



April 26, 1996

Education through
public broadcasting and
telecommunications

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To: Library of Congress - M/B/RS Division
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Re: Supplementary Comments for the Study of the
Current State of American Television and Video Preservation

From: Mary Ide, Director
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WGBH Educational Foundation

Public Television
Channel 2 Boston
Channel 44 Boston
Channel 57 Springfield

Public Radio
89.7 FM Boston

**Programming for
public broadcasting**
Children's
Cultural
Drama
How-to
Instructional
Public Affairs
Science

Telecommunications
Interactive Media
Captioning
Descriptive Video

The following three concerns are submitted for your consideration in preparation of the final report on the State of American Television and Video Preservation.

I. Graduate programs in archives management should be encouraged to develop curriculum in the field of media management and preservation.

Over the past five years, I have sought to hire archivists with training or background in the management of media materials. In addition, I have made extensive use of interns from graduate programs in archives management. Rarely, if ever, have I found archivists or graduate students who have had formal training in the field of media materials management and media preservation techniques. It is imperative that graduate programs provide a source of leadership and teaching in this specialized area. Adequate education and specialized training in the management of video materials are necessary if archivists are to successfully insure that we meet the challenge of properly identifying, appraising and preserving the records of our national television and video heritage.

2. The documentation strategy and documentation planning methods should be considered as ways of providing a framework for national and regional collaborations and interrelated planning between the public and private sectors. These methods would provide the structure for coordinating an informed and cooperative national and regional plan for the preservation of television and video materials.

Over the past 10 years or so, archivists involved with the problems of coordinating the documentation of American business, health administration, science and academic institutions have proposed several methods to deal with the vast, and rather unmanageable, problem of adequately documenting these disciplines. Two methods, documentation strategy and documentation planning, which have been developed and implemented may have relevance to our problem of documenting video and television. A documentation strategy provides an approach to planning and coordinating collecting activities on specific topics within a geographical area. To determine what records are collected, documentation planning focuses on identifying functions of a collecting organization within the broader context in which the organization exists. Used in tandem, these methods could:

- * provide a national and regional planning structure to assure coordination of a comprehensive collecting plan,
- * help avoid duplication of efforts, and
- * build coalitions to support rational and regional collecting policies and preservation efforts.

3. Recommended standards of appraisal criteria and practices for the selection and preservation of television programming and video art should be developed.

The Library of Congress is in an ideal position to encourage the development and dissemination of recommended standards of appraisal criteria for the permanent retention and preservation of video art and television programming. While recommended standards and procedures in this area are few and far between, I would suggest that the Library of Congress working with Association of Moving Image Archivists and other pertinent professional groups, compile and make available existing appraisal information in this area. Sources for this information include: the International Federation of Television Archivists (FIAT/IFTA), the British Broadcasting Corporation, the National Archives of Canada, the Australian National Film and Sound Archives and the National Center for Film and Video Preservation. Recommended standards information would be very helpful to the many archives, special collections and producing institutions that are currently collecting video and television programming in a rather random and uninformed basis.

Adequately trained professional media archivists, the availability of recommended appraisal standards, and national/regional documentation strategy or planning methods, would all contribute to building a strong network for collecting "...the most pervasive communications medium of the modern era....".

I am happy to elaborate on these ideas or to assist the Library on any of these proposals. Thank you.

Thank you.