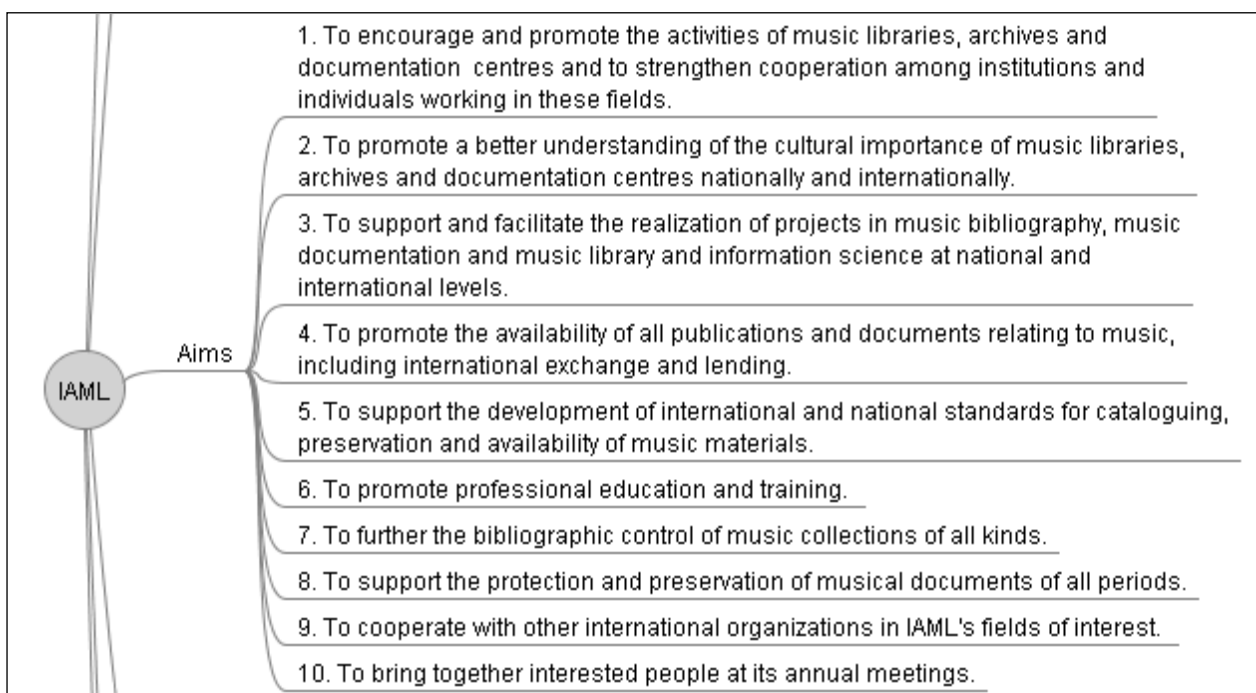My personal involvement with IAML started in 2000, when I attended the Edinburgh conference. I had been heading the IRCAM Multimedia Library for five years with a professional background quite remote from the library world, being trained as a mathematician and a computer scientist. I feel this is necessary to posit at the outset, as my qualifications and experience, and thus my opinions, will probably not reflect those of the majority of IAML members. In order to structure my thoughts, I have used a mind map of which parts are included here.

The music world is now different from the times when IAML's aims were drafted (although, being quite general, they still express very valuable aims): due to the emergence of digitization and networking, "real" libraries have seen their budgets slashed (reduction of personnel, of acquisitions) so as to be redirected to digitization; online music (i.e., sound) has become so prominent as to affect the recording industry on the one hand and the perception of the usefulness of music libraries on the other hand ("if music is just sound, and sound is online, who needs music libraries[1]"), some of which are losing their independence (and sometimes their personnel) and become integrated to various extent in general-purpose libraries; search engines have changed the way people look for information (full text search in records and, if available, contents)[2].

One of the consequences is that the role of bibliographic control (aim #7, see chart below) has shifted in more than one way. It takes a larger place in the back (so as to help provide semantic links to the emerging search engines) rather than explicitly at the search level. Additionally, it is becoming increasingly shared (e.g., the VIAF project, but also, more recently, the International Standard Name Identifier) so as to allow for an easier online sharing of information[3] by computers (see Linked Data). This has also impacted the exchange formats for digital records and communication protocols (aim #5).

IAML — Aims

1. To encourage and promote the activities of music libraries, archives and documentation centres and to strengthen cooperation among institutions and individuals working in these fields.

2. To promote a better understanding of the cultural importance of music libraries, archives and documentation centres nationally and internationally.

3. To support and facilitate the realization of projects in music bibliography, music documentation and music library and information science at national and international levels.

4. To promote the availability of all publications and documents relating to music, including international exchange and lending.

5. To support the development of international and national standards for cataloguing, preservation and availability of music materials.

