

Monday October 4th

Workshop 1

The development of Audio-visual Archiving

Transfer of information from Card Catalogues.

Alain Goossens, RTBF.

RTBF is the French speaking public television of Belgium. RTBF started to broadcast in 1953, and the first archive department was created in 1956.

The archive department began with one person, whose main job was to find the broadcast programs in the different offices, and to store them in a room.

The archivist rapidly understood that if he wanted to find the programs again, he had to describe their contents and to attribute a reference number to each.

From the beginning, he used therefore A5 format cards, and created two files :

- one called '*mother file*', in which he described the contents of the program, by alphabetical order of title
- the other called '*heading file*', in which he gave, also by alphabetical order, the main research criteria of the program (names of main characters, locations and keywords).

It was a classical way to work in libraries, and I believe that many televisions used this kind of files.

After some years, another archive department was created, describing the contents of the TV news. Followed by another one, for the 'video' programs, at the end of the 70's.

Finally, in 1989, those three departments were merged... but not the files.

The new archive department, called IMADOC, decided to create two new files again (mother and heading), and worked with them until July 93.

After having computerised the daily work of the documentalists, I thought about what to do with those card files.

My main concern was to ensure the long term safety of the files : cards were used many times a day, and could be damaged with the time, misplaced after use, or even lost...

Below, two examples of those files.

Mother file

COULEUR

LOISIRS A LOISIR 18-9-75 70.75/59

Format	Durée	Son O	Son M	Identification réalisateur	SUJET	BONS DE PRET
16	30'50"	X	P	Dupont	Evocation des fêtes de Wallonie - la date de la fête de la Wallonie: le 27 septembre - à Liège - interview du président des fêtes, programme des spectacles - spectacles de variétés notamment - photos du cortège - manifestations diverses: artisans venant de la Côte d'Azur - chaus du corso de Nice etc - A Mons, festival international du Hainaut - photos de ballets - Vues du groupe: Les Balladips, ils jouent de la guitare - A Nivelles (Net B), mes du cortège - interviews des organisateurs de ces fêtes - expositions, manifestations sportives - A Philippeville: interview de l'organisateur des fêtes - mes aériennes de la région de Spa - T.S.V.P.	

Heading file

EASTWOOD, Clint (Réalisateur + Acteur Cinema) ①

Numéro	Durée	Réalisateur	SUJET	Effacement
12.82/40/00	11'57"	Krollstein	CARROUSEL AUX IMAGES 12.11.82: extrait de "Firefox" + interview	
12.82/32/00	1'03"		Carrousel aux images 11-11-82: extrait "Firefox"	
12.84/29/00	5'03"	Krollstein	Carrousel aux images 23-8-84: "Sudden Impact": extrait	
12.85/24/00	3'	Krollstein	Carrousel aux images du 1.85: "Tijppakop" (sona corde aide) - extrait	
12.85/20/00	3' 4'20" 2'20"	Krollstein	Carrousel aux images du 5.9.85: 2 extraits et interview du réalisateur (extraits de "Pale Rider")	
12.86/04/17	2'48"	Buytaers	Coup de film 5.1.86: extrait de "City Heat"	
12.87/16/17	2'27"	Buytaers	Coup de film 4.5.87: "Heartbreak Ridge"	
12.88/36/17	3'34"	Buytaers	Coup de film 1.6.88: "Brind"	
12.90/33/17	59"	Joram	Coup de film 30-5-90: extrait "White Hunter, black heart" ("Chasseur blanc, Cœur noir")	
12.90/31/17	59"	Joram	Coup de film 23-5-90: "White Hunter, black heart" de Clint Eastwood	

I could not find the money to computerise the contents of the cards, so I decided to scan them.

The scanning was done in 1995 by Danka Imaging Services, with a 200 dpi resolution.

As 80% of the cards were hand-written, we did not try to do an OCR.

Every morning, for two weeks, I drove 10.000 cards to Danka, and went back with the 10.000 scanned the day before, and a CD ROM.

Proceeding this way, we limited to the maximum any potential problems due to the temporary absence of a part of the file.

With all the CD's, I went to the RTBF IT department, and asked one of our computer engineers if it was possible to 'do something' with the scanned cards.

