

May 7, 1996

Dear Steve:

Enclosed are our responses for *The Report on the State of Preservation of American Television and Video*. There are two documents, paginated as follows:

- Pages one through fourteen contain our response to the *Television and Video Preservation Survey* questionnaire.
- Pages fifteen through forty-nine contain our *Narrative Statement* on American television.

Please leave me a voice mail when you receive this material — otherwise, I'll call your office on Monday (May 13) to make sure this arrived safely.

Sincerely,



Douglas F. Gibbons
Director of Library and Information Services

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The Museum of Television & Radio
Scope Notes Regarding Written Responses to The Library of Congress
May 1996

The Museum of Television & Radio is a national, nonprofit, educational organization founded by William S. Paley in 1975 to collect, preserve, catalog, and interpret television and radio programming and advertising (commercials on television and radio), and to make these materials available to the public. The Museum opened its doors on November 9, 1976, as The Museum of Broadcasting on three floors of a converted office building at 1 East 53 Street in New York City. In 1991, the Museum's Board of Trustees renamed the institution The Museum of Television & Radio to reflect more accurately the addition of programs beyond those that are broadcast, to those transmitted by other methods such as cable and satellite. On September 12, 1991, the Museum moved into the William S. Paley Building (located at 25 West 52 Street in New York), named after its founder and designed by Philip Johnson. On March 18, 1996, The Museum of Television & Radio in Los Angeles opened to the public. Named the Leonard H. Goldenson Building, the Museum is located at 465 North Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, California. The Los Angeles facility was designed by Richard Meier.

1. The Museum's responses to The Library of Congress Television and Video Preservation Survey and the Museum's narrative statement both focus on American television. The general absence of remarks concerning the Museum's collection of radio programming and international programming should not diminish their importance to the Museum's mission in the reader's mind.

2. The Museum is one museum with two locations. The Los Angeles facility further serves the Museum's mission to preserve, present, and interpret its collection with an exciting schedule of exhibitions, screening and listening series, seminars, and many other activities. However, because the Los Angeles facility just opened in March 1996, the Museum's written statements reflect the history and findings of the Museum's New York facility. This logical emphasis on the New York facility should not diminish the importance of the Los Angeles facility in the reader's mind.

The Museum of Television & Radio

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Television and Video Preservation Survey

The information requested below is intended to assist the Librarian of Congress in understanding the issues involved in the preservation of television and video materials nationwide. This information, together with the statements made at the public hearings and written submissions, will be statistically incorporated in the Library's report on the status of the preservation of American television and video materials. Please note that the questionnaire is directed at organizations or institutions having custody of television and video materials and is not intended to serve as a substitute for a narrative statement. (For the purpose of this survey, television and video materials include edited or unedited film or videotape made expressly for television broadcast or video display.)

1. What is the name of your organization or institution and what specific administrative unit has responsibility for safeguarding or maintaining television and video materials? The Museum of Television & Radio is a national, nonprofit, educational organization founded by William S. Paley in 1975 to collect, preserve, and interpret television and radio programming and advertisements, and to make them available to the public. The Museum opened its doors on November 9, 1976, as The Museum of Broadcasting on three floors of a converted office building at 1 East 53 Street in New York City. In 1991, the Museum's Board of Trustees renamed the institution The Museum of Television & Radio to reflect more accurately the addition of programs beyond those that are broadcast, to those transmitted by other methods such as cable and satellite. On September 12, 1991, the Museum moved into the William S. Paley Building (located at 25 West 52 Street in New York), named after its founder and designed by Philip Johnson. On March 18, 1996, The Museum of Television & Radio in Los Angeles opened to the public. Named the Leonard H. Goldenson Building, the Museum is located at 465 North Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, California. The Los Angeles facility was designed by Richard Meier. The Museum is, therefore, one museum with two locations.

