Preservation Services for Audio Visual Media Material: An Inquiry into Current and Future Models

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Introduction

All archives today face a complicated combination of needs and challenges. Broadly speaking, one set of needs comes from the type of content they collect and the other set of challenges come from the various forces at work in the environment in which archives exist.

I believe that small to mid-sized archives are especially vulnerable to these combined factors. They have survived thus far as preservation theory and science advance through a series of modifications and adjustments which often result in compromises in practice or behavior. Because there are multiple factors involved, archives may respond to one set of challenges or needs, but leave the others un-solved.

What follows is based on my observations, experience, and research in the archive and preservation community. The preservation community is comprised of traditional book, paper, and photo preservationists, as well as those dealing with objects, artifacts, and art. Then there are the preservationists dealing strictly with audiovisual (AV) media material, including, analog and digital, moving image and audio works. The preservation community as a whole, functions as an ecology, and it is made up of many organizations each influencing each other, some directly, some indirectly. Though these organizations all claim a similar obligation and concern in regards to the material they collect, conflicts can arise as to how the material is valued or cared for. These conflicts can occur between institutions or organizations, or within a single institution, from department to department, or worse within a single department.

To a certain extent, these conflicts are natural as preservation science and theory evolve and grow. But these conflicts are complicated further by the changing nature or value of content, by a confusing mix and lack of archival services, and by the fact that archives are increasingly under-funded, and under-staffed. Also with newer modes and methods of distribution brought about by digital potential and the Internet, there is a convergence and consolidation of the traditional positions of content providers and content caretakers.

Add to this the multiple other duties that an archivist may be responsible for including: maintaining intellectual and physical control and insuring the integrity of bibliographic representations of the collection, providing various types of research support and access and educational outreach, performing acquisitions and collection development, confirming intellectual property rights, and the ubiquitous fundraising. More often than not, preservation gets collapsed into the ideal separation of duties and responsibilities which most archivists have to begin with.

It soon becomes obvious that the biggest loser in this equation is the content. Next in line for neglect and abuse are the archivists and preservationists of small to midsized, under-staffed and under-funded collections. These archivists and preservationists may have vital collections but lack the knowledge or training to address either immediate or long-term issues surrounding the needs and administration of the collection. Or they may have the knowledge and training but because they are the sole caretaker of a collection they are unable to effect change because they simply don't have time or resources to do so. This is not to say that there are not wonderful success stories out there. Some preservationists have been able to make the most out of lean circumstances, and information for self-education,

though not entirely codified, is permeating deeper with listservs and conferences devoted to special aspects of preservation.

With this growing awareness of the needs and forces affecting archival collections, emerging archivists and preservationists are becoming more activated and taking on new responsibilities as well as taking up roles where in the past none existed. As production and distribution markets consolidate, and converge with advances in technology it will become increasingly part of the archivist's job to determine value in AV material. As we will see, this is difficult for the emerging archivist because traditionally archivists consider their position to be neutral when assigning monetary value to collections and the individual items within. (But if they assign other types of value up to a monetary one, wouldn't they be very well positioned to assign a monetary one if they had to?)

One cannot change systemic problems overnight, so an activated emerging archivist is doing what they can where they can to better educate, or position themselves and their collections. But this is a battle that many are still waging largely by themselves, and this still seems to leave the archivist and preservationist in too much of a reactive mode. Even with the benefit of professional organizations and associations, a lot of practice and many services remain un-codified, un-standardized, un-consolidated, and diffused.

With all of this in mind, and in keeping with archival practices of relationships, I will try to approach these issues in such a way as to show their connections and linkages, as I see them occurring both externally and internally to the archive.

Within the landscape of content producing entities and content preserving entities, there is also the individual preservationist. *Just as the content is valued in this landscape, variously from different positions, so is the emerging AV preservationist.* I will attempt to locate and define the preservationist (or archivist) and content (and their respective values) within an overall superstructure of the preservation community (which itself exists within the larger communities of cultural production and knowledge management).

Furthermore, I will review the current state of preservation services specifically geared to the needs of AV media material. While I define and describe those needs I will also explain pertinent factors that challenge and complicate those preservation or archival needs of AV media material. As I see them, these factors and challenges come from both within the preservation community as well as from outside it. My argument or hypothesis is that there are no current existing (standardized, institutionalized, consolidated) services for moving image and audio works such as there are for traditional paper based material, photography, or art and historical objects. Why is that? Is the need for such a service recognized and agreed on in the preservation community? If the need is recognized and agreed, why hasn't one been created? What are the difficulties in doing so? Are there existing conditions that make it impossible to do so? Are there different ways or previously untested models to provide this service?

These questions lead to the next point of the thesis where I advance the proposition of an entity, organization or collective agency that would offer consulting services and project management to collections holding AV media material. This entity would aim to accomplish three things:

- isolate AV material (from non-AV material) and address the unique archival needs of AV media material

- systematize and standardize preservation services, including assessment and survey tools for AV media materials

- integrate services, across and throughout archives holding AV media material, increase efficiency and maximize coverage for providing these services by consolidating preservationists as consultants and creating an ongoing and scalable network or agency of these consultants

As a result of its functioning it is hoped that this collective agency would achieve these by-products and results:

By focused work and attention to only AV media material the entity or collective agency would help to ameliorate the situation of many archives by acting as a project manager for tackling collections or parts of collections, assessing them, drawing up preservation plans, helping to carry them out, and advise on how to best pursue options for using the newly preserved material to generate revenue. Most archives are already acting in some knowledge, financial or operational resource deficit. Many can barely complete their current functional duties and obligations, and, in-house they can hardly take on the preservation process (which we will see is a *production* process, it produces more stuff) as it is currently structured because of the extra responsibilities it adds to an archive's original workflow. To have an outside entity, tailor and manage the preservation process to archive's needs would disburden the archivist of full time preservation and/or full time project management and/or full time fundraising.

By its performance and accomplishments the collective agency would further strengthen existing ties in the community. This entity would not only be an interface between sectors, but would bridge generations between emerging and established preservationists.

Through the process of creating and performing preservation projects valuable and needed training instances would be provided, and allow for another place where experiential and professional memories can be passed down to a new generation of preservationists.

The final part of the thesis will briefly address what would be involved in creating such an entity, and outline some considerations that must be noted before embarking on such a prospect.

Chapter 1   Factors and challenges facing AV content and AV preservationists

1.0   Relational Arrangements Inside and Outside of the Archive

One can view the relation of content, the archivist, and the archive as a dynamic, not static, relationship of meaning and value when it comes to the archive's function, administration, budgeting, workflow, time management, etc. Similarly one can see the relationship of meaning and value structured into an archive's intellectual representation and physical organization of its material. Archival theory holds that papers and mixed media collections are to be organized according to rules of arrangement which aim to render physical and intellectual control over the material. At the same time, this organization should best lay open for discovery, the relationships as they exist in the historic and intellectual provenance of the collection, how the collection was created, or came to be. In standard archival practice, collections are categorized by series and the series arrangement is constructed depending on the nature of the collection, whether it is an individual's manuscript collection, or whether it is the records grouping created through the daily functioning of an office or department within an organization.

This comparison is made to suggest that the issues affecting the triangulation of content, archivist/preservationist, and organization are vital to how we think about the roles of these three players in the big picture of preservation administration.

When one considers how and why collections are processed and represented as they are, the archival rules for series arrangement of content are themselves not entirely air-tight. That is because not all collections are the same, and not all organizations have the same user communities or missions, and just as no two catalogers will catalog a book in the exact same way, archivists and preservationists may differ slightly in their methods depending on their previous experience, their knowledge of archival practice, and their understanding of how a collection serves a user community, or how a collection is valued by the organization which holds it.

If this seems complicated—it is, because archives are by their nature dynamic and open for various interpretations, not only on the practical level of physical and intellectual arrangement, but on the greater macro level of how they are perceived and how they function in the world of cultural production, circulation, and management. The value of archival material is put into further flux, as technologies converge, while market forces and strategies consolidate capital.

In this chapter I will discuss a bundle of factors or concerns that I believe affect AV media material differently than non-AV material. As a result, these factors create a set of overall preservation needs that are unique to AV material and require a different set of solutions than have traditionally existed for non-AV material. It remains to be determined if complete solutions currently exist for these needs because the solution would have to address both micro and macro issues, what I define as First and Second Order Needs below.

Likewise, I feel that just as AV media material has a bundle of special (First and Second Order) needs that must be addressed and acknowledged in the overall preservation community, I believe that the AV preservationist herself has a set of needs separate and unique from other preservationists of non-AV material. It would not be wrong to say that the needs of the AV preservationist exist as a result of the First and Second order needs that are unique to AV material.

After identifying and discussing these two levels of needs, I will put forth a solution intended to satisfy both sets simultaneously.

We will start with specific needs and move from there to general factors.

1.1 A bundle of concerns

There are four general factors, issues, or concerns currently facing AV media material. Any one of them by themselves is complicating enough. But because they all four exert an influence on the material at the same time, the stress they effect is strengthened and make it that much more difficult to treat and handle this material.

The four issues or concerns are

- The unique preservation needs of AV media material

- The preservation process as a production process

- The rapidly increasing volume of AV media material

- The problematic and unsettled issue of the value of AV media material

1.2 Definition of Preservation Needs

All formats have unique needs or characteristics related to their physical components. They also have a common set of needs regardless of their physical characteristics.

