
DIGITAL MEDIA ARCHIVING

**CREATING HOURS OF CONTENT?
EASY.
FINDING IT LATER?
NOT.**

by Cathy Hutchison

Remember the days of closets and boxes filled with tapes that were hopefully labeled? What a relief that content keeps getting smaller and smaller. Though methods of storage are becoming more compact, the amount of content generated and the need to access it quickly is growing exponentially. The challenge that operators face in running their departments is: how are we going to deal with it?



For Walter Silverberg of Silverberg-Roberts, video archive solutions are critical. Not only does he own his own production company, he has also served as the Director of Television for TD Jakes Ministries for the past ten years. "When you work with someone as highly creative as Bishop Jakes, you have to expect that some great ideas come with a short timeline. It isn't unusual to find yourself on a Sunday morning finding a tape, locating the footage, digitizing, then quickly building the piece. At the Potter's House, if every message were kept digitized, we could access



it quickly; pull it into the timeline, then edit. If it were sitting on a server somewhere, even better."

The challenge in Silverberg's world is that broadcast quality video gobbles up a tremendous amount of hard drive space. Fifteen GB per hour of footage.

Paul Podraza, Media Director for Mountaintop Community Church in Birmingham, AL has similar issues. "I have over 750 GB of hard drive space 85% full at any time. We keep certain elements that we use on a week-to-week basis digitized, but then digitize four cameras an hour long each plus

the audio track each week to edit our television show. Once the broadcast has aired, a volunteer records it and burns the DVD. The tapes get reused."

Video archiving is an asset that has to be managed, but in a world of Sunday to Sunday deadlines, it's easy to lose sight of the future value of the content you've created. Because of this, it isn't the church that is leading the charge of video asset management. The people developing the solutions are corporations, sports, broadcast news, and... libraries.

In many ways, libraries are way ahead of the game in understanding

how to manage information assets. Karen Shull, Director of Library Media Services for Richardson ISD in Texas, is often hired to do private consulting to help people manage their media archives. Just like in the video world, some of the information managed by libraries is physical and some is digital. "Library catalogs represent an object with metadata—data about data. Whether physical or digital, you need to characterize what it is about and where it sits in the information spectrum."

With that concept in mind as churches manage their video archives,

a good place to start is in developing the metadata. What information do you need about each piece of video? Description of the content and date of creation is a good place to start, but what about other information?

"Recently in developing a new graphics package for a show," Silverberg relates, "I needed to capture

the speaker with different looks... casual, at Easter, summer. This required a lot of searching through tapes. Access has value because time is money."

If your metadata includes the type of information that will help you quickly find tapes in likely real-world scenarios, the time it takes you to

access the footage is improved. Your context should determine what information needs to be tracked.

Daniel Penz, News Editor for CBS Affiliate KTVT in North Texas, understands the value of metadata because in the fast-paced world of broadcast news, time is a luxury in finding clips. "We produce more than five hours of news programming a day... seven days a week. HD storage and disc storage is simply not yet economical to do at our scale. Since we are already geared to record onto tape [Sony Beta SX], it makes sense to use those tapes as a storage medium. We have 'tape ops' whose duty it is to archive everything. Each piece of aired footage is logged into INEWS, an AVID Technology program. In addition to archiving the script, we can notate the tape number and timecode. [INEWS tracks the metadata.] For example if I wanted to look up Ronald Reagan's funeral," Penz says, "I would go to the search function, and it would tell me what footage was available and where to find it."

Professional and college football is probably the most utilized video database. Not only does the NFL maintain every game ever captured, but coaches can access every play from every game from every team in the history of football. At the college level, they usually go back for at least five years. "There is a tremendous amount of metadata tracked for every minute of sports video," says Stuart Reynolds of Acoustic Dimensions. "The only way to achieve consistency in the creation of the metadata is to record it when you create the content. If you have to go back and do it later, it takes twice the amount of time."

Of course, in order to get everyone on the church production team excited about tracking metadata, there may need to be a shift in way content is perceived. Many times, churches have an "oh, that was last Sunday" mentality,

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Circle Reader Response #11

Walter Silverberg



"I have over 750 GB of hard drive space 85% full at any time."



"Library catalogs represent an object with metadata—data about data."



"Access has value because time is money."

and content is often discarded or recorded over after its initial use. In order to invest time building an archive, it is important to view what you are archiving as having future value.

The beauty of archival information is that it is a product that you already own. The challenge is in organization and creating the mechanism for delivery—something Acoustic

Dimensions now regularly consults on as part of their scope of services for professional sports and is moving into in consulting for churches.

"Technically we record every service and keep the two with the largest attendance since they have the most energy in the crowd," says Jeff Petersen, Programming and Media Director for Granger Community Church in

Granger, IN. "Sometimes we keep all services if there is something extra special about a performance or there are live elements that warrant it. We used to use SVHS or VHS tape, but now we record to DVD hard drives and burn discs of what we want to keep. All of these are stored in binders with miniaturized copies of our service order to help us with identifying the contents.



