Digitizing the Past

Newsfilm Digitization Guideline With 3 cases & 3 tips

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Newsfilm overview

- What is newsfilm: TV footage that was shot on 16mm film in the 1950s-1970s

- How they have been managed: obsolescences (news production environment, not-very-clear custodial body, difficulties in access)

- How they have been utilized: educational field (teachers, learners, and researchers), commercial field (documentary productions, broadcasting stations, feature films) with great educational and cultural value

- As opposed to: "news reel". the term used for the packaged 10-minute (or so) updates and reels created to be projected in film theaters before theatrical features during the 1920s-early 1950s on 35mm film

Why digitization

- Access, access, access

- To meet education need
- To prove its existing values
- To promote the fundings
- To preserve

- Goal: to provide a resource for the UK Higher and Further Education community (on the 1st August 2008) → emphasis on education, not archiving

- Organization: the British Universities Film and Video Council with the ITN Archive

- Size: over 3,000 hours of news stories (=60,000 news items)

- Format: 16mm films and many different types of videos

  → MPEG-2 sub-master (at a target data rate of 8 Mbps)

  → Windows Media Players (at 768 Kbps), Apple QuickTime (at 768 Kbps)

- Budget: part-funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee (a £2.28 million government grant during 2004-2006)

- Access: subscribing institutions can download all the contents (free for 5 years)

- Workflow: telecine as the bridge medium, metadata cleaning

- Goal: realizing maximum accessibility to the Netherlands' audiovisual memory for users (educational institutions, public, and the creative sector).

- Organization: Sound and Vision

   (from Audio visual archive, Polygoon newsreel archive, Film archive of the RVD, Film and science foundation, Small gauge film museum)

- Size: a total of 137,200 hours of video, 22,510 hours of film, 123,900 hours of audio , and 2.9 million photos from 2007 till 2014. (3,000 hours per year)

- Format: HD, DPX for image (10 bit log RGB or single channel BW), BWAV for audio (24 bit linear PCM, 48kHz sample rate), timecode track in material package MXF

   SD, Digibeta as the bridge format (including most newsfilms)

- Budget: €154 million from the Fund for the reinforcement of Economic Structure

- Access: database is already searchable, contents will be available

- Workflow: SD, HD, storage, metadata (file naming)

- Goal: more access to members of the university and the general public

- Organization: The Walter J.Brown Media Archives & Peabody Awards Collection in University of Georgia Libraries

- Size: 5 million ft or 2200 reels in WSB, appx. 500 reels in WALB, 9 reels in WRDW

- Format: ProRes422, DV quality, AVI → all for in-house transfer

- Budget: 'Save America's Treasure' grant ($300,000) for CRDL + annual budget

- Access: number of clips available from Internet is increasing

- Workflow: cleaning and compiling → direct transfer as a full reel (TP-66, rebuilt for 16mm transfer, will purchasee Flashscan in 2011) → store files on a SAN and LTO → separating clips into individual items (Final Cut Pro in Apple lab), using 5 digits for the file naming after collection title (ex. WSBNxxxxx, WALBxxxxx) and file type at the end.

TIP 01: Workflow

- Keep the importance and difficulties of the prep in mind
  (physical deterioration, poor organization, unkind metadata, etc.)
→ Enough time and human resources allotment

- No need of the bridge format such as other video format
→ Enough consideration about the sustainability

- Start digitization and digital access at the same time
→ Robust database open to public is needed (importance of metadata management over the whole workflow)

TIP 02: Technical specification

- Born-to-be-seen-on-the-small-television-monitor contents
  - → No better quality than HD/2K
  - → Broadcast-compatible video format at best
  - → In most cases, no need of mezzanine file

- Keep the sustainability issues in mind
  - → More open standards encoding methods such as MPEG
  - → Internet access format should providing the most common formats (usually Windows Media Player, QuickTime, etc.)

- Near line storage
  - →If it is the for long-term preservation as well

TIP 03: Metadata management

- Avoid the copyright infringement

- Consistency in file naming/ titling

- Enough allocation of cataloger for metadata cleaning

- Critical data for newsfilm: footage matching and sorting out, person information in several fields

- Importance of the format data (in prioritization)