To help us to talk about these varying and sometimes conflicting needs as they exist in a collection, it may help to divide the needs into two categories of First Order Needs, and Second Order Needs.

First Order Needs are dependent on the medium.
From an understanding of the fundamental needs and properties in the first order (differences of composition) we can then build a risk, or needs, or preservation assessment. First Order Needs for AV material are detailed below.

Second Order Needs encompass all other decisions related to how content is handled, or perceived as cultural, historical, or institutional currency. These second order needs are best reflected in how content is treated within an institution, how it is budgeted for processing or preservation, what funding opportunities are pursued to accomplish this? What is the inter-institutional relation the content in question holds, is it completely rare, do other organizations have exact or similar material? And furthermore, how is the collection advertised for exhibition, or how it is utilized to generate revenue? How is a collection, and the content within it best kept alive, aside from physical material considerations, through all the stages of its life cycle?

To best represent the collections, questions from both orders should be asked when making surveys or assessments. But since we are looking to determine the existence and quality of AV media material assessments it is necessary to further divide the particulars of the First Order needs.

1.2.1 First Order Needs: General Preservation Objectives

From the start, regardless of medium, preservation objectives must take into account

- issues of the composition of the physical carrier (photos, books, posters, paintings, sculpture, floppy disks, film, video, audio tape, dvds, compact discs, etc.)

- issues of intellectual arrangement (examples include shelf-lists, inventories, databases, catalogs, etc)

- issues of physical arrangement (examples include item level housing and collection level storage)

- issues of reformatting for access, which in turn are effected by issues of original composition (examples include digitization of books and photos; transferring film to video or dvd; or film or video to digital files)

- issues of intellectual representation or documentation of the reformatted manifestation and the steps of process in the reformatting (examples of this include metadata, preservation reports, etc)

1.2.2 First Order Needs Unique to AV media material

All the issues listed above are concerns for preservation specialists as they look at assessing book, print, photography, art or heritage objects, or AV content. About the only common denominator for an effective conservation action across all media is storage temperature: cool and dry goes well for almost all objects.

However, as moving image and audio archivists and preservationists we understand the problems in film, video, audio tapes, and digital media as they are directly related to and the result of two main factors.

- the item's physical composition

- all AV media material is machine dependent

Physical Composition

True, all items, non-AV as well as AV material have unique decay and restoration issues related to their physical composition, whether it is organic, synthetic or a mix of the two. Chemical or mineral properties are important to know for any conservationist and preservationist, and no one can be expected to know all properties and behaviors across all types of objects and carrier mediums.

The problem is that, historically, AV media material has been treated either as a throw-away object, or has, wrongly, been assumed to be everlasting and unchanging because of the complicated technological (mix of organic and synthetic) processes used to create them. Also, because the photomechanical and video processes are so young, AV media material and photography to a lesser extent, have taken a back seat to the conservation and preservation of ancient objects and heritage items, and are

now playing catch up. The irony here is that many of these early objects have endured twice or three times their lifetimes and this is partly due to their less complicated production processes. Unfortunately, the complex of technologies actually makes some of these AV objects even more unstable, and more of a preservation challenge.

Machine Dependency

However, where AV media material is completely unique and separate from non-AV material is that the information contained in AV media material is not immediately self-evident. AV media material does not disclose its contents as does non-AV material. Because AV media material is dependent on playback machines, this material is complicated one step further then the non-AV material which does not need a translator to relay information held internally. When one adds the batch of preservation issues that are unique to and dependent on the original capture equipment and recording situation, the preservation points to consider are expanded and complicated. Knowledge of the capture process and the recording and playback material is almost as important as is knowledge of composition and decay rates of the physical carrier, be it polyester, acetate, or nitrate.

One cannot prescribe the same strategies for the maladies that afflict these materials as one can for non-AV material. Each type of material, each format has its own risks associated with it.

The preservationist will therefore need to be explicit in pointing to the medium specific issues and risks which affect the preservation decisions she must make when locating and defining Second Order needs for AV media material, and any tools created to assess this material.

1.3   Preservation as a *Production* Process

Traditionally preservation of AV material has been viewed or grappled with as a secondary activity in comparison to the processes of acquisition (for a cultural repository of any kind), or production (from Hollywood studios, to independent producers) that usually take precedence in the cultural marketplace. Preservation is not perceived as important as production or acquisition. Preservation does not have the same symbolic or cultural cachet as do the other two processes, and yet preservation is increasingly becoming more and more important as the first two processes do not abate.

However, the preservation process is not simply a postscript or addendum to a finished work. Preservation is not a mere subsequent procedure. It needs to be stressed that preservation of AV media material is an entirely new production process in and of itself and this must be recognized as such, by all collection managers and preservation administrators.

It therefore should be understood and accepted that all AV media material preservation projects will be

- costly

- time consuming

- resource consuming

The preservation process will not necessarily be equal to the original production process but could be a similar type of project size and complexity. Do collecting institutions fully understand this? Can they integrate this time consuming process into their current workflows, or will it create dissonance with existing procedures and policies? These are questions, what I am defining as Second Order Needs, that any organization, regardless of size, need to address and thoroughly come to terms with before embarking in earnest on preservation projects.

The preservation "production" process is time-consuming, and resource-consuming because it will include, but is not limited to,

- multiple timelines and schedules:

- overall institutional timelines of the organization carrying out the preservation

- external institution (funders or partners) and vendor timelines, grant timelines,

- windows or timelines for publicity,

The timeline of degradation of the materials themselves also plays a role and affects the above schedules.

The preservation process also produces:

- multiple components

- physical items:
  original production elements, or best surviving elements of the title in question, and
  preservation generated elements/iterations

- intellectual items:
  paper records from the original production process
  interim inventories or databases to manage

One can see that the amount of original AV items and their ancillary support materials can be multiplied by the preservation process which generates a wealth of important materials itself that should be also kept for the future as records of this new stage of production.

Unfortunately many organizations, even with the best intentions, do not fully know, or are not familiar enough with the process to comprehend the complete ramifications of this until they are well into projects. This inability to properly understand the proportions, boundaries and nature of a preservation project can be remedied through better education and communication. To a certain extent this education and communication is already happening, and great strides are being made not only for the community as a whole, but for collections just starting on the path of preservation who have decided to integrate this practice into their workflow, either out of necessity or out of raised consciousness.

1.4   Volume

Even without the additional materials generated through the preservation process, AV archivists and preservationists are faced with a growing amount of newly produced AV media content. This is obvious and not a striking observation, but it has ramifications on both the large and small scales for preservation specialists and administrators. Types of preservation projects financed will be affected by larger, subtle and not so subtle trends of AV media content development and distribution.

AV media material exists in a landscape, or ecology, produced by, and/or held by various sectors. AV media material has a life cycle that can contain either extraordinary or limited exposure, premature deaths, and long delayed revivals. In a basic circuit of production the material is produced for a reason, it exists to be exposed, disseminated and discovered (usually for its economic capital, if not sometimes still for its intellectual capital) and various sectors are more or less equipped to do this.

AV content is only growing. Management and care of legacy material as well as newly produced work won't slow. The demand for this original material will also grow as new methods of delivery evolve such as portable storage and playback devices, wireless and streaming technology. On top of all other concerns we have for historical AV content, new technology and human nature are important drivers which affect the quantity of material produced and which we, as preservationists, need to be aware of. These drivers could very well shape or dictate not only the type of work we may be asked to preserve, but also dictate the formats and technologies that we will have to contend with, whether they are technically compliant preservation standards or not.

The multiple, sites, venues, locations and platforms for presentation of content are also growing. One can find AV content on traditional home televisions, computers, or on cell phones and PDAs (wired or wirelessly) streamed or downloaded from the internet. One finds AV media material as art and advertising in public spaces.[1] The question becomes how to navigate through the variety of formats and types of AV media material. Each sector has until now taken care of its own, but as types, formats

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[1] A sampling of other outlets for and new uses of AV content can be found simply by opening the pages of the NY Times: *The New Security: Cameras That Never Forget Your Face* Noah Shachtman. New York Times. (Late Edition (East Coast). New York, N.Y.: Jan 25, 2006. pg. G.6; *Keeping an Eye on Things, by Cellphone*. David Pogue. New York Times. (Late Edition (East Coast)). New York, N.Y.: Feb 27, 2003. pg. G.1: *Online Auteurs Hardly Need To Be Famous*. Richard Siklos, March 13, 2006, Section C; Column 2; Business/Financial Desk; MEDIA; Pg. 1.

and distribution of AV content become more and more fluid, we as AV preservationists will have to expand our thinking about not only what is preservation worthy, but what is a fair sampling or representation of an AV phenomenon, in an expanding scope of AV phenomena. By phenomenon I mean new uses and types of AV content, new distribution methods. With a greater amount of content, comes also the amplified sense of disposability which in turn has an affect on our definitions of preservation.

Archivists and preservationists must understand that content is out there to be discovered (this means different things to different interests in different sectors). We as preservationists must thoroughly acquaint ourselves with the issues and drivers at work which will influence how AV content is to be used and preserved so that we may be able to contribute to the discussion, or in the most drastic cases, insure that the discussion even takes place.

