

DOCUMENTATION

Documentation is one of the most vital aspects in anything related to preservation of all media. Not only is it important to document actions connected with the preservation and/or archiving process, but there are important details often written down before and then after the actual reformatting process.

While various reformatting processes will vary depending on institutional policies, what follows is an assessment of what is in place at Bobst's Preservation Department at NYU.

Note: The following information is based on video. While information for film, audio, new media & digital formats are likely to be similar, the variances of the media will also likely produce different types of documentation.

Documentation Done Before Item Comes to Preservation Dept.

- Acquire any information on the item from various databases (depending on where item came from one of three divisions: Tamiment/Wagner Archive, Fales Library or University Archives).
- Check in BobCat (Bobst Catalog) to see if item has record (unlikely)

This information can help Preservation Dept. personnel to determine why item was sent to Preservation Dept., when last played, etc. Ideally information regarding physical description about item will already have been cataloged in database when item was processed and was input into Microsoft Access database that each division created. While all information is based on IMAP template, there are differences between the three. This information should include:

- System ID Number (varies from dept. to dept.) [i.e. 508]
- Name of First Cataloger [i.e. Elizabeth Bennett]
- Date of First Entry (into database) [i.e. 4/28/2005]
- Name of Repository where item is held [i.e. Tamiment Library/Wagner Labor Archives; University Archives; Fales Library]
- Name of Collection item belongs with [i.e. Mabou Mines; RG9: Institute of Afro-American Affairs; Arthur Landis: Audio Collection]
- Collection Number [i.e. 95-013; ALBA Audio 66]
- Object ID [i.e. RG 9.8-60; ALBA A 66-001]
- Physical Location of item [i.e. Jones Room; West wall of archives between R6/R7/R8/R9; Tamiment Library/Wagner Labor Archives-ALBA Media Shelves]
- Title Information – including both Title and Alternative Title {often unknown as info comes from written information on box/container/case and is missing or unreliable}
- Series Title [i.e. Soul of Reason]
- Credit Information {often unknown as info comes from written information on box/container/case and is missing or unreliable}
 - Credit info is frequently broken into separate entries: Credit Info (Director, Producer, Host, etc.), Performer(s)/Participant(s) Credit, etc.
- Location of Production and/or Distribution [i.e. Grey Arts Gallery, NYU]
- Date of Production and/or Record Date [i.e. 1/26/1977]

Description of contents [from either written information on box/container/case or viewing – and source of info should be noted]

Physical Description of item

Format of item [i.e. VHS; ¾" Umatic; BetaSP; 2" open reel, etc.]

Condition of item [i.e. Visual inspection only. Popped strands; Kinks in first few feet]

Tape capacity [i.e. 60 min.]

Running time [i.e. 47 min.] {from either info written on box/container/case or playback and source should be noted}

Stock Brand of item [i.e. KCA60; T160SONY, etc.]

Manufacturer of item [i.e. Scotch/3M; Sony; Maxell, etc.]

Stock Batch Number [i.e. 06CB2406E]

Dimensions/Measurements of item [i.e. ½"; ¾", etc.]

Affirmation that erase tab has been removed

Container/Housing information [i.e. Cardboard box; Hard plastic container, etc.]

Action steps taken [i.e. Item re-housed into archival container; Sent to Preservation Dept., etc.]

{There will likely be other information fields in database record depending on policies of various divisions.}

Documentation Done While Item is in Preservation Dept.

It is likely that information fields will be either created or repeated during this stage, particularly concerning item's physical description and condition.

Additional Documentation during this stage:

Observations on Playback-- It should be noted whether item exhibits any of the following, frequency and where in tape they occur. This information is not only important to document for future reference, but particularly for issues concerning quality control.

Drop out

Image instability

Squeal or other sounds

Ghosting

Moire

Actions Taken:

Was the tape cleaned, re-housed, etc.

Information on what the tape is being transferred and/or reformatted to [i.e.

Source: 1 60 min ¾" Umatic Reformatted to: 2 30 min. DigiBeta]

Documentation for Slates

There is a convention to begin the program time code at 01:00:00:00. Therefore, black and bars & tones need to start before this. There is a consensus among Preservation Dept. personnel that there if the source tape does not have bars and tones, then on the destination tape there should be 5 sec. of black then 60 sec. of bars & tones then 25 sec. of black before program starts.

On slates, for both Preservation Master and Access copies, the following information should be documented:

- Number for new reel

- Duplicated from # _____
- Date [of reformatting]
- Title of production(s) {Several related items may be on final tape}
- Extent [i.e. 1 of 1; 3 of 6; 8 of 8, etc.] {If related items are not on one tape}
- Running time [of individual items, not combined]
- Collection Name
- "Restricted" {Many archives put this on the beginning of tapes for various reasons: copyright, warn viewers, etc.}

On labels, which should be color-coded for Original [red], Preservation Master [blue] and Access Copy [green], the following information should be noted:

- Item number
- Title
- Producer [if known]
- Date of production
- Running time
- Color/B&W
- Sound/Silent [Mono/Stereo should also be noted if known]
- Recording Standard [i.e. NTSC, PAL]
- Duplicated from # _____
- Record Date

As the Preservation Dept. exists within an academic library, it is probable that the Microsoft Access records will eventually be transferred to MARC records and therefore reside on BobCat. The following information should be noted in whatever database is available at the time:

- Name of person facilitating transfer
- Date of transfer
- Name of person conducting quality control
- Date of quality control
- Information on recording equipment
- Funding [i.e. Mellon Grant]
- Use restrictions {if donor or division has placed restrictions on whom can view item}
- Copyright information [i.e. Name of donor; Name of division, etc.]
- Donor information
- Running time
- Actions [i.e. Item re-housed, transferred, etc.]
- Date of actions taken