

# **Whose Cultural Heritage Is It Anyway? Preservation of Cultural Heritage as a Collective Endeavor**

***Yaşar Tonta***

Hacettepe University Department of Information Management, 06800 Beytepe, Ankara, Turkey  
tonta@hacettepe.edu.tr

Intimate relationships have been developed between different cultures over the centuries and they were intertwined with each other intricately. Cultural interaction usually overarches spatial and temporal boundaries and generates cultural heritage artefacts (e.g., manuscripts, sculptures, buildings, and so on) that are geographically scattered under different administrative jurisdictions. This makes the preservation of cultural heritage artefacts all the more difficult as there may usually be more than one stakeholders involved in the process. Conflicts may arise between different stakeholders as to whether such artefacts should be preserved in the first place. The loss of cultural heritage artefacts, on the other hand, interests all the stakeholders, not just the one who currently happens to steward them. In fact, it goes well beyond the stakeholders and interests all the humanity, as we lose part of our cultural heritage forever. This paper attempts to discuss the long-term preservation of cultural heritage artefacts using the game-theoretic constructs. It submits that the stakeholder approach would undermine the future of cultural heritage artefacts and the preservation of such artefacts should be viewed as a collective responsibility. The efforts of international organizations such as UN are reviewed in this context, including UNESCO's Memory of the World programme. The paper suggests that long-term preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage artefacts requires close cooperation between different organizations and nation-states so that effective preservation policies, strategies and practices can be developed.

**Keywords:** Cultural heritage, long-term preservation, game theory