1.5   Value

The polyvalence of value in AV media content

The increased technological "ease" with which one can self-generate and disseminate or syndicate content goes to the heart of the issue of quantity versus quality that a preservationist must contend with.

The use and exchange value of content is affected by the overall means of production, distribution and storage. Audiovisual content, though it's original evidential value establishes itself in relation to others of its kind (or others not of its kind), is increasingly regulated by market terms just like any other commodity. The important fact to realize and remember is that AV content is unique in its adaptable or malleable ability to represent or explain or describe. It is a free radical in this sense; it can provide multiple values to be exercised in innumerable ways simply by its positioning in relation to other items (either within an archive, or within a final work). The use value, and by extension its exchange value increases in a media hungry world, one in which content is disposable, and the idea of any permanence or persistence of an image is questioned philosophically as well as literally.

The future hope of archival or historic, and unique, newly generated AV media material is that it can withstand and surpass dominating market forces. As archivists we hope that the power of these materials will extend further investigation, creation, and research as opposed to being subsumed and controlled by destructive commodification and political forces.

Considering moving image and audio content simply as a commodity might seem to some incongruent with goals and beliefs of preservation as it has been traditionally defined. But this limited notion of only the "social good" of AV content (historical or not) will ultimately do a disservice to the content itself and to the health and integrity of the preservation ecology we are examining. AV content is out there to be discovered, how it will be discovered, under what terms, who will get to see or use it, are questions that the preservationist should be asking.

There are several sources and needs present in the preservation of moving image and audio material, and these can be said to create a circuit of supplies and demands. The need for preservationists to be actively involved in the discovery and administration of heretofore unknown or lesser known work is an important part of their charge.

Indeed, AV archivists and preservationists, when adequately educated and positioned, can act as governors or gate keepers in this flow or circulation of content. As the creation, and dissemination—or the destruction and quashing—of work, are all political acts, the preservationist should take part in this cycle knowing full well the gravity of her placement as part of a larger circuit.

Generally speaking as more content becomes available there is more competition for attention in the cultural, research, creative and financial marketplaces. As a preservationist we must be able to determine the values of AV media content in relation to the slurry of other competing media, currently existing and yet to be developed.

Attempts at Defining Value

Sam Kula has written on the difficulty of placing a value on archival moving image works either as historic or heritage documents or as commercial products. In his 2002 book, *Appraising Moving Images: Assessing the Archival and Monetary Value of Film and Video Records*, he enumerates multiple situations where AV media material can have varying, and even undeterminable values, depending on what it is, and in what context it is placed. In Chapter 6 (Monetary Appraisal) of his book, he says that the assessing of monetary value of AV material is an "onerous responsibility that has been thrust on archivists in recent years"[2]. It may be onerous, but the consideration of the value of AV material will become increasingly part of the archivist's job as production and distribution markets consolidate, and converge with advances in technology. The archivist can not allow only outside forces to dictate value of archival and related AV media material. It is incumbent upon the archivist to perform an active part in the discussion of value. The responsibility is even more so when there are no codified rules for appraising monetary worth, but only some vague and somewhat relative trends in place.

…It has proved to be extremely difficult to establish fair market value under any broad definition of the term. In the absence of actual transactions at auction, for example, such monetary assessment can only be rough estimates based on the value placed on comparable documentation in other media.[3]

Kula begins to define value with the traditional idea of "fair market value" which is applicable and understood in most product markets as attached to prices of raw material used to manufacture an item. Instead, Kula points out, fair market value for film, has been historically defined (though not very well) by courts.

There is a widely accepted definition of fair market value based on a number of legal rulings that was, perhaps, most clearly stated by Mr. Justice Cattanach in 1973:
I do not think it necessary to attempt an exact definition of the expression as used in the statute other than to say that words must be construed in accordance with the common understanding of them. That common understanding I take to mean the highest price an asset might reasonably be expected to bring if sold by the owner in the normal method applicable to the asset in question in the ordinary course of business in a market not exposed to any undue stresses and composed of willing buyers and sellers dealing at arm's length and under no compulsion to buy or sell. I would add that the foregoing understanding as I have expressed it in a general way includes what I conceive to be the essential element; that is an

[2] *Appraising Moving Images: Assessing the Archival and Monetary Value of Film and Video Records*, Sam Kula, (Landam: Scarecrow Press), 2002. p.94

[3] Ibid, p. 94

open and unrestricted market in which the price is hammered out between willing and informed buyers and sellers on the anvil of supply and demand.[4]

I cite this quote for several reasons. Firstly Kula reads Cattanach's ruling and the definition of fair market value as most "clearly" stated, when the ruling at the beginning of the quote is not worded very clearly at all. Even the self-referential description collapses meaning and seems to dodge any clarity: "I do not think it necessary to attempt an exact definition...." But in the end the Justice is quite clear in how he believes worth and value are determined, the free market will do so. And the description of the 1973 free market is quite tame, fairy tale even, by today's standards. "...sold by the owner in the normal method applicable to the asset in question in the ordinary course of business in a market not exposed to any undue stresses and composed of willing buyers and sellers dealing at arm's length and under no compulsion to buy or sell." First of all what is a "normal method" or the "ordinary course of business (not exposed to any undue stresses)" for selling AV media material now in the digital world? Could it be an over advertised DVD purchased at Tower Records, or a bootleg version bought on Canal Street, or the subway, or that same film purchased on demand via cable or downloaded over the internet? In fact digital files, the internet and the post dot com bubble burst frenzy for digital content has blown most of Mr. Cattanach's definition out of the water. Except for the part about the "price being hammered out between willing and informed buyers and sellers on the anvil of supply and demand". Prices are being hammered out for mp3 downloads from the iTunes store, or self-generated content from MySpace, YouTube, Clesh, or GoogleVideo, but in a digital social network not entirely ruled by the traditional market controls. Taking it a step further, are Mr. Cattanach's "willing and informed buyers and sellers" today the phone, cable and internet service provider companies of the Telecom industry? I belabor this point not only to emphasize the complexity, but the gravity of the situation of pricing and market value for AV media material. These are dilemmas that archivists will have to face, and hopefully help to solve.

But, Kula goes on to add some useful complimentary values to be considered:

In the absence of *willing buyers and sellers*, appraisers of moving images have been forced to adopt other criteria such as *research value*, the potential uses scholars will make of the material in years to come; *historical value*, the role the material can play in helping write the history of the family, community, or society that the material documents; and *cultural value*, a value that embodies all the others and implies as well that every work reflects the civilization that produced it and, in that way, has value.[5]

He admits that these are largely subjective and can not always be proven empirically but rather in relation to other existing or non-existing evidence. Next he goes into the idea of iterations to demonstrate that this can complicate the appraisal even further. He poses the ramifications of the multiple (for example, an animation cel, or, the fourth generation prints of completely lost original masters) against notions of minimum values, replacement values, and production costs, all of which prove somewhat unsatisfactory when faced with creative works which may be fragments, orphans, or use historical or vintage processing methods, or which consciously choose to exist outside normal production and consumption circuits.

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[4] Ibid, p. 94

[5] Ibid, p. 95

1.6 Unique Needs for The AV Archivist/Preservationist

As we've discussed, the perceived worth of AV content is still debatable in various sectors. Or if it is agreed on as having worth, the means are not always at hand to properly fund or administrate the preservation services. Similarly, the perceived worth of the AV preservationist also varies from organization to organization. Even within an organization from department to department, or within a single department, that value can be treated differently.

In direct relation to the rapidly growing volume of AV media material, there is an increased need of AV preservation specialists to handle that material. But there is a less obvious need following from, or in the shadows of, this increased need for specialists, and that is the need for increased experience by this growing body of preservation specialists who are coming into their own careers to match the growing volume of AV content.

Now, this would seem, at first glance, to be a perfect match. There are a limited amount of existing preservation specialists who have worked to establish the field, and as they are retiring, production and discovery of content is not slowing. An influx of new emerging preservation specialists, one would think, would be able to match the volume and the presumed growing amount of available jobs.

On the institutional level, this valuation of preservationists could be measured by the amount of full-time jobs offered by organizations with large amounts of AV material. A survey of small to large organizations noting who employs full time AV preservationists, versus who contracts preservationists for grant funded projects would be very revealing. It would not be surprising to find that larger, more well funded institutions, even those who preach the preservation gospel, don't have full AV preservation plans or staff in place.

But an increased preservation consciousness overall does not necessarily and immediately translate or trickle down into a concrete valuation of 1) the content that is held by a repository, and 2) the archivist, or preservationist herself.

The need for us to understand our place in the marketplace

The AV landscape, the general preservation landscape, and within that the AV preservation landscape all lie within the larger regime of knowledge and cultural production and management. As archivists and preservationists, we must, see ourselves, and identify and define ourselves as knowledge managers, and information brokers with a stake in how content is managed, represented and distributed, because all content has a use and exchange value as it is interpenetrates these overarching sectors.

Transparency, or a willingness to share information pertinent to or about the community, within the community is also a challenge facing the emerging preservationist. In an attempt to find consultancy rates for AV preservationists, a brief search was conducted through the Association of Moving Image Archivists listserv. Going back several years into the mid to late 1990s no direct information could be found. There were requests for this information posted but no responses posted online to the list. This is telling about a community that prides itself not only as being part of an open organization, but also one that supposedly believes in the free circulation of information. I had to travel to the Society of American Archivists

list to find an adequate figure that places an actual dollar amount on the value of the preservationist's intellectual labor.

