

Federal Agencies Audio-Visual Working Group

Recorded Sound Digitization Activities, Guidelines, and Format Specifications

Version of August 12, 2008

I. From Federal Agencies

A. Library of Congress

1. National Recording Preservation Board: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/record/nrpb/>
 - a) Engineers Roundtable Reports
 - i. First roundtable: <http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub137/contents.html>.
Summary of discussion by expert sound engineers that provides an excellent overview of the various types of original analog sound recordings encountered in historical collections, together with best practices for transferring their content.
 - ii. Second roundtable: document in process
Expert sound engineers discussed the nuances of producing digital file copies of historical analog recordings. One paper ready now: Ken Pohlmann on A-to-D converters: <http://www.clir.org/activities/details/AD-Converters-Pohlmann.pdf>
 - b) Background paper (2003):
http://www.arl.org/preserv/sound_savings_proceedings/Digital_audio.shtml
2. Digital Audio Preservation Prototyping Project
 - a) Example of a draft Statement of Work (2001):
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/mopic/avprot/audioSOW.html>.
One project's perspective on specifications relevant to outsourcing.
 - b) Background paper (2003):
http://www.arl.org/preserv/sound_savings_proceedings/Digital_audio.shtml

II. From Other Organizations

- A. International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives, Technical Committee
 1. TC 03: "The Safeguarding of Audio Heritage: Ethics, Principles, and Preservation Strategy, Version 3," http://www.iasa-web.org/IASA_TC03/TC03_English.pdf.
This and the next document provide important overviews and background to the recorded sound preservation field. Widely read in the community.
 2. TC 04: "Guidelines on the Production and Preservation of Digital Objects, August 2004" (May be ordered from IASA from this page: http://www.iasa-web.org/pages/06pubs_03_new.htm.)
- B. Indiana and Harvard Universities: Sound Directions project report:
<http://www.dlib.indiana.edu/projects/sounddirections/papersPresent/index.shtml>.
An excellent and comprehensive look at the reformatting of recorded sound into digital-file form by leading practitioners at two university programs. Published in 2007.
- C. Harvard University Library Digital Initiative: <http://hul.harvard.edu/ldi/>.
This page introduces the topic of audio reformatting:
http://hul.harvard.edu/ldi/html/reformatting_audio.html#standards. It includes references that seem to have moved; see instead: <http://preserve.harvard.edu/guidelines/audiodig.html>.

- D. Rutgers University. Menu of documents pertaining to recorded sound, video, and other formats from RUcore (RUtgers COmmunity REpository):
<http://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/collab/reference.php?submit=Search&auth=ALL&orderby=date&group=ALL&type=dos>
 A set of very forward-looking guideline and specification documents pertaining to reformatting audio-visual and other content into digital form, and to managing born-digital content.
- E. TAPE (Training for Audiovisual Preservation in Europe). “Audio and Video Carriers,” by Dietrich Schüller (http://www.tape-online.net/docs/audio_and_video_carriers.pdf)
- F. Michigan State University, “Digitizing Speech Recordings for Archival Purposes”:
http://www.historicalvoices.org/papers/audio_digitization.pdf.
 From the abstract: “Best practices for digitizing speech recordings for archival purposes. Many current guidelines do not give an adequate rationale and are not specific enough about audio digitizing practices for spoken word digital repositories. [Our work included] analyzing frequency response, dynamic range, formant bandwidths, noise, psychoacoustic and perceptual quality, and the spectral evaluation of recordings” See also Historical Voices (<http://www.historicalvoices.org/>) and the National Gallery of the Spoken Word (<http://www.ngsw.org/>).
- G. Northwestern University. Spoken Word at Northwestern,:
<http://www.at.northwestern.edu/spoken/>.
 A useful overview of the activity with information on the method used for transcribing the words. No detailed information on encoding, file wrappers, and the like.
- H. Library and Archives Canada, “Guidelines for Computer File Types, Interchange Formats and Information Standards”: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/information-management/002/007002-3017-e.html>.
 Suggested formats for creating and transferring electronic records (born digital) to the Canadian national archives; section 3.1 pertains to digital audio; 3.3 to digital video.
- I. Arts and Humanities Data Service (UK): <http://ahds.ac.uk/>
 Studies including “Moving Pictures and Sound Archiving Study ” available from <http://ahds.ac.uk/about/projects/archiving-studies/index.htm>.
- J. NINCH Guide to Good Practice in the Digital Representation of Cultural Heritage Materials (2003): <http://www.ninch.org/guide.pdf>.
 See “Audio/Video Capture and Management” (chapter VII, pp. 120ff), for background information and some guidelines.
- K. Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC): <http://www.arsc-audio.org/index.html>.
 Organization to be aware of, Web site does not include guidelines or specifications.

III. Format Specifications

- A. Menu of description documents for digital sound formats:
http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/formats/fdd/sound_fdd.shtml