The day-to-day management of the collection is the responsibility of the Registrar's Department, which is comprised of a Registrar and four Assistant Registrar positions. Oversight is provided by the Preservation Committee which is made up of the Vice President for Administration & Technology, the Vice President for Curatorial Services, the Director of Engineering, the Director of Library and Information Services, and the Museum's Registrar. The committee is responsible for setting policy, overseeing its execution, and

reviewing all procedures and policies relating to management of the collection.

a. In what year did your archival program begin and can you identify any particular event that prompted it? The Museum of Television & Radio (formerly The Museum of Broadcasting) was founded in 1975 by CBS founder William S. Paley (1901-1990) because television and radio programs were not being adequately preserved for the benefit of the general public. A handful of private collectors and the three broadcast networks maintained limited archives, while the Library of Congress was acquiring programs but granting access only to scholars. In general, programming was considered disposable, and valuable television footage was being destroyed or erased—in effect, lost to history. As with film, few anticipated the need to care for this material professionally or the demand for access to past programming. Lastly, the history of—and the history captured by—television and radio was not being exhibited and interpreted for the general public. Outside of university-level media/communications courses, the significance of television and radio was not being analyzed and interpreted in public settings. The Museum was established to address the need for an institution that would acquire, preserve, catalog, exhibit, and interpret television and radio programming.

b. How do you acquire your television materials? For example, do you produce them, purchase them, solicit and receive donations, or tape them off-air? The Museum's founder, William S. Paley (1901-1990), founder of CBS, enlisted the support of ABC, CBS, and NBC in establishing the Museum's permanent collection. Each broadcast network agreed to donate copies of programming selected by Museum curators on an annual basis. Agreements were soon reached with production companies and other copyright holders of programming, both domestic and international. Programs for the collection are now acquired from a wide variety of sources in the United States and around the world.

Programs for the collection are generally acquired in three ways. The Museum has long-standing contractual agreements with studios, networks, and production companies whereby they annually donate programming selected by the Museum; in addition, the Museum is allowed to tape programming off-air. The second method of acquisition is initiated by the Museum when the curatorial staff determines that certain programs should become part of the collection. Cable programmers, production companies, studios, broadcast organizations, or individual producers, directors, and other copyright owners are approached about donating programs. A contract dealing with copyright and other issues is mutually agreed upon. The third means of acquisition is unsolicited donations, which are accepted when Museum curators determine that they are suitable for the permanent collection.

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2. How would you describe your interests in terms of the strengths of your current holdings and in terms of future growth or acquisitions? (For example, commercials, political commercials, national or local news, sports, documentaries, educational, entertainment, public affairs, video art, etc.)

The collection is divided into the following genre and sub-genre categories: **Advertising Programs** (i.e., commercials on television), **Arts Programs** (Arts Documentary, Classical Music, Dance, Opera), **Children's Programs** (Animation, Children's), **Comedy Programs** (Comedy/Variety, Situation Comedy), **Drama Programs** (Daytime Serial, Night-time Serial, Docudrama, Drama, Fantasy/Science Fiction, Legal, Medical, Police/Private Detective, Spy, Television Movie, Western), **Game/Quiz Programs** (Game, Panel, Quiz), **Music Programs** (Classical Music, Jazz, Music/Variety, Musical Theater, Opera, Popular), **News Programs** (Magazine, News, Public Affairs/Documentaries, Talk/Interview, Science Documentaries), **Specials** (Awards, Specials), **Sports Programs** (Baseball, Boxing, Football, Golf, Hockey, Horse Racing, Olympics, Tennis), and **Variety Programs** (Comedy/Variety, Music/Variety, Variety).

Important television programming in the collection includes: documentary coverage of World War II, highlights of the Army-McCarthy hearings, *The Milton Berle Show*, the Nixon-Kennedy debates, The Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, television coverage of the Vietnam War, *Hallmark Hall of Fame* presentations, Apollo moon-walks, a comprehensive collection of *M*A*S*H*, *Eyes on the Prize*, and coverage of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Also included are speeches by world leaders of the twentieth century, hundreds of early and "lost" television programs, classic television commercials, and political conventions from 1948 onward. All programming specifically acquired for exhibitions, screening series, and festivals becomes part of the permanent collection, and all Museum seminars are videotaped and added to the collection.

The Museum's permanent collection of television programs and television commercials is comprised of approximately 60,201 television items: 50,121 items of television programming (videotapes and film); and 10,080 cataloged television commercials.

