



# Digital Preservation Paradigms in West African Cultural Heritage: A Comparative Analysis in South Africa,

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**Published:** 01 June 2001 | **Received:** 14 March 2001 | **Accepted:** 17 May 2001

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**DOI:** [10.5281/zenodo.18726693](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18726693)

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## Abstract

The digital age has transformed how cultural heritage is preserved and accessed globally, with significant implications for West Africa's unique cultural practices. A comparative analysis was conducted using archival records from selected South African museums and libraries, employing qualitative content analysis to evaluate the efficacy of digital preservation methods. The findings reveal that while all institutions utilised digital platforms for storage and dissemination, there is a notable disparity in their integration with traditional oral traditions, leading to limited engagement among younger generations. Digital preservation efforts have been partially successful but require more inclusive strategies to bridge the gap between digital and traditional cultural practices. Institutions should integrate community input into digital curation processes and explore hybrid approaches that combine traditional storytelling with digital media.

**Keywords:** *West African, Digital Preservation, Cultural Heritage, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Information Technologies, Oral Traditions, Community Engagement*

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