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The service orders are kept on disc and in a paper form. To track all of this, we started a rather elaborate database in MSAccess to keep track of every song, drama, performer and media element used every service. It requires continual development to improve user-friendliness. Unfortunately it is not easily accessible to our Mac people as it is only available on a PC."

So, how do you choose a workable system for access and storage?

"It's a good idea to get some guidance in setting up a system," Karen Shull advises. "Automation systems that retrieve information about either physical or digital items range from simple to complex depending on the size of the database you are working with. Once the system is in place, maintaining it can be clerical, but it is still important for someone to do quality control. If information is incomplete, the system doesn't work."

"The ongoing cost is going to be someone to input the data and administer the database," Shull continues. "It doesn't have to be a professional, but it does need to be someone who does the quality control to make sure records are complete and knows how to do the entries. The more complex the system, the more experience you need."

Though setting up a system can take a substantial manpower investment in the beginning, once it is in place, it can buy you the time you need in critical moments.

Reynolds explains it this way, "There are two issues when it comes to digital archiving: storage and access. With regard to storage, a lot comes down to asking yourself, 'How much compression am I willing to tolerate?' In some cases, the answer is 'none' and you will have to store the video in a physical location. In other cases, storing in MPEG or other compressed format is appropriate, in which case you can store it on a video server, such as those manufactured by Sony or Doremi. My current favorite in the sports world is Click Effects because the user interface provides easy access to clips via touchscreen blending the boundaries between storage and access."

"[At Granger Community Church] we record a 'clean feed' (no overlays and no Mpg2 compression) onto a digital video hard drive. We use this to record special elements of the service that we use in our shows and conferences. We use the regular DVD recordings for these as well, but they lose quality very quickly when you have to edit them. They are great to view on their own for evaluating services—which we do and for showing at conferences and workshops," Petersen adds.

Tim Thornburgh, Global Account Manager for SPL in St. Paul, works with corporations such as Dow Corning on

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managing their digital media archives. In the corporate world, the issues aren't limited to storage and access, but also extend to delivery. "At the corporate level, the challenges often include the need to access at multiple locations... regional, national, global. In the past, most of that information was captured on tape and sent through the mail." SPL partners with companies like Starbak Streaming Media Solutions to improve access. "Whenever you begin talking about streaming, the IT guys say, 'Don't do that.' A huge part of what we do is to develop solutions that are IT friendly. Archiving happens at regional endpoints so that you don't bog down the network."

Though we are still trying to figure out solutions in the transition from analog to digital, it is important to keep in mind that none of this was even possible just a few years ago. "I grew up reading that digital was coming," Silverberg says. "Now that it is here, it is like freedom to fly. Like gravity doesn't apply anymore." ♦

Cathy Hutchison is a freelance writer whose interests include the impact of technology on the worship experience.

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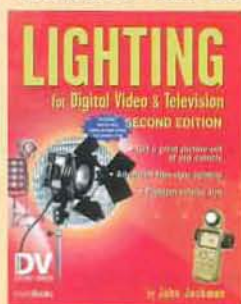
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Circle Reader Response #73

"LIGHTING FOR DIGITAL VIDEO & TELEVISION" BY JOHN JACKMAN - CMP BOOKS 2004



I have thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. The author is in touch with the subject, obviously writing from experience. He has a way of teaching the basics without being condescending. He also throws in a little humor to keep the subject matter interesting, seeing as some of the subject matter can be quite dry.

The book is very comprehensive in the coverage of the material. He starts out with a good discussion that convinces you of the need to understand what the book has to offer. Before jumping right into where to put the fixtures he gives you all of the required background to understand the human eye and then the camera, and how vastly different they are. This is a book about lighting for the camera and not the eye, so clearly understanding the difference between the two is important.

The first half of the book is devoted to the equipment and location lighting. I find that Chapter 3, placed early on, titled "Volts, Amps, and Watts"; is critical to understand before doing any location work. If you don't understand electricity you could create some very dark lighting at the wrong times.

The depth with which he covers the subject of how to utilize lights and their properties, is invaluable. I'm sure that this will become one of my reference books when I need to explain a subtle point or remember how to get a "look" when I don't have all of the fixtures.

He talks about the standard lighting setups, and then, since the real world tends not to allow for standards in every situation, how to get the look without all of the gear. The problem solving chapter will help you to think out of the box, in order to get the shot that is required.

The second half of the book discusses how to light in a studio, where you have more control, and explores more advanced lighting setups. He also delves into the realm of low (to no) budget lighting.

The final chapter gets into even more advanced techniques for non-standard shots along with blue and green screen. At the end, he even discusses how to work in spaces that are not set up for video, such as certain churches and theatres.

I encourage anyone interested in creating good video to get a copy of this book.

- Provided by Stephen Ellison, Lighting Editor for TFWM and President of Nimbus Design and Production - a lighting design company.