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May 19, 1996

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As chair of the Society of American Archivists' Visual Materials Cataloging and Access Roundtable (VMCAR), I am writing to support the Library of Congress' current efforts to study and plan for the preservation of American television and video materials. During the last half of this century, society's dependency on visual documentation has increased at a tremendous rate, as television and video materials are produced and used on a daily basis. Many of these valuable resources have been or are being lost as a result of inadequate preservation measures. A national preservation plan will help to insure the existence of television and video documentation that is of continuing value to society.

VMCAR includes members from state and local historical societies, corporate archives, and academic and research institutions. The roundtable's focus is on the cataloging and access of visual archival materials. The roundtable is also very much aware of the link between preservation and access. In fact, our government has recognized the vital connection between preservation and access via the establishment of the Commission on Preservation and Access. For these reasons, I strongly urge that the national plan include procedures for cataloging and making accessible television and video materials.

As VMCAR Chair, I would like to make a number of recommendations for a national preservation plan for television and video materials. Recommendation are listed as follows:

- Section 1 - RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO CATALOGING
- Section 2 - GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO CATALOGING

1.1 Cataloging standards for television and video materials:

Identify and endorse cataloging standards for television and video materials. There are a number of different standards that are used for the cataloging of television and video materials (i.e., *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, 2nd ed. [AACR2], *Archival Moving Image Materials* [AMIM], and other tools for descriptive and subject cataloging). The national preservation plan needs to identify "all" standards that are acceptable for the cataloging of television and video materials.

[Perhaps the national plan could establish a clearing house (or even a publication) that tracks all cataloging standards that are applicable to the cataloging of television and video materials. The clearing house (or other tool) could serve to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each standard, and make recommendations to individual institutions undertaking television or video preservation/cataloging projects.]

The identification and endorsement of cataloging standards are critical to resource sharing and bibliographic linking, which are both addressed below in 1.4 "Bibliographic Networks"

1.2 Revision of cataloging standards:

The national plan needs to establish an official process for maintaining and updating existing cataloging standards. AMIM, perhaps the most widely used cataloging standard for television and video archival materials, is grossly outdated. Efforts are underway to update AMIM. Once this revision takes place, a plan should exist to review and revise this standard on a regular basis, as well as any other standards that are endorsed by the television, video, as well as the broader moving image cataloging community.

1.3 Training:

Many persons involved in with television and video materials lack formal training in library and information science, and therefore have little exposure to working with standard cataloging tools or standard encoding formats, such as Machine Readable Cataloging (MARC) or Standardized Generalized Mark-up Language (SGML). The national plan should support a mechanism for training catalogers. The national plan might investigate the possibility of participating in the Library of Congress Program for Cooperative Cataloging's (PCC) Training the Trainer program.

1.4 Bibliographic networks:

Television and video materials should not be separated from other moving image visual materials (film), let alone the larger world of recorded knowledge. For this reason, I recommend that research be undertaken to investigate the impact of cataloging television and video and other moving image materials into a bibliographic network. The Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) and the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN) are two such possibilities. These networks already contain a fair amount of moving image materials, including television and video materials.

Working with an already existing network will offer tremendous benefits in terms of resource sharing (i.e., authority files) and linking bibliographically related materials (i.e., video, text, and sound recordings that document the same subject). The established networks support cataloging standards and probably cost less than developing a database from scratch. And, the use of a bibliographic network will permit creation of a national inventory of television and video materials.

1.5 Funding:

Establish a fund to support cataloging as a part of all television and video preservation projects.

2. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Storage facilities:

Establish national standards for storage facilities (temperature, humidity control, etc.).

2.2 Preservation copies:

Establish standard for creating preservation copies (similar to the guidelines that have been created for preservation microfilming).

2.3 Funding:

Allocate funding to support the overall preservation initiative for television and video materials (and as stated above in 1.5, "Funding," support the cataloging of preserved materials).

2.4 Appraisal:


Establish guidelines for the preservation of television and video materials, so that the materials can be adequately appraised before undertaking costly preservation projects.

2.5 Coordination of preservation initiatives:

Coordinate the preservation initiative of all moving image materials into one plan (i.e., television, video, film, etc.)

In closing, VMCAR's agenda is a critical component to the preservation and access of television and video materials. Therefore, on behalf of VMCAR, I support a preservation initiative that recognizes the importance of cataloging and making accessible the television and video materials that document our society.

Sincerely,



Jane Greenberg, Chair

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