Interestingly enough, and refreshingly, there was an open discussion of how a dollar amount for services reflects one's general value of that service. Here are some examples:

Date: Tue, 1 May 2001 08:39:08 -0400
Reply-To: <[log in to unmask]>
Sender: Archives & Archivists <[log in to unmask]>
From: <[log in to unmask]>
Subject: Re: Consultant Fee
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=us-ascii

>I think that you should expect to pay a consultant between $250 and
>$500 per day plus expenses (transportation, meals, and housing if an
>overnight stay is required) depending in part upon the complexity of
what you expect...
I'm curious about this. Many of you will pay an attorney this much for
an hour or two of work. While there are a million attorneys out there.
Qualified consultants in the fields of archives and special collections
are indeed rare. Why are their services so undervalued? Could it be
that some type of anachronistic economics are at work? Indeed, this is
what skilled and sophisticated consultants charged ten or twenty years
ago. In my specialties of appraisal, preservation, and security
consultants routinely charge $ 500.00-$ 1000.00 per day.
Any comments?

And:

Date: Wed, 29 Sep 1999 12:08:19 -0400
Reply-To: Archives & Archivists <[log in to unmask]>
Sender: Archives & Archivists <[log in to unmask]>
From: <[log in to unmask]>
Subject: Consultant Fee

Probably better than checking with NHPRC would be to check with your state
Historical Records Advisory Board. They would probably be able to give you some
idea of the range that is charged in your state.

Archival consulting is no different than any other self-employed work in this
regard. It depends on where you are and who your anticipated clientele is and
what the traffic will bear. A local restaurant in northern Maine would not
check New York City restaurant prices in order to decide how much to charge;
neither should an archivist who wants to consult with local historical societies
in Maine check NYC or Washington DC prices for a realistic daily fee.

And:

A good way to determine hourly/daily consulting fees for archivists might
be to ask NHPRC what rate they are willing to support. It has been
considerably higher than $35.00 per hour.

I fear that consulting archivists may be underestimating the value of
their services. It might be useful to compare what one might charge to
fees charged by others in one or more categories; e.g., management
consulting, records management consulting. In the records management
consulting I and some associates do, the charge is $100 per hour plus
expenses. The main point is that this is still modest compared to fees in
other, nearby disciplines.

As these brief samples show, it is important for emerging preservationists to
understand that we have a role to play in the market place. There is also a need for
this discussion to take place more openly, and more often. We will be faced with
systemic changes and new circumstances which will call for new approaches and
practices. In order to meet these challenges we will have to creatively invent and
implement new models. Part of what we will have to invent for some organization
will be positions and salaries that have not before existed.

As change in the preservation world increases, not only in theory but in practical
technical and bibliographic applications, we will also benefit from establishing robust
and rewarding circuits of continuing education for ourselves. These may resemble
traditional or old fashioned methods (such as conferences, workshops, and training
sessions), but will also hopefully prove to be more activated, politicized, and engaged
in change on the ground in regional or local collections, in real world situations.

An activated emerging preservationist will also be a transmitter or conducer for
education within the organization she works. The aim will be to affect policy by
praxis. This will be a challenge for us as we will be working in various institutions
that have policies already in place, and that may treat or value AV material in a
variety of ways. With our expanded conception of the potential and value of AV
material, as well as our knowledge of its unique characteristics, we hope to be able to
enter into nontraditional archives holding AV content, and be able to assess and
educate for the sake of the material while best considering its contexts. We must be
ready to define, translate, explore, negotiate and defend preservation policies across
sectors, between two or more institutions (say between a vendor and the home
repository, or between a standards, or professional organization and the home
repository), and also within an organization (say between departments, or even
between individuals of the home repository).

Chapter 2   Needs Dictate Services: Prevalence and Quality of AV media preservation services, and a discussion of surveys and assessments

2.0   Introduction

In this Chapter I will look into current services, and tools geared specifically towards preservation of AV media material.

I will consider existing organizations in the US which provide some type of preservation service, or which are associated with direct conservation or with the creation of preservation policy. I am looking to see how prominent AV care services are in relation to the existing care services for print, art and photography, or non-AV material. From a greater or lesser amount of AV preservation services, we may be able to extrapolate a matching level of preservation consciousness for AV media material in general within the overall preservation community. Though this is not a formal survey, a further quantified survey could be made with more time and resources to fully illustrate and exercise the hypothesis. This is a sampling of the most relevant and related services existing and does not propose to be complete by any means.

There is a more consistent history of preservation services matching with the needs of non-AV material, and although preservation services for AV material are still evolving, they have the benefit of referring to the roads traveled, and the standards already in place for non-AV material. AV preservationists would also benefit from understanding the difficulties in coalescing services and the dangers of "service creep" which involves a commodification of the services themselves. In this case, services eclipse their original purpose, and create an ever increasing reliance on accessory products more and more removed from the original need.

Standardization of practices is an important objective, but one that does not necessarily come easily or in a timely manner. This has been true with the development of basic and value added services in the non-AV world, and this is proving to be true thus far for AV material.

At the very core, differences in preservation services between AV and non-AV material are rooted in the differences of physical composition, storage, retrieval, and duplication processes between the two general types of material. In this way we can say, in general, that services are defined by the basic needs we identified as First and Second Order Needs in Chapter 1.

Services can be more precisely categorized and as we do so, it is important to keep in mind that terminology defining these services can vary between organizations, and across sectors. Organizations holding similar physical material (either AV or non-AV) may treat it differently than other organizations holding the same material. Depending on the internal needs of the organization one organization may "service" their material differently than another. Or, as is often the case, preservation needs of AV material are not understood, and they are considered in the same preservation category as non-AV material. When it comes to the realm of AV material and their very specific set of physical needs, preservationists should be careful that AV material is still treated differently and not lumped together with non-AV material.

2.1   Terminologies and Methodologies

Across the sectors and in each organization one may find slight differences in the definitions of their assessments of material and collections. The main terms found to be used are *survey*, *assessment*, or generally *consultation*. Used in general these terms are vague and should be more clearly defined so their scope, meaning and purpose can be understood as it relates specifically to a content type, its format, a collection and the various needs accompanying these.

In general libraries and museums have a long history of using surveys to evaluate various aspects of their collections. For these sectors, the survey is geared towards handling large numbers and pulling particulars out of a large quantity of information. The goals of such surveys are usually quantitative, so that administration can balance budgets with the needs of a collection. This could mean buying more books, more serial subscriptions, or it could mean de-accessioning them. It also means tailoring the profile of the collection to the needs of its user community.

In general we can start with some basic differentiations in our terms:

Surveys
Traditionally (as they are used in library management and to a certain extent conservation sciences) a survey is created to prove or disprove a an existing belief or supposition about something, in most cases, a collection. Surveys have a wider history in the library community dealing also with employee performance, volumetrics for overall circulation, and to create a profile of a collection for development or acquisition purposes. As they are related to preservation or conservation they can be built to measure a recorded amount of a quality or quantity and from there extrapolate an overall estimate of the collection.
A survey for AV media material might profile a collection by format or by format type, or by media, or by year to determine, for instance, items most at risk for deterioration.

Assessments
One basic difference between surveys and assessments is that surveys are usually built to gauge a particular characteristic, or group of them, for a predictive purpose. An assessment can start without a purpose and exist as a basic tally or evaluation of a collection. In this respect, an assessment may help to produce first stage intellectual control, such as inventories, databases, or catalogs where before there were none. This can be helpful for organizations who do not know how to best order or record, or show relationships between, what they have. And more archives than one would think have unprocessed or un-assessed material, which may be tangibly present but have no physical or intellectual control.

Both surveys and assessments for AV media material can inspect and measure a variety of conditions. These conditions can be grouped into two categories:

The physical micro condition of the item:

- Condition of immediate housing or enclosures (video cases, film cans, boxes, etc)

- Condition of elements (wind, open/closed reel/core, evidence of deterioration: smells, fungus, red shift, warping, etc)

And the physical macro conditions of storage

- Shelving units within storage facility

- Location of storage facility

- Temperature and environmental factors of storage facility (light, heat, humidity, pest control)

- Disaster risk factors and recovery plans

Given our definitions of surveys and assessments, and given the AV unique metrics we've listed above, we can see that an assessment or survey is variable or modular, and can be modified, or customized to suit an organization's needs. One might survey to determine a total amount of formats, and years, or one might need an initial assessment which creates a listing of titles including any versions or format differences which may exist. One might also perform a condition assessment which would gather information on the physical state of the material, its housing and location and environmental risks. Rationales and motives for conducting these assessments and surveys will vary with an organization's knowledge, purpose, resources and needs. Generally however, a survey or assessment should be properly constructed to collect information in a structured and efficient manner. Multiple surveys may be time and resource extensive, and certain item details can be captured in the same pass, whereas other, or too many, details may require a second or third pass out of practicality and necessity.

There are different attitudes behind surveys and assessments but most are made to be able to understand a collection over time, and thereby be able to predict any needed adjustments or changes to storage procedures which could increase an item's health and longevity.