By 'doing something', I meant make it available through a computer application.

The result was beyond my expectations. We have had, since 1996, a new application on our Intranet, called ROLODEX (by analogy with ROLINDEX, the name of old filing cabinets)

From the hardware point of view, the application consumes 8 GB Hard disk space, and is on our Web Server.

The application is on a sun station, but can run on any platform. For instance, the demo shown in Santiago Fiat Conference is on PC. There is a full portability, both on server and client side.

From the software point of view, the application is developed with HTML, JavaScript and Openkiss (a Netscape plug-in to display interactive graphics).

The first treatment was to reduce the sizing of the cards (to allow them to appear full screen on our computers (with 17 inch screen)).

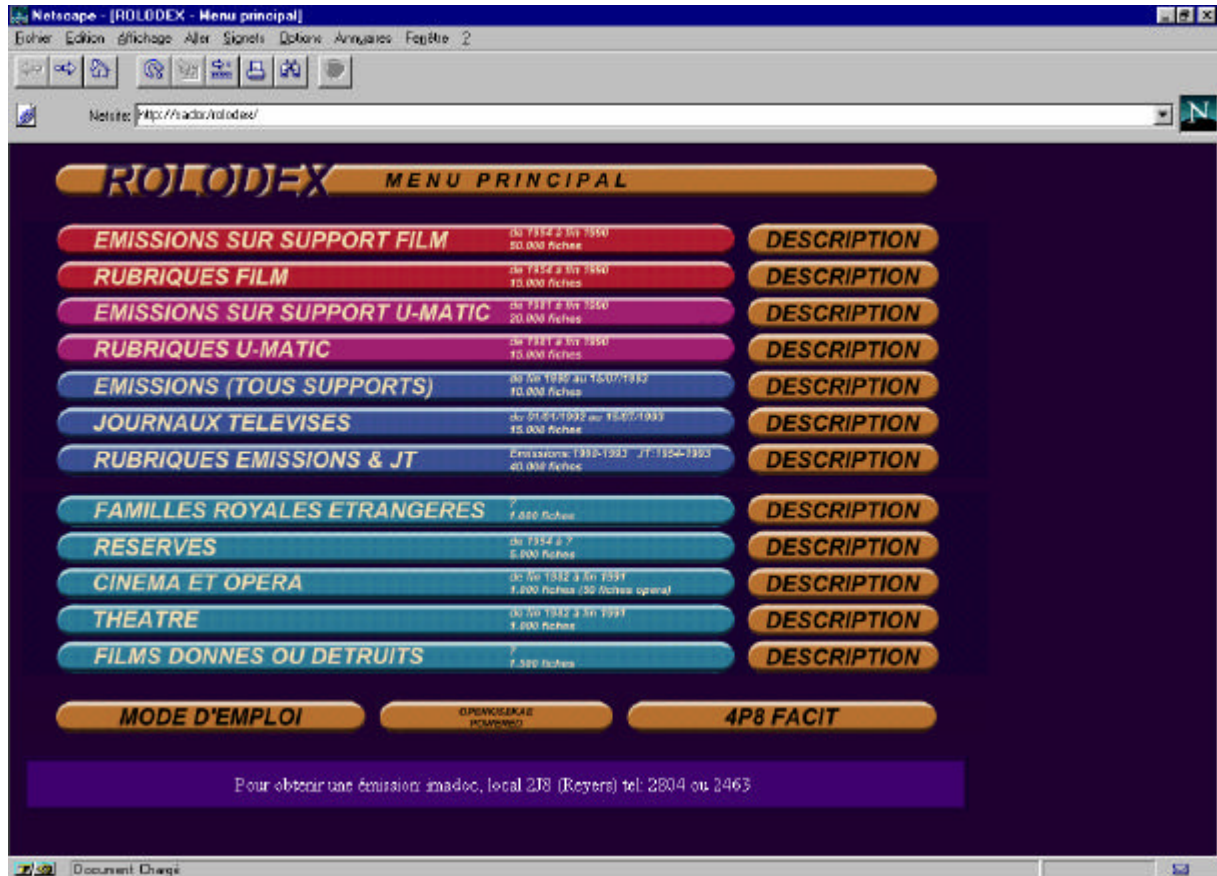
The top of each card was reduced again and skewed.

