The Electronic Media Review
Electronic Media Group


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THE CALIFORNIA AUDIOVISUAL PRESERVATION PROJECT: A STATEWIDE COLLABORATIVE MODEL TO PRESERVE THE STATE’S DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

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National studies on the preservation and access of media holdings by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) of the Library of Congress as well as a research survey of special collections and archives conducted by OCLC Research Group underscore the magnitude of the challenges facing cultural heritage institutions. Primary source sound and moving image recordings of the 20th century are seriously endangered by physical deterioration, lack of playback equipment, and rapidly advancing format obsolescence. Preserving them, including addressing metadata needs, potential rights issues, and technological complexities of audiovisual materials and the digitization processes, can be intimidating. Few institutions have the staff and resources to begin preservation planning, and very few have in-house facilities to accomplish audiovisual preservation work.

The California Audiovisual Preservation Project (CAVPP) is a preliminary example of how a collaborative model can work as one proactive solution to many of these challenges. It is the first statewide initiative in the country to collaboratively facilitate access and accomplish audiovisual preservation work most individual organizations are unable to undertake. The Project helps libraries and archives move from the analog to the digital age. Perhaps most importantly, it teaches libraries and archives how to help themselves with their audiovisual preservation challenges. Based on best archival practices for moving image and sound preservation, the CAVPP es-
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establishes low-cost, practical, standards to guide partner institutions through the preservation planning process: from collection assessment, selection, description, digitization, and metadata management to quality control, long-term storage, and online access. It also brings to light hidden media collections via the Internet Archive (IA), a repository that is freely available for non-profit and educational use. To date, the California Light and Sound (CLS) collection includes 5,500 previously endangered and historically significant audiovisual recordings, contributed by 108 museums, archives, and libraries across the state.

This session will discuss how the CAVPP is developing a collaborative, increasingly sustainable, statewide audiovisual preservation infrastructure.

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