2.2   Review of Services from the Library and Museum Sectors

Most organizations that provide or purport to provide conservation and preservation services have grown out of models developed by the library sector. These models are the result of historic and circumstantial needs surrounding bibliographic and technical services functions. The need for cataloging, duplication processes, and records sharing across regions spurred the creation of regional service providers and

support organizations in the mid 1970s, though some of these organizations go back further. For the purpose of this study I will call these multi-service providers as opposed to preservation service providers. This will also help us to distinguish what organizations attend to, and to what degree, AV media material.

Library and Museum Sector Multi Service Providers
These organizations are usually non-profit and exist to provide low cost or scaled support services related to both the traditional library functions as well as those which have changed with the introduction of networked systems, the internet and digitization of content.

Most multi-service providers exist as cooperatives, or consortia, or alliances, and offer a large menu of aid and assistance for the library, archive, museum and historical society. The Regional Alliance for Preservation (RAP) offers services and guidance to organizations in the non-profit domain and to multiple sectors throughout. It is a nation wide umbrella consortium of other related organizations which carry out and fulfill the actual services themselves. Members include among others AMIGOS (which serves the southwest), SOLINET (which serves the southeast), The Midwest Art Conservation Center, the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts (CCAHA), the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC). These organizations offer assistance to both private and public collections. A list of services from SOLINET is long and crosses many purposes and needs:

Technology Planning, Team Building, Grant Writing, Database Licensing, Training Audits, Library Binding, Collection Assessment, Environmental Control, Technical Services Workflow, Building Design & Renovation, Interlibrary Loan Workflow, Preservation Program Planning & Administration, Electronic Resource Selection & Analysis, Pest Control, Retrospective Conversion, Conservation and Reformatting, Staff Development Planning, Preservation Needs Assessment, Technical Services, Cost Analysis, Long Range Strategic Planning, Meeting Facilitation, Security and Safety

Many of these services are complicated enough in and of themselves, but SOLINET and others pride themselves on their "on-stop shopping" approach. This is understandable, as many libraries are cash and resource short, and don't have the time to compare prices for services. But as times change—and as the needs of libraries and museums also change, diversify, and grow more complex—one wonders if this broad approach best suits the needs of libraries and museums themselves, or if this smorgasbord service model affects the quality of services they offer. The services listed above from SOLINET come right from their website which are located all together for a superlative marketing effect no doubt, but they are services addressing actually quite different needs. Some of these are management and administrative, some of them are technical services (cataloging), some of them are technology related, and then there is conservation and preservation.

For ease of access, RAP provides a chart of services offered from each regional organization (see http://www.rap-arcc.org/index.php?page=chart). Scanning the matrix we do not see any services dedicated uniquely to AV media material, and there is no mention of specific preservation assessments or services provided for moving image, or audio work. There are vendor lists for AV reformatting and preservation, but no direct mention of AV material or handling instructions from these RAP organizations.

A second tier of organizations can be grouped as carrying out some kind of conservation or preservation type of research either through studies or surveys. These include but are not limited to Palinet (the Mid Atlantic Libraries Group), The Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR), and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL).

Two other helpful organizations of special note from the conservation field do openly admit and discuss the existence of AV media material and its unique needs. These are the American Institute of Conservation (AIC), and Conservation Online (COOL) from the Preservation Department of Stanford University Libraries. They both provide resources for conservationists, collection managers, and restorers of non-AV and AV material. The resources they have assembled provide much more accessible, readily usable information on care and handling of materials, and collections management then do the other RAP sites. AIC and COOL also display a refreshing transparency in their transmission of this information. This is perhaps because their missions are different then the profit based services of RAP organizations.

There is further evidence of attempts to codify assessment and survey tools in the library world with UC Berkeley's Library Preservation Department (http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/CALIPR/) and Columbia's Material Survey Instrument (which was developed initially by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania) (http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/services/preservation/surveyTools.html). Each of these tools enable collecting and manipulating data from large volumes of mainly paper based materials. Both surveys are unique in that they provide the small software applications for free. Work is still being done in different collections outside of the original home collections to test the ease of use of the tools, and the strength of results gathered.

2.3   Sampling of specific tools and surveys for AV material

As we've briefly surmised the lack of assessment tools and services devoted to AV material from the overall preservation community we will now turn to examine what the AV community itself is creating to address the lack of dedicated AV preservation tools and services.

There is a pointed movement within the AV preservation community to address AV media's "special needs" when it comes to cataloging and intellectual control and representation. Quantifying and describing the characteristics of AV material complicates the traditional bibliographic record schema, such as MARC, where fields where originally built to represent books, periodicals and serials. Creative examples of stretching MARC's bibliographic capabilities to include AV-unique characteristics and preservation information[6] are to be found in the catalogs of the UCLA Television and Film Archive, The Peabody Awards Archive at the University of Georgia, and certain research collections in the Performing Arts division of the New York Public Library.

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[6] Characteristic such as stock, gauge, roll, generation of element, version, video standard, damage, signal quality, etc.

Initiatives such as IFLA's and OCLC's Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR), the Library of Congress and AMIA's *Archival Moving Images: a Cataloging Manual* (AMIM), and IMAPs MARC compatible template, are some examples of creating tools for bibliographic representation for AV material. These projects have gone far to emphasize not only AV-unique characteristics, but that record keeping for AV material needs to be standardized yet compatible and scalable across sectors with various sized organizations of various sized collections with variously different missions.

When it comes to addressing the physical control and condition of AV material there are less tools which have been developed, or which have been vetted and are in use. Below I will briefly review some of the more prevalent or useful tools and services, which have been created from within the AV preservation community.

Assessment tools for AV media material fall into different categories and can be of various levels of detail. Some tools will be for initial identification of media, and others will speak to degradation and issues surrounding best preservation practices. These can also appear in one guide or review, or several. The reality of AV preservation guides and tools is that nothing is completely standardized, there is no one textbook or source for this information. The fact that they are scattered and often piece meal makes an assessment of them, including their uses, strengths and weaknesses, very difficult.

For Film:
The National Film Preservation Foundation's *The Film Preservation Guide: The Basics for Archives, Libraries, and Musems*, from 2004 is a well-weighted and in-depth introduction to the First and Second Order Needs of Film. There is no assessment per se included here but the presentation of information is such that one could very easily take from chapters what they need to construct an assessment that would best fit their individual collections, or create a basic assessment and in a second stage, create a more complex assessment with extended resources. Overall the guide is a good place to start for understanding how the conditions of film can effect larger decisions of preservation and how they can be balanced for the good of the film.

For Audio
The 2004 survey by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) provides a recent and exemplary survey of various collections of libraries and academic institutions holding all formats of audio content. This survey was broadly designed to measure both First and Second Order needs of the content as I defined those terms above. [7] This survey focused on neglected audio collections in Academic Libraries.

While respondents tended to identify lack of funding as the greatest barrier to access, a closer look at the survey results tells a more complicated story. Other commonly cited barriers included the following:

> the absence of appropriate standards and tools for cost-effective inventory and bibliographical control

> the lack of effective and cost-efficient means of treating and reformatting analog originals
> the absence of clear mandates about how to provide access to valuable collections the rights to which are ambiguous or unknown

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[7] http://www.clir.org/PUBS/reports/pub128/contents.html. Abbey Smith, David Randal Allen, and Karen Allen.

the lack of staff who are sufficiently trained and conversant in the genres, formats, and rights issues unique to recorded-sound collections

These results provide data proof that shows funding for preservation is only half of the issue. Education, advanced knowledge of the media, and a robust policy directive are more relevant and must be in place first of all before money can be spent, lest it be squandered.

Another survey recently conducted on audio collections is the Sound Directions Project of Indiana University and Harvard University in 2005.[8] The project was an attempt to investigate and test current best practices for audio reformatting of historic recordings. The project aimed to also create an interoperable methodology and workflow template to be used by universities and private collections holding large amounts of historic recordings. Indiana University's Archives of Traditional Music, and Harvard's Archive of World Music were chosen because of the potential high risk of those collections' physical conditions, and for their endangered cultural or intellectual content. The project aimed to standardize their procedures and to set baselines for future consideration in file reformatting and metadata generation. To this end they used the file exchange standard AES-31-3-1999; they chose the destination preservation object to be Broadcast Wave Files (BWAV); they chose for their conceptual framework the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) for its vetted and widespread use in academic digital repositories; and lastly elected to use the Metadata Encoded Transmission Standard (METS) for their base metadata scheme, because of its inclusivity and flexibility as a file, and again because of its widespread use in conjunction with OAIS infrastructures.

The core of the survey is an assessment which ranks the priority of the audio items based on the item's informational content, and the condition of the carrier medium. The materials chosen for this project were done so because of their research value as examples of endangered or obsolete musical cultural. Two scales of point systems were set up for each of the two first divisions of research value and physical condition.

Points were assigned to formats depending on the level of perceived risk of the format itself, with more points assigned to particularly unstable formats such as lacquer discs, for example. Additional points were added for characteristics within a format that added to risk so that a 1 mil acetate tape, for example, received points for its acetate base as well as 1 mil thickness. Further points were added for documented problems such as lacquer disc plasticizer migration, severe tape pack problems, the presence of fungus, etc. Finally, points were taken away in varying quantities if the ATM had copies of the recording, depending on the quality and perceived risk of the copy.

These values were then compared to the point scale to determine an item's risk.