The permanent collection, carefully chosen by the curatorial staff in consultation with scholars and the television creative community, encompasses the entire history of American television from 1939 to the present. Local programs from such states as Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin are part of the collection. (Out of scope

statement: Television programming from over thirty countries from around the world is also included in the collection.)

a. **Do you have written appraisal or selection criteria for acquisition or retention of items or for deaccessioning or disposal? If so, please attach a copy.** The Museum of Television & Radio was the first museum in the world to acquire and exhibit television programs for the general public. Two principles have guided the formation of the Museum's program collection. The first is to establish a balanced collection of significant programming that represents all important genres. The second guiding principle is to collect programming that is relevant to exhibitions, screening series, and festivals. When an exhibition or series is developed, the Museum seeks to acquire the most significant programming interpreting that subject.

The Museum acquires a wide range of programs selected for their historic significance, social relevance, and artistic excellence. This includes programs that win such awards as the Emmy, Peabody, Humanitas, WGA, DGA, or the Iris as well as highly rated television programming. This ensures that the collection is significant to the widest possible public audience as it is a permanent record of common historical, social, and cultural events.

Curatorial decisions determine all acquisitions. Extensive research and technical surveys are conducted to determine the quality and content of material being considered for the collection. Curators speak to scholars and creative talents in television to determine which programming is significant to the history of television and to keep abreast of current trends in programming. Curators are constantly evaluating the collection's strengths and weakness and make efforts to acquire programming that ensures the collection encompasses television history.

Guest curators and consultants are engaged for exhibitions, seminars, acquisition efforts, as well as for special technical and computer services. They are chosen according to their professional qualifications and expert knowledge, and assist with the development, organization, and implementation of programs.

Deaccessioning. The Museum strives to collect the most complete version of a program and one that is of the best possible technical quality. Occasionally, duplicate copies of a program may exist in the holdings, and the better-quality version is kept for the permanent collection while the lesser-quality version is deaccessioned. In special cases the Museum accepts a large number of programs without the opportunity for a prior review of the material. After a review, the Museum's curators may recommend that only selected programs be kept for the permanent collection. The Museum has custodial relationships with other institutions and actively seeks to transfer physical custody and share jointly all programs which are not selected by the curators

for the permanent collection. Deaccessioning occurs if a program is not suitable for the collection according to curatorial standards or if the Museum has a copy of higher quality.

3. Can you estimate the size of your television and video holdings?

Television film -- total number of reels: The Museum holds approximately 5046 film reels of television programming on film reels.

Videotape -- total number of tapes and cassettes: The Museum holds approximately 45,075 items of television programming on videotape. Additionally, 10,080 cataloged television commercials are stored on videotape.

Titles -- total number of film or video productions:
(Each episode of a series should be counted as one production. Also, count each program as "originally produced," rather than those shortened or lengthened for different time slots.)

The Museum's permanent collection of television programs and television commercials is comprised of approximately 60,201 television items: 50,121 items of television programming (videotapes and film); and 10,080 cataloged television commercials.

4. Can you describe the physical characteristics of your holdings?

Date span: Holdings of American television range from 1939 to the present.

Of the total number of film reels, what percentage is black and white? color?

Of the approximately 5046 film reels the following is the case: 4784 reels (95%) are black-and-white; 262 reels (5%) are color.

Predominant video format(s): Reference copies for public use and research use are Hi-8mm videotapes; Exhibition copies for public exhibitions and screenings are D3. Museum Masters are 3/4"; D2; Betacam; and D3.

Number of uncopied 2-inch videotapes: Approximately 70.

Number of uncopied 1/2-inch, open-reel videotapes: None held.

Number of other uncopied obsolete video formats: None.

If obsolete formats have been copied, what are the new transfer formats?

D2 is the preferred format.

Are the only copies used for general reference? Museum masters are never used for general reference. Reference copies for public/research use are Hi-8mm videotape copies of Museum masters. Exhibition copies for public exhibitions and screenings are D3 videotape copies of Museum masters.

Estimated rate of growth? Approximately 3500 items of television programming per year.

