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Electronic Media Group

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SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL PRESERVATION FOR AUDIOVISUAL CONTENT

LINDA TADIC

ABSTRACT

Preserving digital time-based media and born-digital art is resource-intensive. Digital content can be the result of analog-to-digital transfers, or be born-digital. To preserve these works into the future, conservators must be familiar with proprietary file formats, systems used to create and render content, and production workflows behind content creation. Performing managed digital preservation actions are more complex than with static content: files are larger (making fixity checks and storage requirements intensive); the analog-to-digital preservation process must be carefully tracked through metadata; and proprietary formats must be migrated to newer generations or open formats while being mindful of content file interdependencies. Many museums and custodial institutions—as well as the creators themselves—lack infrastructure and staff expertise to perform managed digital preservation actions on this content. This paper will provide an overview of the issues surrounding preserving digital time-based media, and describe the Audiovisual Archive Network (AVAN), a non-profit digital preservation service for educational, arts-based, cultural heritage, and government organizations as well as individual creators.¹

NOTES

1. Shortly after the AIC conference, AVAN's institutional partner, the UCLA Library, withdrew from our partnership and the Mellon Foundation proposal we were drafting. AVAN dissolved and became a new entity called Digital Bedrock, offering the same services, but expanding beyond cultural institutions to anyone with digital content.

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