THE SOUL OF AN OLD MACHINE: MANAGING INDUSTRIAL MOVEABLE HERITAGE

ABSTRACT: What is the nature of past industry, and how can be best understand and present it to the present and the future? These are fundamental questions of industrial heritage management, and moveable industrial heritage provides a key tool for understanding the ‘soul’ of the industry. This paper examines the issues associated with managing a collection of moveable industrial heritage within the context of a working industry. Drawing on the example of the Sydney Water Corporation, a public institution with nearly 120 years of continuity, it discusses the processes Sydney Water put in place to assess and manage its moveable heritage collection. The paper also discusses the challenges associated with the collection, including storage, transport and acquisition and disposal. The paper concludes that managing industrial moveable heritage provides a substantially different set of challenges when dealt with in an operational, industrial context, as opposed to managing moveable heritage in a museum or display setting.