Estimated expenditure for preservation copying of television and video materials in fiscal or calendar year 1995? The value of tape stock acquired in calendar year 1995—including donated tape stock—was \$482,000 (videotape and audiotape combined).

5. Can you describe the conditions of storage for preprint film and master tapes?

What percentage of the film holdings are stored in archival containers (e.g., inert plastic or acid-free cardboard)? Information not available — inventory in progress.

Temperature for film: 68-72 degrees Fahrenheit

Temperature for video: 68-72 degrees Fahrenheit

Relative humidity for film: 35-45 percent

Relative humidity for video: 35-45 percent

Air content monitoring for pollutant gases: There are no specific devices to monitor for pollutant gases. However, the Museum's on-site tape vault has its own separate temperature and humidity controls and utilizes high efficiency filters on the output of the HVAC system.

Air filtration for particulate matter: There are no specific devices for filtration for particulate matter. However, the Museum's on-site tape vault has its own separate temperature and humidity controls and utilizes high efficiency filters on the output of the HVAC system.

Automatic fire-suppressant system? The permanent off-site storage facility is constructed to withstand natural or other disaster. The Museum's on-site vaults in New York and Los Angeles are constructed to be fire and smoke resistant. Smoking is not allowed at any Museum location.

To safeguard collections, the Museum has an up-to-date alarm and fire extinguishing system that incorporates automatic communication with the New York City Fire Department.

Level of security protection (e.g., 24-hour guards): There are various Museum procedures to protect staff, visitors, the collections, and facilities. Two separate entrances, lobbies, and elevator banks help to keep visitors in public spaces and away from restricted areas. A security officer is posted at the Museum's New York location twenty-four hours a day, including holidays; another security officer is posted in the office lobby during regular business hours. The Museum's permanent off-site storage facility is protected twenty-four hours a day.

Is an effort made to store copies in separate locations?: Yes. The Museum's master videotapes and film materials are stored in a permanent off-site storage facility in upstate New York in a climate-controlled vault in with stable temperature and humidity levels.

The Museum's on-site vaults in New York and Los Angeles are for Public Use Copies (Hi-8mm) and Exhibition Copies (D3).

6. How would you describe the major preservation problems? (For example, extensive evidence of vinegar syndrome {strong odor of acetic acid, exudations on film surface or edge}, deteriorating magnetic sound tracks or videotapes, jammed videocassettes, etc.) Can you describe significant losses?

For television programming stored on film, the major concern is vinegar syndrome and the rust-potential of metal film canisters.

For television programming stored on videotape, the main concern is the aging of the Museum's Master Copies.

Any physical deterioration of a film or videotape—whether on one or many items—poses a significant loss to the intellectual content of the item in question. Many of the Museum's Master Copies are 3/4" U-Matic videotapes and are ten to twenty years old; some of the Museum's untransferred 2-inch masters are twenty-five to thirty years old. As the Master Copies age, the Museum has encountered a variety of common flaws such as head clogs, flaking, creases, color loss, video drop out, poor color signal, audio loss, sync problems, and so on.

7. What actions have been taken to correct the above conditions?

The Museum places great emphasis on the importance of stable vault conditions in order to extend the life of the Museum Master Copy. After delivery from the off-site preservation vault, all television materials are

conditioned to the operating environment of the technical dubbing area for at least twenty-four hours.

The Museum's mission is the preservation of program content, not necessarily the preservation of the program stored on its original medium (e.g., film, videotape). The long-term stability of the format and its fidelity to the technical quality of the original is important, not whether it is the original format of the item.

The long-term goal for preserving the television collection is to convert it to an absolutely stable storage medium. Digital disk technologies are being watched carefully.

The Museum constantly monitors and contributes to efforts to develop tape preservation methods and equipment. At present the longevity of digital tape formats currently in use is not known, nor is there any agreement on what format is best for taking their place. When the most appropriate format is found and agreed upon (a reasonable time period for such a technology to be fully developed and accepted is the next five to seven years), the entire collection will ideally be converted. In the meantime the Museum will continue to build and safeguard a representative collection.