6. To promote professional education and training.

7. To further the bibliographic control of music collections of all kinds.

8. To support the protection and preservation of musical documents of all periods.

9. To cooperate with other international organizations in IAML's fields of interest.

10. To bring together interested people at its annual meetings.

"Information" is the key word rather than "resources", as the latter suggests only digital contents[4], while most of the "information" regarding music is not digitized and probably won't be in a foreseeable future (rights, technology), a position IAML must defend if we want to avoid encouraging the opinion that anything that is not available on the internet does not exist, and that human mediation (the librarian) has lost his "usefulness" now that direct access is possible (see aim #2). At the same time, IAML should aim to encourage digitization, online distribution and digital preservation of various kinds of music material by its members (this should fall under an extended aim #4) by a variety of actions, including (but not limited to) lobbying for the rights to do so, participating in boards and steering committees of international digitization projects (IASA is a member of the

---

[1] And libraries in general? Watch this video (to the end, it is worth it).

[2] While this may sound like the Taiga Provocative Statements, it is not meant to, on many points.

[3] Ontologies are one of the important aspects of this general trend, however the IAML Music Ontology Working Group has not made much practical advance on this issue, as well as that on the Access to Music Archives, which aims at establishing crossbase search among databases holding music material, much in the spirit of online information sharing.

[4] I.e., audio and text files and the like, and *not* bibliographic records with no attached online contents. This is how Europeana is designed.
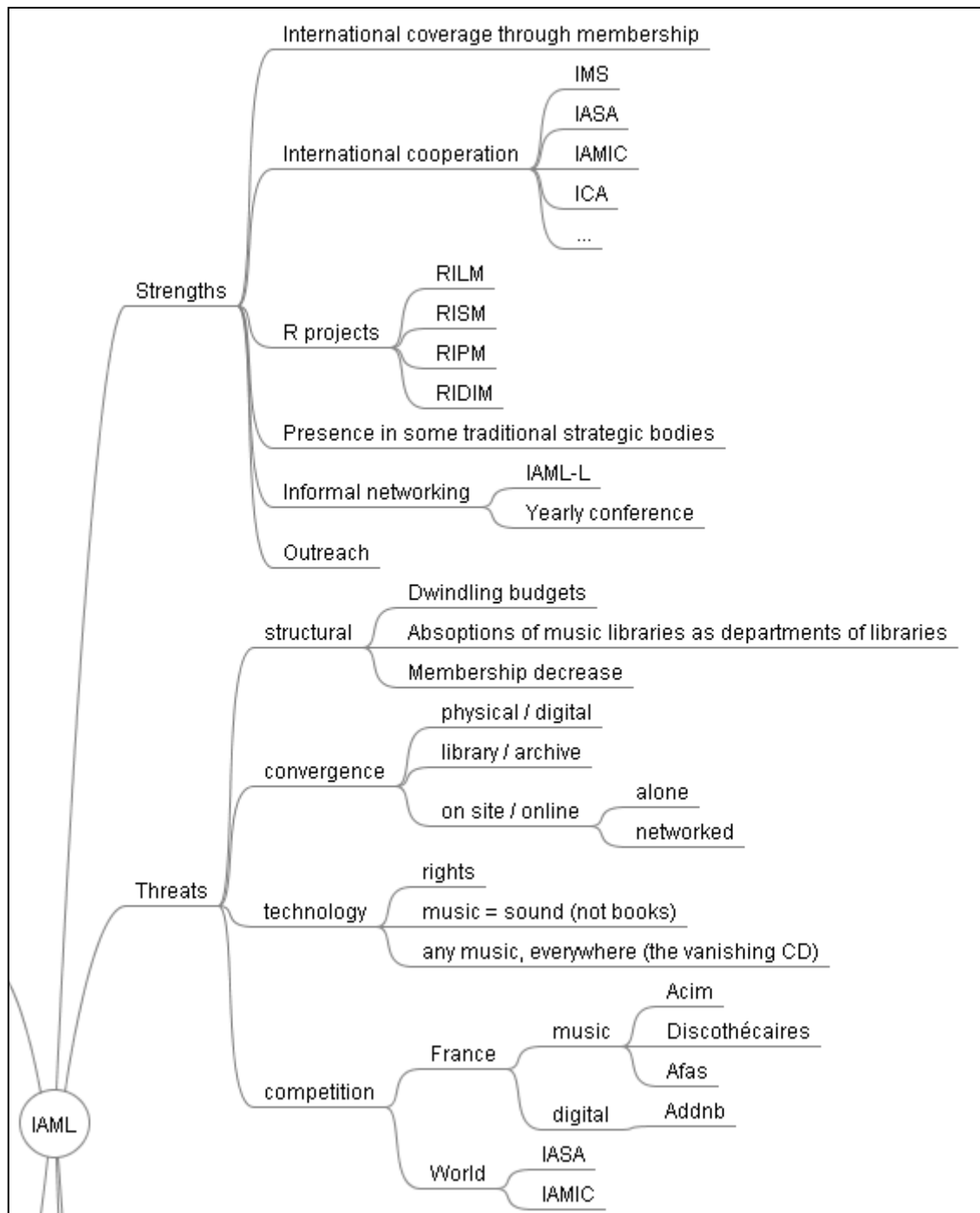
[Board of Europeana](), informing its members of interesting developments they should be attuned to[5], draw their attention to calls for projects they could submit to, etc. In addition, IAML should take affirmative action regarding large, general purpose, digital library projects such as Europeana, so as to ensure that music material, if made available that way, be properly described and documented[6].

