

Tanisha Jones
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Video Restoration Lab
Instructors: Mona Jimenez with Chris Lacinak
Video Preservation Guidelines and Tips

Prioritization, Selection and Inspection

The “Video Preservation Guidelines and Tips” will document procedures for proper prioritizing, inspection, handling, documentation, recording, quality control, and other actions essential in the restoration and preservation of videotape at Elmer Holmes Bobst Library.

This section will address preparatory actions for restoring and preserving videotape: prioritization, selection, and inspection. Following are written guidelines for prioritization and selection of tapes to be preserved, and a videotape inspection form listing physical characteristics to look out for and actions to be performed during tape inspection.

Prioritization & Selection:

Video preservation projects at Bobst Library will presumably be dictated by priorities established in Special Collections in consultation with the Moving Image Preservation Specialist and the Video Preservation Lab. Procedures will be done in stages. Video materials will be evaluated based on the order of importance of the materials in conjunction with the age, and urgency of their preservation needs (i.e., tapes showing obvious signs of deterioration). This process will also determine whether a tape is in good enough condition to playback without cleaning of tape. Tapes that show signs of excess dirt, dust, and other debris will be cleaned prior to playback. Tape cleaning is a controversial issue in the archival community because many tape-cleaning machines are equipped with blades that aid in the cleaning of tapes. Additionally, the practice of baking tapes suffering from binder adhesion loss is another debatable issue in the archival community. However, baking is a practice that is moderately used by a number of institutions and labs. As a result, the Video Lab will be careful and highly selective when singling out tapes for cleaning and baking.

Next, obsolete videotape formats will be given the highest priority for restoration and preservation. Older video formats such as 3/4” U-matic, of which Bobst Special Collections has large numbers, will be given high preservation priority, as well. Videotapes designated for restoration and preservation work will be categorized to determine the appropriate action for each item. The categories are as follows:

- **In-house duplication** (videotapes that can be re-mastered in the Video Restoration Lab)

- **Outside lab duplication** (videotapes that require actions beyond the scope of the Video Restoration Lab and need to be sent to an outside lab)
- **Best copy search** (when applicable, research will be conducted to find whether less degraded source materials exist outside of Bobst's collections of the production in question)

Inspection:

The following two pages is a "Videotape Condition/Inspection Form" to be used in the Video Restoration Lab for the analysis and needs of videotape items.

VIDEOTAPE INSPECTION & CONDITION REPORT FORM – Page 1

Date of inspection: _____

Inspected by: _____

Informational Description

Title (exactly as it appears on tape container label): _____

Alternate title (if label is different on tape compared to container):

New title (if applicable): _____

Collection name: _____

Storage location: _____

Object ID: _____

Old container number (if applicable): _____

Date of recording/production: _____

Tape length: _____

Running time: _____

Physical Description

Tape format: _____

Tape stock brand: _____

Lot number: _____

VIDEOTAPE INSPECTION & CONDITION REPORT FORM – Page 2

Physical Description (cont.)

Color/Black & White: _____

Silent/Sound: _____

Tape generation: ___ Original ___ Master ___ Dupe

Tape binder: _____

Original tape container: ___ Polypropylene ___ Paper board
 ___ Shipping case ___ No casing

Condition Description

Physical damage: ___ Warping ___ Edge damage ___ Cinching
(Tape pack)
 ___ Flange pack ___ Pack slip ___ Popped strands
 ___ Loose pack ___ Bent

(Tape case) ___ Cracked ___ Warped ___ Water damage

(Tape container) ___ Cracked ___ Warped ___ Water damage

Environmental damage: ___ Dirt/dust ___ Mold/fungus
 ___ Oxide flaking ___ White/brown powder

Additional condition notes (i.e., tape is housed in plastic bag, tape is not rewound to head, tape has a pungent smell, etc.):

VIDEOTAPE INSPECTION & CONDITION REPORT FORM – Page 3

Playback (if performed)

Bars and tones Blackburst Slate
 Head clog Snow Dropout Image instability
 Squeal Ghosting Moire effect

Content description:

Recommendations (i.e., cleaning, re-housing, baking, etc.)