4-5 points = danger zone

2.5-3.99 points = caution zone

0-2.4 points = no worry zone

This point system helps when repositories are looking to assess large quantities of material which by that sheer volume could prohibit a more thorough inspection on an item by item basis. This calculus of sorts can also be deployed as the legitimizing

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[8] http://www.dlib.indiana.edu/projects/sounddirections/index.shtml

logic behind the assessment in the eyes of administration and funders. As we will see, this type of point system can be used across collections of varying AV material, including video.

For Video:

An equally comprehensive and instructive, detailed but not complicated, source is the Texas Commission on the Arts Video Identification and Assessment Guide. This is available online (http://www.arts.state.tx.us/video/), and as a printable pdf. The TCA guide covers similar ground that NFPF's guide does, except specifically for video, including identification of formats, examining condition, assessing risks based on condition and storage, conservation and preservation actions to take for various situations and a list of resources, including a glossary. Both the TCA and and the NFPF guides include photo documentation which valuably illustrate procedures and conditions mentioned in the text.

Of note also is the Image Permanence Institute in Rochester. They are an independent non-profit research institute linked to the Rochester Institute of Technology and The Society for Image Science and Technology. They provide collection surveys consultation services for mixed collections but specifically focusing on photography and AV media material.[9]

As for a specific survey or condition assessment for Video en masse a useful model to be considered because of its attempt at establishing an analytic metric is one created by Sarah Stauderman of the Smithsonian Institution. It has been published online via the Experimental Television Center's Video History Project, and was part of a seminar *Looking Back/Looking Forward: A Symposium on Electronic Media Preservation* held May 31 – June 1, 2002.[10] Stauderman constructed her survey in three parts: Identification, Value Assessment, and Risk Assessment. Identification speaks to whether tapes are identifiable as having content and what kind. If tapes are not identifiable as containing recorded content, then the survey asks if tapes are in a physical condition to be played back as can be determined from a visual inspection of case and winds. If so, a suggested 10% of the collection is advised to be tested, to determine content and further confirm condition. If tapes are identifiably containing content then one moves to Value Assessment. Both these steps speak to Second Order Needs as tape content may or may not be related to a home repository's mission and collection policy. Value is determined by a multiple choice ranking, then totals are added and that total representative number for all tapes moves to the Risk Assessment Section. Here, the physical condition is assessed and also via a multiple choice ranking is given a number representative of a level of risk. Sauderman admits that her survey is only a step in the right direction and it can seem complicated to translate physical and abstract quantities into a number scheme. She says: "Surveys like this general prioritization survey, at the end of the day, are probably only as good as some of the analytical tools— some of the sub-survey activities that went on while doing individual item surveys and so forth."[11] In responding to its usefulness across all types of collections in various organizations she says: "Some people will love it, and some will say, 'This is just too many rules, I don't like it.' I think it's very useful for people to think along the lines of the way that librarians or archivists think

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[9] http://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/sub_pages/8page17m.htm; and http://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/sub_pages/8page17m.htm

[10] www.experimentaltvcenter.org/history/preservation/preservation_level1.php3?id=3&id2=7&id3=11

[11] Ibid

sometimes."[12] Pip Laurenson, later in the discussion of Sauderman's tool, seconds this outlook: "I think what conservation adds at this point is that we have this obsession about risk assessment, which is giving us a way of thinking about that which we should really worry, and how we should direct our anxiety."[13]

We note that these tools are coming out of a variety of sources: preservation advocacy organizations or special collections in libraries. More exist also from vendors of reformatting and restoration services and labs. In the overall scheme of sectors, they have also contributed a great deal to the literature on AV preservation, and have educated many other content holding organizations when it comes to best practices and guidelines for storage and treatment.

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[12] Ibid

[13] Ibid

Chapter 3   The need for new models

3.0   Introduction

Although our investigation into preservation and assessment tools for AV media material is admittedly not exhaustive, we can derive from it that in general there is not the same sensitivity or detail of service in place for AV media material as there is for non-AV material.

Part of this, we've seen, comes from market conditions which have grown up as a result of historical circumstances of need in the Library and Museum sectors. Non-AV material and the large scale bibliographic needs related to technical services and cataloging have dictated some trends, while conservation of paper, books, photography and art objects have garnered more attention and representation in the service industry then have AV media material.

It is clear that AV media material has gone under-represented, not only because its physical condition and machine dependency makes it a more "foreign" medium to traditional librarians and archivists. But the variable potential of AV media material to be both historic artifact and cultural commodity, to have agency in two different realms, both a for-profit and non-profit realm, further confuses these same stewards.

An example of an organization aware of the use and exchange value of its AV material is The Special Collections Library of the American Museum of Natural History in New York. With a small staff it handles hundreds of yearly requests for footage and generates upwards of $80K a year on licensing material from its collection. And only a small percentage of that material that the Museum owns the rights to is being utilized. The majority of the material languishes as potential capital, situated still on its original film or legacy video formats. If a portion of the income from licensing was allowed to be re-directed to preservation and reformatting of these titles, AMNH could see an exponentially increased return on investment.

Not only does there need to be a shift in thinking about how to preserve AV content on the material and financial level, but also on the administrative level of how to manage, conduct, highlight, program and represent AV collections in the wider cultural sphere, beyond just libraries and museums.

In the following I will present a few examples from various entities in the field of research, preservation and production, which recognize the need for not only a heightened preservation consciousness, but one that is willing to adjust to new cultural and market trends with a new set of models.[14]

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[14] See also the manuals and brochures produced by the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) a subsidiary of the Academic Resource Libraries (ARL): *Create Change*, *Declaring Independence*, and *Gaining Independence*. Though acting in the publishing (scholarly digital documents) sector, SPARC presents an important parallel model for producers and distributors of AV reformatted-to-digital content. "The SPARC program aims to put scientists and scholars back in control of their intellectual property while simultaneously lowering the cost of publishing and distributing their work to libraries and other users. The idea for [these manuals] grew out of observing and participating in the efforts of many universities, libraries, societies and collaborative groups to implement alternatives to the commercial publication of scholarly and scientific information." http://www.arl.org/sparc/pubs/index.html

3.1   Heritage Preservation

To begin with, Heritage Preservation, a national institute spearheading conservation projects and awareness, published in 1998, and updated in 2003, the pamphlet *Capitalize on Collections Care to Increase Support*. The document brings together several examples of small to mid sized cultural or heritage repositories and archives leveraging networks and publicity to increase partnership, funding, and visibility for their collections. It speaks also to the current climate of funding on the national level available to the non-profit sector:

Cultural institutions face the challenge of finding new financial resources and broadening their base of support. The federal government has several grant programs providing funds for collections care, preservation and conservation. But these programs are increasingly threatened. Private as well as state and local government support has often been directed to high-visibility programs such as exhibitions, new buildings and educational programs. Preservation and conservation, though integral to an institution's mission, have traditionally received less attention than they deserve because they are not made visible to funders and the public.
As competition for the private dollar increases, fund-raising techniques are becoming more sophisticated and creative. Conservation and preservation can be used creatively for fund-raising. Collections care can appeal to funders. Administrators, trustees and development officers must be convinced collections care is useful in fund-raising.
This booklet is intended to inspire readers to adapt some of the strategies shared here—or use these ideas to develop new approaches—at their own institutions. Private conservators and preservations professionals are encouraged to share this information with clients.[15]

Though the suggestions it goes on to supply may sound foreign to the archivist and more familiar to a development officer, the archivist and preservationist, who know the collections most likely better than the development office, must understand the need for their activated role in helping to contextualize collections. This contextualizing of collections occurs not only within an institution, say between the Development office and the archivists, but also through outreach and dialogue with partners and other sectors in the overall preservation community.

3.2   IMAP

IMAP (Independent Media Arts Preservation) a preservation advocacy non-profit working to establish and disseminate best practices for AV content, acknowledges that much is the same with AV material, and that it too needs a special kind of advocacy:

Arts and cultural groups have suffered continual cutbacks in public and private funding over the past five years. Media arts is also one of the most underfunded disciplines for arts funding, and most resources go toward production and public programming, not to preservation.

National, regional and local strategies are needed to address preservation issues, as there are groups at all stages of preservation activity: those just beginning their efforts, those who are engaged with preservation, and those who can be leaders or teachers to others. Thus, for

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[15] *Capitalize on Collections Care to Increase Support*, Heritage Preservation, 2003, p. 1

preservation to be successful, funding must be provided at all levels, using a range of strategies.[16]

It should be noted that the though this is not the first report from the AV media material community to announce these key facts, in this range of examples I am drawing together, it is the earliest, reflecting the basic awareness of their situation present among AV preservationists from the outset.

3.3   Intelligent Television

Another study, *Marketing Culture in the Digital Age: A Report on New Business Collaborations Between Libraries, Museums, Archives and Commercial Companies*, undertaken by the media production company Intelligent Television, is important not only for its content but for the type of collaborative models they are practicing. Intelligent Television is a hybrid species in that it produces content, and performs research. It is unique in that it is comprised of executives from media production companies and independent producers of educational and documentary material. The company works closely with museums and libraries to produce content related to their collections and through these projects, helps to promote alternative views of culture perhaps left out of more mainstream narratives. Intelligent Television also partners with foundations and non-profits to carry out research studies related to the uses and value of media and information technologies, and how policy and praxis surrounding these technologies can be affected or changed. Among other organizations Intelligent Television has partnered with are The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Columbia University's Center for New Media and Learning, MIT, The New America Foundation, The Library and Archives of Canada, The Joint Information Systems Committee, The American Council of Learned Societies, and Ithaka. Ithaka is a non-profit created with support by the Mellon Foundation and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, with the "mission to help accelerate the adoption of productive and efficient uses of information technologies for the benefit of the worldwide higher education community."[17] Furthermore, they help advise and enable entrepreneuring non-profits who are using technology to discover, expose, and manage media content of some kind. Ithaka helps these organizations develop organizational and business models that are both sustainable and tailored to their individual sectors.