Long-range preservation of television programming is a four-stage process:

- (1) creation of a Museum Master Copy videotape (D2 is the preferred format) from the original program media (film or videotape) supplied by the donor;
- (2) transfer of the Master Copy to a Public Use Copy (Hi-8mm) for public and research use and, as needed, Exhibition Copy (D3);
- (3) creation of replacement Museum Master Copies as appropriate through the re-acquisition of original program media or transfer from older Museum Master Copies; and
- (4) storage of Museum Master Copies, Public Use Copies (Hi-8mm), and Exhibition Copies (D3) under controlled environmental conditions with access to all tape copies restricted to authorized Museum personnel. Equipment and facilities reduce the chances of tapes being damaged due to frequent handling. Tapes are never handled by the public.

There is an on-going project to replace metal film cans with plastic canisters.

There is an on-going project to transfer film materials to videotape before on-set of vinegar syndrome.

There is an on-going campaign with Nick at Nite to increase awareness of the importance of television preservation, and to find "lost" television programs to add to the Museum's collection.

8. Are videotapes periodically inspected and rewound and if so with what frequency? Since 1991, more than fifty percent (50%) of the Museum's television collection has been transferred to Hi-8mm videotape. During this process, the masters were monitored for technical quality and rewound.

During the normal course of its business, the Museum transfers television programs from its videotape and film masters to subsidiary formats (such as Hi-8mm). This activity provides an opportunity to monitor the condition of these masters. Beginning in July 1994, the Museum began duplicating its entire cataloged collection to Hi-8mm videotape for installation in the Museum's Los Angeles facility which opened in March 1996. This twenty month project enabled the Museum's technical staff to survey the condition of the Museum's cataloged television holdings.

In 1991 the Museum instituted a procedure whereby collection samples are taken for examination at regular intervals in order to determine the condition of collection materials in storage. These reviews provide a means of monitoring rates of deterioration (e.g., vinegar syndrome) and determining the need for re-acquisition and re-duplication of program materials as appropriate.

(If specific inspection criteria are used, please attach a description that might be shared with other archives.)

9. To what extent are holdings cataloged or otherwise described? What standards are employed?

a. What percentage of the holdings is cataloged or described at the item level (minimal description or greater)? One hundred percent (100%) of the Museum's television holdings are captured in the MT&R Library Database as follows:

Seventy percent (70%) of the Museum's television holdings exist as minimal data records and usually include the following fields: accession number, series title; episode title, network, air date, running time, format, and name of donor (donor information is confidential and is for internal use only).

Thirty percent (30%) of the Museum's television holdings exist as fully cataloged data records and usually include the following fields: accession number; series title, episode title, network, air date, day of week, time of day,

running time, genre, names (main cast and production credits), subject headings, series run, summary of program content, and name of donor (donor information is confidential and is for internal use only).

b. **If a computerized system is used, please describe the system.**

The Museum is one of the few sources for information about particular radio and television programming. Its database of programs is one of the most comprehensive in the world.

The MT&R Library Database is designed to describe and keep track of the Museum's holdings of television programs, radio programs, and advertising (commercials aired on television and radio) . Current television holdings total approximately 60,201 television items (50,121 items of television programming and 10,080 cataloged commercials on television). These numbers include cataloged and uncataloged programs and commercials.

Visitors can retrieve data about television by searching any of the following indexed fields in the MT&R Library Database: Title; Names; Program Summary; or Subject Heading. Visitors can retrieve data about television commercials by searching any of the following indexed fields: Product or Title; Proper Names; Summary; Product Category; Advertiser; or Agency. In the future, more complex searches will be possible, including search by air date, network, and so on.

The amount of data varies. Generally, a data record for an uncataloged television program includes series title, episode title, network, air date, running time, and donor; for a television commercial, product name, running time, and donor would be a minimal data record. A data record for a fully cataloged program includes series title, episode title, network, air date, day of week, time of broadcast, running time, genre, names (main cast and production credits), subject headings, series run, and summary of program content.