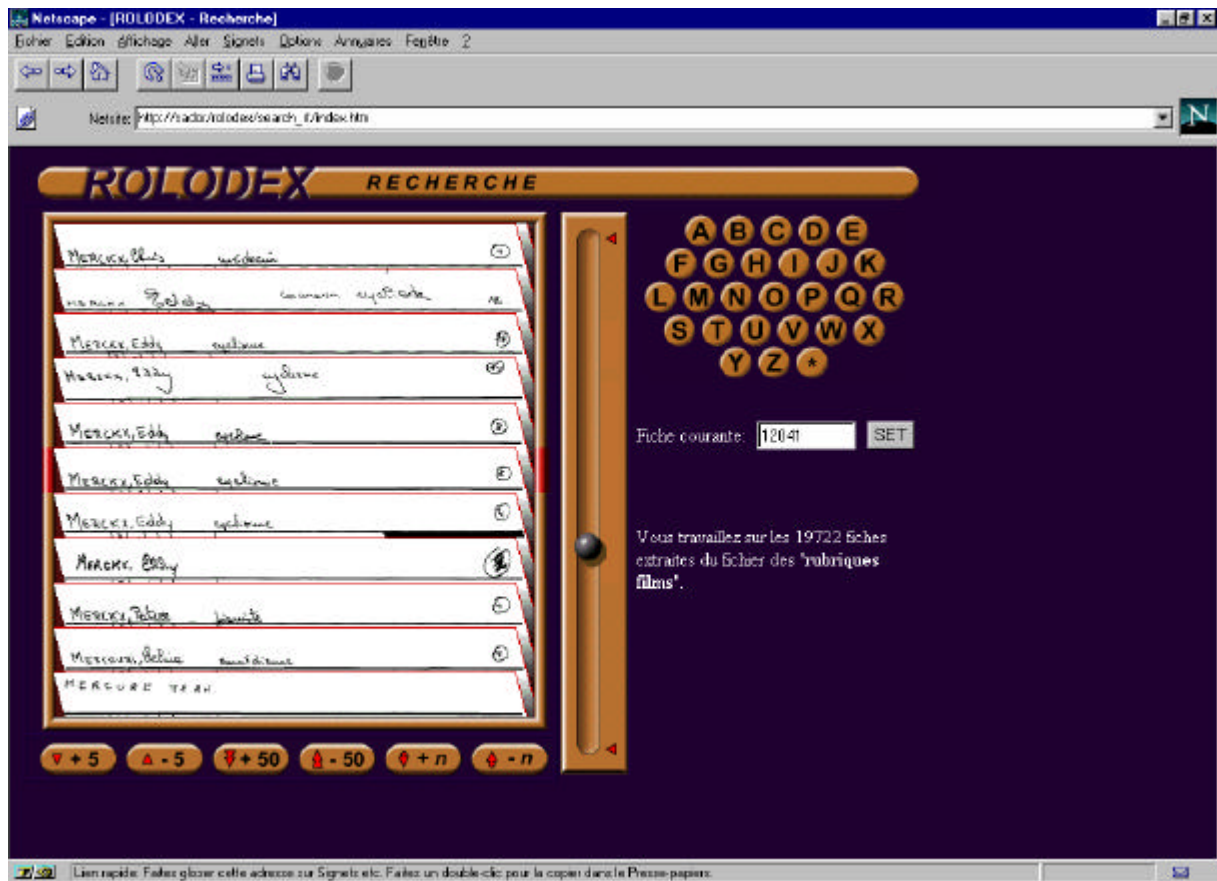
All those GIF files were numbered and stored on disk. Although the process took few seconds per card, it was quite long to process the 200.000 cards.

The global philosophy of the virtual cards is to allow the search of the appropriate card from a remote PC in the same way as in the card file.

Below, some screens of the application :

First, you have to make a choice of the file you want to use.