Intelligent Television's report, *Marketing Culture in the Digital Age,* is the result of interviewing and surveying a wide swath of participants and stakeholders in cultural production and management sectors. They questioned interested parties in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors on the subject of digitization and publication of cultural and heritage materials, including AV content. The project investigates the traditional pathways and internal dynamics at work for publishing distribution, and exhibition of content, and looks at collaborative models between the sectors as a method for introducing material held by non-profit cultural or heritage organizations.

The survey was based on a set of questions which aimed to describe and detail notable business negotiations and arrangements between commercial and cultural organizations, covering areas such as: which parties were responsible for which deliverables, and how are these decided upon; how is the content to be valued; are

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[16] *Cultural History at Risk: Independent Media Preservation*, IMAP, 2000, p. 9

[17] http://www.ithaka.org/about/mission.htm

organizations equipped to make these transactions; and do they have the staff and intellectual resources to do so. Non-profit organizations were asked to relate which projects proved to be successful and which didn't; how they originally perceived the project, and how in reality it was fulfilled. Commercial entities (publishing companies, licensing and merchandising groups, law firms, accounting firms, investment banks, and venture capital firms) were also asked what types of arrangements they could foresee being made that would benefit the open circulation of content. The results of the report are helpful to see what ground still needs to be covered, what questions still need to be answered by both sectors in the rapidly shifting world of AV media content.

The report admits the importance of archivists and librarians as crucial participants and asset managers in a cultural and information economy, who are gatekeepers to a vast range of content:

There is a growing recognition that libraries and museums and archives are the equivalent of unexplored gas and oil fields when it comes to content that might be discovered, converted, repurposed, and marketed. Furthermore, and quite apart from the content therein, commercial firms in publishing, music, film, television, gaming software, and hardware are increasingly understanding that much of the most exciting media work in the world today is being sponsored under the aegis , or facilitated by the creative wisdom, of information or library science. Indeed, the recognition is rising that library and information scientists occupy a vital place not only in the record-keeping of our society, which most people understand as historical in nature, but in the development of media, which is forward looking.[18]

However, the report goes on to reveal quite honestly the current level of awareness and knowledge among archivists and preservation administrators when it comes to brokering deals and actually negotiating the circulation of that content:

Libraries, museums, historical societies, archives and universities have not, as a rule, been particularly adept at marketing themselves—neither for their content, nor for their skills and expertise.....
While it is true that that the current corpus of collaborative relationships, taken together, has generated significant revenue for the sector to date, the legal and business structures and practices underlying many of these relationships have not always effectively facilitated the good work of cultural and educational institutions. In many cases, the distribution of rewards from these arrangements, including revenue and publicity, has not been equitable. Many leaders of non-profit institutions, for a variety of reasons, seldom have developed backgrounds or experiences in the ways of business—in determining the market value of their assets, for example, or negotiating business arrangements, or conceptualizing and implementing business plans. Commercial representatives have told us that this makes it a fundamentally different experience for the to engage in a business arrangement with a library than it is with a coequal commercial enterprise. While there have been some efforts launched to familiarize cultural leaders with business tools ad techniques, most of the business planning guides intended to improve planning in the cultural and educational sector have been prepared and distributed by authors based in the noncommercial sector, with little or no professional input form the business world.[19]

The report goes on to look into current practices in content acquisition and distribution deals, outlining some transaction models and the legal and financial

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[18] *Marketing Culture in the Digital Age: A Report on New Business Collaborations Between Libraries, Museums, Archives and Commercial Companies*, Peter B. Kaufman, Intelligent Television, 2005. p. 3-4
[19] Ibid, p. 4

elements to their structures. The report is transparent with its methodology and reveals its survey questions and a good amount of actual unfiltered, though anonymous, feedback. Following from this, the report goes on to make detailed recommendations for individual organizations within the for-profit and non-profit sectors, and for the AV cultural and commercial community as a whole. Overall this report is very valuable, and is refreshing in its straightforwardness, and ingenuity in accepting and proposing hybrid relationships between the for-profit and non-profit sectors.

3.4   New Media Arts: New Funding Models

Valid models for rearrangement of AV material as capital and redistribution of its revenue can be found not only in the library and museum sectors, but from production sectors as well. In a 2000 report prepared for the Creativity and Culture Department of the Rockefeller Foundation, Pamela Jennings investigated the state of funding for New Media Artists. As a niche of artists, these multi media producers have a hard time financing their work because of the extensive costs for technology. Many of these artists have day jobs in the technology sectors, and can create new software applications to fund their artwork, but still find it hard to legitimately generate cash for making art. There are few channels for funding New Media work and the competition is fierce because the field of New Media artists is wide. This study details the alternative routes that multi media producers are forging. The study surveys individual artists, organizers and foundation program officers to determine how New Media Art is viewed and what the current funding models are.

I cite this study for two reasons. One, because New Media Art is content that AV preservationists will have to reckon with. We as AV preservationists should be aware of the entire production and preservation lifecycle of content. That producers of AV content are looking for new avenues for funding is nothing new, as filmmakers and video artists have made a cottage "how-to" industry on this very subject. But more precisely, my second reason is because of the parallel I see with a developing field of concern: finding new "initiatives that bridge the for-profit and non-profit funding sectors including artists' research centers, innovative business models, new approaches for traditional funding sources, incubators, venture funding, and leveraging community"[20] The preservation community can take up the examples given by the filmmaking community[21] and take the requests for funding outside of the traditional governmental and private foundation circuit. AV preservationists could even go so far as to partner with AV content producers in their quest for initial production funding and lobby at the front end of the lifecycle for a percentage of start-up costs to go into escrow for the title's preservation.

It walks a thin line with the "social good" theory of some AV content, but corporate sponsorship, just like of film festivals, is not completely out of the question for AV preservation. Many corporations have to disburse monies in socially responsible outlets, if only for a very honorable looking tax-deduction. There is the Coca-Cola example and its donation of its advertising history to the Library of Congress. Granted the deal did not have a broker such as an preservation consulting agency,

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[20] New Media Arts: New Funding Models, Pamela Jennings. The Rockefeller Foundation, 2000. http://digital-Bauhaus.com, or http://www.rockfound.org/Library/New_Media_Arts_-_New_Funding_Models.pdf.
[21] See for instance the endeavors of fundfilm.org and the Center for Social Media (www,centerforsocialmedia.org) as well.

but smaller deals between corporations and cultural or memory institutions could be made for the sake of the permanence of the content and for the circulation of it in the public sphere.

Returning to Jennings' Rockefeller report we hear suggestions that were echoed later in the Intelligent Television report of 2005.

Survey participants spoke of the growing need for partnerships among non-profit organizations, foundations, and the for-profit and venture capital sector of business. New media initiatives that are neither non-profit nor fully commercial confuse both foundations and private investors and consequently float in a twilight zone of under-funding and underdevelopment. But Jonathan Peizer at the Soros Foundation believes that there are ways to bridge those gaps. He has coined a term—the *.corg*—for a new Internet entity that is neither a totally business-oriented .com nor a non-profit. org. Rather, the .corg bridges that gap between the two domains: it is a socially responsible .com that partners with non-government organizations to accomplish its mission or an organization that uses entrepreneurial methods to attain self-sustainability.[22]

Jennings notes that even New Media artists—having a natural proclivity to innovate, and fed up with having to wait for limited funding, and then compete among colleagues for it—have felt the stress of straining to evolve to stay buoyant with the reality of their situation.

If the New Media artist's learning curve involves defying the boundaries of technology and integrating his/her aesthetics, philosophies, and visions, the artist-entrepreneur's learning curves involves acquiring the knowledge of an MBA and negotiating with investors, venture capitalist and corporations without losing his/her artistic integrity. [23]

If New Media Artists are evolving into New Media Entrepreneurs, could AV preservationist entrepreneurs be far behind?

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[22] http://www.rockfound.org/Library/New_Media_Arts_-_New_Funding_Models.pdf., page 12

[23] Ibid, p. 13

Chapter 4   Considerations for Agency or Collective Consulting Services for AV material

4.1   Some Preliminaries

Because this thesis appears as part of an Arts and Humanities degree, its purpose cannot be to detail the establishment of a for-profit independent agency or collective that would provide consultation services for preservation management of AV materials. To not speak about the establishing of an organization (that would ostensibly make money through its services) in effect limits the discussion of the services and needs of the community they would address. In order to discuss establishment of a service providing organization, we need to delineate particular service points (much as we have been doing above) and match these to the needs in the community. However we run against a limit of the context of the thesis being a Humanities project, so we can't further discuss specifics even as they are related directly to needs.

