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SUSTAINING PLAYBACK THROUGH TECHNOARCHEOLOGY: A VTR REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

MICHAEL ANGELETTI

ABSTRACT

To those archivists working with magnetic media, it is apparent that all analog tape formats face veritable extinction in the long term. Not only are the physical carriers at risk, but the machines used to play endangered tapes are also facing extinction.

Audiovisual archives may have access to legacy videotape machines, but no way of restoring them for use in video reformatting. Using a recently completed refurbishment project at the Stanford Media Preservation Lab as an example, this presentation will focus on how archivists can take steps to refurbish their old videotape machines, enabling them to handle the antique video in their collections, as well as consider acquisition of new collections containing valuable but at-risk videotape. Through detailing the process of refurbishing an EIAJ videotape machine (Sony AV-3650), attendees will gain insight into why these old machines are costly and problematic to repair and maintain. It will also cover basic processes related to the handling, treatment, and playback of this open reel video format still commonly found in archival media collections.

Based on examples from the project undertaken at the Stanford Media Preservation Lab, this presentation will highlight some of the pitfalls in finding parts

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and repairing or making new parts, as well as the advantages of working with legacy equipment specialists.

Adding capability for in-house playback of these machines can have a direct effect on the way that money is allocated for video reformatting work in archives where there isn't funding available for outsourcing to a vendor. Replicating the work examples from the session would require an in-house reformatting program; however, for those without a working video lab, this presentation will offer a valuable look into the challenges faced by media preservation vendors and other institutions.

The PowerPoint presentation and a link to the accompanying EIAJ videotape machine playback demonstration are available at <http://purl.stanford.edu/nv468td2285>.

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