Regarding preservation (goals #5 and #8), attention should also be given to digital preservation of music material, and long-term planning to digitize as quickly as possible so as to put online as much material as

---

[5] This is, e.g., what IASA has successfully been doing though the special publications of its technical committee on standards, recommended practices and strategies.

[6] Currently, Europeana has only four types of documents: text, still image, moving image, sound. Music scores, music sound recordings and other music resources are perforce not identified as such. Other large portail projects, initially geared to still images of museum material, do not identify correcly music material (e.g., "Symphony n° 1", but with not even a composer's name…).

possible. Standards and projects exist in this domain as well (e.g., CASPAR and PrestoSpace) , in which IAML should have an observer's role, at least, if not more.

All these directions imply further strengthening the ties with other professional associations (aim #9) which complement each other and when relevant and possible, work on common projects (conferences, publications, lobbying, etc.). This is particularly important with the emergence and/or continued existence of organizations on related domains of activity: as it is becoming increasingly difficult (financially and time-wise) to be a member of several such ones[7], membership may stagnate or dwindle, in countries where the alternatives are viable and appear more attractive for one reason or another. In some cases, national branches should do well to attempt to join forces[8] rather than to fight.

Professional education and training (aim #6) are ever more needed in this increasingly quickly shifting world. Some branches have developed interesting courses (as the latest newsletter reports), yet if anyone coming to the IAML website in order to learn about this topic, he would have a hard time finding useful, collected information: there is simply not an entry in any menu nor a page dedicated to this topic; there is deep down the page for the Service and Training Commission, which provides links to other pages with reports, but not e.g. a current, centralized list of available courses organized by IAML branches.

The web site is one of the communication means of IAML and the one most visible to the outside world. As it is currently structured, it is mostly modeled after the organizational *structure* of IAML rather than after the important *domains and topics* IAML strives to encourage, promote and support (standards, protocols, education and training… recommendations, resources…). In my opinion, it should thus be turned upside-down so to speak, and be functionally restructured so as to act as a resource center, a clearing house for the rich activities of IAML and its components. This does not mean throwing away information, but reorganizing it so as to provide quick and easy access to it: think of the end user, who is not necessarily interested in IAML *qua* organization, but in its practical productions and activities. As a result, it may end up being better indexed by search engines[9].

Similarly, the structure of the yearly conference should continue evolving towards ones in which sessions are clearly topical (as it is increasingly becoming the case) rather than structural, and, at joint conferences, a stronger integration of both programs. It would be of value to have yearly collected, well-identified proceedings of the papers (i.e., not the reports, which may appear in *Fontes,* the *Newsletter,* or in some section of the web site) which were presented[10] at each conference. At least, there should be a searchable cumulative list (better: database) of bibliographic references (titles, authors, abstracts…) of these papers on the IAML website, as many web sites of the past (and also recent past) have disappeared along with their program.

While these contents, and others, should be available through the IAML international archive, its page seems quite outdated, as it does not have many entries past 2000; moreover, it is a paper (and audio: a few cassettes…) archive, and so does not archive the IAML website nor those of its past conferences. An organization whose aims include archival and preservation should do better than that…

The IAML mailing list is another useful tool, yet somewhat underused. In addition (unless I am wrong, but I can't find on the IAML web site any information about it), its archives are not searchable, which is a pity.

As to the structure of IAML, it seems to me that the formal distinction between branches, commissions, sub-commissions and committees could be somewhat simplified, as well as the working groups vs. projects. More importantly, some are dormant during the year for a variety of reasons (e.g., having to defer key decisions to the General assembly; lack of time and means for the members to collaborate during the year, etc.) and should either be given means and incentives to fulfill their charter or propose alternative ways to do it. It may be the case that the IAML WGs don't have the resources to run projects, e.g., the development of an AMA search point, or of a music ontology, without specific outside support (Mellon, the EU, etc.). In this case, it might be a better strategy to aim for a more modest but not less useful goal, that of editing and publishing relevant documents (guidelines, recommendations, surveys) which would be of use for the members, and, for larger projects, look for resources as one of the first steps of embarking on them.

---

[7] IASA and IAMIC, for one. In France, ACIM, Discothécaires, AFAS… In the US, the MLA.
[8] Which is what IAML-US and MLA are considering doing.
[9] A search for a randomly chosen paper from *Fontes* showed up 8th in Google, and with a
[10] This might imply putting in place an editorial committee so as to ensure the final result is of reasonable quality; either before the conference (and then maybe imply a selection/rejection mechanism for papers) or only afterwards, as a condition for publication in the proceedings.