The constitution of an organization of this kind—a consulting agency or collective—is not built on profit making models. An organization of this kind would never reach a liquidity event, it would never become a public company, it would never achieve profit margins that exceed its operating expenses, it would at best aim to be a cash neutral entity. But even these assumptions, which I am suggesting from an archivist's, not an entrepreneur's point of view, would be considered already as part of a business model. Knowing "the market" that one is servicing is a very important aspect of putting together an organization to serve that market. Knowing those market forces and creating an organization with a business model to fit them is very different than building an organization based strictly on a profit-making model. There are different business models, some more or less emphasizing profit making. These models all depend on the environment in which the organization will exist, the products or services it will be offering, and the existence of competitors in that environment offering similar services.

But too often these subtleties of how to best form an organization to meet a range of needs goes unrecognized for what they are worth. I am not advocating a project such as this so that I can retire early on this new company's 401k. Rather, I am advocating this type of organization for two reasons. One, I see a basic need for something like this in the community. I wonder what forces (be they market, professional or philosophical) are at work to influence and affect the conception and implementation of an entity of this kind. And, two because I believe that by trying to answer questions related to the organization of organizations, and to the ratio of supply and demand of needs to services in the preservation community, we better understand this community and what factors make it function both successfully and less successfully. To be sure, I believe these are concerns inherently present in the MIAP program as a whole.

As a caveat, before I go on to briefly sketch some thoughts on how this organization would look, I must also put on the table one other point. The overall preservation community is already very crowded with organizations. To understand the full lifecycle of content one must expand the scope of our examination to include the original content producing entities as well, which equals even more organizations. It is important to understand the range and different places in which this AV content, that we are responsible for preserving, will be present. I was interested in doing this

in an earlier version of this thesis because I think it is important to understand globally the lifecycle of content and how it is varied across sectors each having different for-profit and non-profit goals. Furthermore I thought it was important to attempt to chart those goals, and given those organization's goals, match those organizations to how they valued content, and how that valuation of content is linked to whether they are for-profit or non-profit. But as these distinctions, between whether an organization is for-profit or non-profit, are collapsing, or are in argument, I chose not to fully address them. And this may have been more fortuitous in the end, as one of my main problems in understanding how organizations are created (out of a real need, or out of any number of secondary perceived needs), and what roles they play ultimately in the preservation community, was, and still is, complicated by their sheer number and quantity.

This brings me to the point to put out and leave for consideration as a rhetorical question. Why create another organization at all? When there are already countless professional standards bodies, media advocacy and interest groups, and preservation awareness organizations currently operating to supposedly enlarge and strengthen our preservation mandate, why build yet another entity? Why create an organization to attempt to succeed in a market zone where others have either not tried to enter, or where others have ventured but met with varying degrees of success for different reasons? I leave this to be answered by both emerging and established preservationists; I pose this question to peers and colleagues, and ultimately to the market of the preservation community itself.

4.2   Needs Dictate Services Redux: Or, What kind of organizational model?

When focusing our attention on how an organization or collective consulting service agency may look, we have to think of the external factors and the internal factors and how we can make them best relate to each other. These too will also help to determine whether the organization should operate as a for-profit, or a non-profit entity.

External Factors
Again we have to consider the overall environment into which this entity would be fitting. I have tried to identify previously in the thesis these external factors and so I won't belabor them here. But, in my mind, an understanding of these needs and forces already at work in the preservation community, as they positively or negatively affect the longevity or stability of content, are primary determining factors for establishing organizational models. These primary determining factors, again in my mind, initially *override* any desire for financial gain. Of course the financial stability of this consulting organization is necessary. But all the financial planning, cost analysis and revenue modeling are useless unless we can pin-point the needs, and the surrounding causal reasons for those needs, in our market sector, or the preservation community. One cannot build a machine virtually, outside of, or removed from the environment in which it will be used. One must build the machine to suit existing issues in and dependencies of the environment in which it will be a functioning part.

Internal factors
As there is a complexity of external factors affecting how an organization would define its external goals, how the members of this organization decide on achieving those goals internally is just as crucial.

Mission Statement
A mission statement is a bridging of the external with the internal. To this end, all members must together identify and agree on a clear mission. This vision must then be unambiguously set forth in a mission statement and ratified. The mission statement will help the members clarify their multiple goals.

Identifying Group Goals
The members may have a set of goals for the AV content they are servicing (related to the external factors) and a different set of goals they wish to achieve individually or as a group.

These internal goals could be related to factors of personal or professional growth opportunities, or instances where members can further exercise what they have learned either on a job or through school.

The internal goals will be influenced by other internal factors as well. Effectively synthesized, all goals contribute to the organization's working culture. Questions surrounding these internal goals are:

- *how holistic or organic the organization will be*

- *how professionally the members wish to function*

- *how they wish to organize themselves (formally or informally)*

- *how they wish to delegate and execute tasks*

- *how open or closed they perceive themselves to be*

- *how nearby or removed they wish to position themselves in alliance with other organizations, or, are they willing to partner with a larger organization as a subsidiary or joint venture*

- *how will they deal with conflicts of interest*

Beyond issues of the work culture there are issues of human resources and operational administration.

Human resource questions include:

- *how large will the organization be*

- *will there be a maximum amount of members*

- *will there be a hierarchical or networked employee structure*

- *will there be a permanent or rotating staff; will members be able to come in and out for jobs as they wish, or as the need arises for them personally*

- *should there be set permanent positions, or should there be the option for having them temporary and flexible*

- *is it possible to establish benefits, such as health care, or expense accounts for travel, to minimize stress on the consultants and allow them to work at maximum efficiency*

In the interest of scalability, and being able to expand and contract to the amount of incoming jobs, and ultimately the degree of national economic prosperity, one could imagine a core staff of fixed positions, and added support positions depending on the directions the organization would move into. For example the group may need accounting or legal advice along the way, do they elect one person with contacts to these professions to head these areas continuously, or is it the responsibility of whomever is in that position currently, on a rotating basis, to be able to find and make a contact when the need arises? This then leads into the administrative functioning of the group.

Issues of operations include but are not limited to establishing workflows by category of function, and then establishing operational protocols for carrying out the tasks and obligations in category of function. Standardized protocols will save time and energy, and although as we have seen with collection assessments and surveys—there is not one survey method that fits all collections—we can still aim to normalize the workflow as much as possible and present boilerplate procedures to minimize having to re-invent the wheel for every new job.

Furthermore, an in-house "database" or cumulative file of jobs should be kept to record experiences so that one can in the future reflect on the unique ones or the anomalies, in order to best deal with new issues as they arise. A very basic tenet or premise behind this idea of a consolidated consulting group is that for the most part we know the bounds of our professional playing field. Granted, technology continues to widen that field, but we can with concerted effort manage the knowns and best prepare for the unknowns that would come up in attending to the needs of different collections.

In addition, one could imagine matching standardized workflow protocols with standardized internal documents and record managing procedures for the group. Standardized documents would be created and verified so that there would be no internal questions (which could result in larger external questions) as to how the group would go about capturing and processing information from different jobs. Common language for collateral documents such as proposals, contracts, reviews, reports, the assessments and surveys themselves, correspondence could all be created to minimize a consultant's time spent in housekeeping and administrative work. But this standardization could also have the effect, after its proven itself in the field, to increase the profile, reputation and reliability of the organization in the eyes of others.

Finally, the organization would have to include some kind of benchmarks to which they hold their work. Benchmarks could include performance standards, or best practices, in research and client acquisition, client relations, due diligence, full disclosure and accountability and quality control of consultation work. These too would calibrate and contribute to the public image of the organization as honest and forthright in their intent and work.

Even with these formulae in place there are still issues to be addressed and answered by the group. These issues may affect how they function or they may be answered over time.

Accreditation

What standards of qualification will the group use to admit members. As this is a larger unanswered question in the preservation community as a whole, it is hoped that the work of the group, in providing and describing another venue for this discussion to take place, will move the discussion forward.

Years of service.

As it is hoped, this group would be made up of emerging preservationists, going forth to actively put into use in multiple locations and as often as possible what they have learned in their various schools or jobs. Critics will offer that the quality of the service would be lacking if an emerging preservationist as consultant has so few years experience. It is not impossible, in fact it may be quite favorable for all, to include established preservationists in this group as well, either as advisors or as partner mentor consultants. But the importance of the overriding idea of a group is the combination of multiple individuals with multiple experiences to draw from.

Independence vs. Combined efforts

A group performing these projects and upholding best practices will also reflect positively on the schools, or other institutions from which they came. An investment by a cultural or memory institution in a newly graduated, emerging preservationist/consultant is in a way an investment in the worth and recognition of the value of these university level preservation programs. And if the schools are putting their money into the future of this preservation profession, it behooves both the schools and the graduates to continue to uphold this relationship for the public good of the preservation community. This ideally would be beneficial for all involved. However there are those that will suggest that a combined syndicate or union of consultants could squash those independents who wish to work by themselves. Again, it is hoped that this type of group would further discussion of these issues that are currently unanswered in the preservation community.

One could continue to expand the details on paper, but eventually interested parties have to continue this discussion in the open among colleagues and peers. This public discussion is where this idea would be further tested. As we have seen, there is a need for these types of services that we're discussing. There are various models that could possibly facilitate the implementation of such services. However, in the end, this is only an idea. And the question of its merit is not so much one of whether the idea is a good idea or a bad idea. The question is will this type of project help the preservation community to fulfill its goals, and are preservationists willing to invest time, money and energy in it.

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