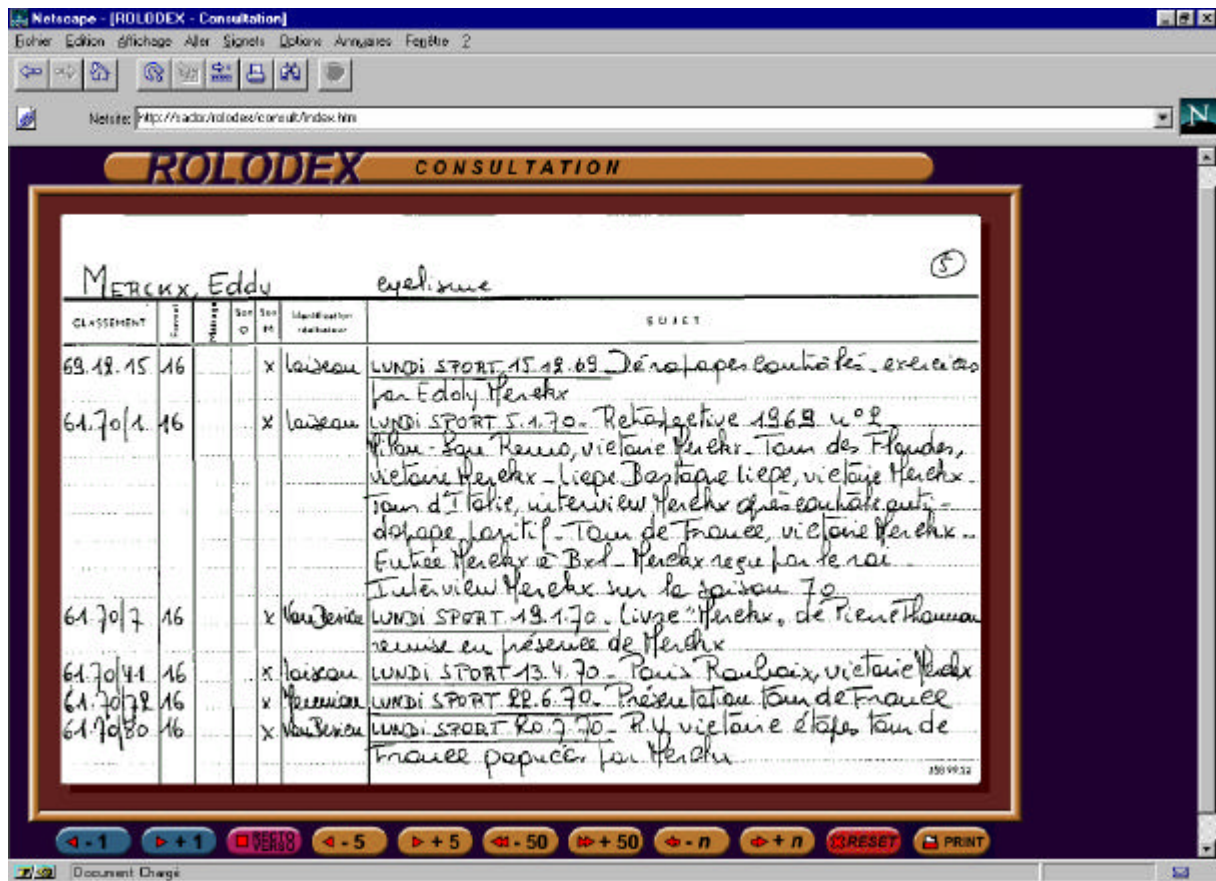




Then, on the left-hand side of the screen, you see the card 'thumbnails'.

You may select only one part of the file (A-Z), or browse through the file with the 'black ball' or go 5 or 50 cards further.

When you have selected the appropriate card , it appears full screen if you click on it.



You may of course see the other side of the card, or print it, or browse through the file again.

At the moment, the file is purely static. You cannot add or remove cards.

Of course, we cannot do more than with the card file, but not less either. We really work the same way with the application as with the real cards catalogue.

The complete cost (including scanning, work of the IT engineer, hard disk space) is less than 15.000 US \$.

It is a cheap way to 'computerise' card files. We think that if we had computerised them in a more classical way (encoding in our retrieval software) the cost would have been approximately 20 times higher.

If you are interested in more details about this experience, feel free to contact me (ags@rtbf.be) or the IT engineer, M. Frédéric Cloth (frcl@rtbf.be).