Holdings are organized into four sections in the Museum's MT&R Library Database: (1) **Highlights**, 400 programs selected by Museum curators as representative of the collection and divided by genre and sub-genre; (2) **Exhibitions & Screenings**, a listing of the Museum's major exhibitions and screening series dating back to 1991; (3) **Collection**, cataloged programs which can be searched under Title, Name, Subject, and Summary headings; and (4) **Archives**, uncataloged (and undubbed) programs. Television holdings in the above **Highlights, Exhibitions & Screenings, and Collection** categories are immediately available on-site on Hi-8mm videotape for viewing. Television items in the **Archives** category can be dubbed on demand and made available for on-site viewing on Hi-8mm videotape within one to two weeks.

c. **What is the cataloging backlog?** Approximately seventy percent (70%) of the Museum's holdings of television programming are inventoried at the minimal level only and, therefore, not fully cataloged.

d. **Are production files, clipping files, and other related documentation retained?** Yes. Press releases, promotional materials, biographies, and newspaper/magazine articles about television's creative community and programming are available at the Museum through the Research Services Microfiche Collection.

10. Please describe the conditions of access and use.

a. **Are researchers from outside your institution or organization allowed to consult the materials?** Yes. An integral part of the Museum's mission is to make its collection available for the purposes of scholarly and general interest research.

The Museum of Television & Radio in New York is open Tuesdays through Sundays from noon to 6:00 p.m., Thursday evenings until 8:00 p.m., and Friday evenings until 9:00 p.m. (theaters only). The Museum of Television & Radio in Los Angeles is open Wednesdays through Sundays from noon to 5:00 p.m., and Thursday evenings until 9:00 p.m. Both locations are closed on New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

The Museum is open to scholars and the general public alike. However, the Museum is mindful of the special needs of researchers. Students, educators, writers, radio and television professionals, and others with a serious purpose who wish to undertake extensive research using the collection can participate in the Visiting Scholars Program, administered by the Education Department.

b. **Do outside researchers have to pay a fee for access or research privileges?** A voluntary contribution is requested from all Museum visitors.

Because the Museum does not own copyrights to the programming in the collection, it does not charge for admission. The suggested voluntary contribution for non-members using the Library or attending an exhibition, gallery exhibit, screening series, is as follows: \$6 for adults, \$4 for students and senior citizens, and \$3 for children under 13.

Students, educators, writers, radio and television professionals, and others with a serious purpose who wish to undertake extensive research using the collection can participate in the Visiting Scholars Program, administered by the Education Department. Researchers are given a pass—on a per diem basis or for a full year—which allows them to use the Scholars' Room to search the MT&R Library Database, search the microfiche collection of clippings, and

view and listen to programs. Access to the print collection is also offered for visiting scholars. Researchers apply to the Education department by letter. The fee is \$10 a day for students and others affiliated with educational organizations, and \$25 per day for persons affiliated with non-educational organizations. A Researcher's pass good for one year is available for a non-refundable fee of \$150.

c. Are copies available for loan, rental, sale, or reuse? Are license fees charged for reuse? The Museum does not own the copyright to the majority of programs in its collection, but through contractual agreements with donors it does have the right to make the programs available for public viewing on-site in New York and Los Angeles, and to use the programs as part of its own activities. The Museum cannot sell, merchandise, or otherwise exploit programs that are part of its collection. Copies of the videotapes cannot be lent to other institutions unless they are part of a traveling exhibition. Under its arrangements with the copyright owners, the Museum does not charge visitors for the opportunity to view programs—rather, a voluntary contribution is requested.

Loans. Because of the copyright and legal-use restrictions specified by donor contracts, the Museum's programs are available only on-site. An exception to this policy are exhibitions and festivals organized by the Museum which travel to cooperating institutions. Only in special case of a traveling exhibition does the Museum lend copies of programs in the collection—and then never the Museum Master copy but a duplicate copy.

d. Is information about the holdings accessible through the Internet?

Not yet. General information about Museum membership and the Museum's exhibitions, screenings, seminars, and other activities can be accessed via the Museum's World Wide Web address at <http://www.mtr.org>.

11. If your organization owns, broadcasts or produces television materials, have you ever donated copies to public archives, libraries, or museums? If yes, please cite the most important examples, excluding copyright deposits?

No.

a. If your organization has never donated such copies, please indicate whether you would consider making donations in the future and briefly describe what reciprocal terms you might expect.

Does not apply.