-minute online presentation** during one of two half-day webinars:

- **15 October 2026**
- **16 October 2026**

Presentations may include a small number of slides, photographs, videos or other visual materials. With the authors' agreement, selected experiences may also become part of the AVICOM digital collection or be published on the AVICOM website.

Submission deadline: 20 September 2026

Notification of acceptance: 1 October 2026

[Submit your experience](#)

Join us

Save the dates and join us in Paris or online to celebrate AVICOM's history, share experiences and help shape the future of museum technologies.

For further information, please contact: chair.avicom@icom.museum



Working Group on Indigenous Data Sovereignty in the Age of AI

Working Group on AI and Indigenous Data Sovereignty has opened registration for our first set of webinars on September 17th. Please join us for both of these important conversations set for different time zones. We have more details below in Scientific Research. You can register [here](#).