

Federal Agencies Audio-Visual Working Group

Notes from the meeting, March 3, 2008

Abstract: Four agencies represented, agreement about likely products from the work, formation of three sub-groups.

This meeting for federal agency representatives interested in audio-visual digitization standards was held at the Library of Congress on Capitol Hill on March 3, 2008. There were representatives from three agencies other than the Library of Congress: the National Archives and Records Administration, the National Agricultural Library, and the Defense Visual Information Center.

The group foresaw the possibility of developing five products during the next 12-18 months:

1. Resource List of relevant documents (guidelines and other documents) from federal agencies, various public archives, and the private sector (to the degree possible). Due to the moving target nature of this topic, the Resource List will receive a moderate level of effort.
2. Research reports. This refers to any reports from expert consultants engaged by the working group. Experts will be engaged to assist with specific issues that arise in the course of drafting the guidelines.
3. Guidelines for recorded sound. This is likely to reach a high level of completeness. It will cite and summarize a number of pre-existing documents that contain information endorsed by this working group.
4. Guidelines for video. Due to the immaturity of the field, this is not likely to reach a high level of completeness (the first version may appear under a more modest title). It will provide an overview of the state of the art and offer whatever recommendations it can. The group will use the process of developing this guideline document to identify some key questions for analysis and research by expert consultants.
5. Guidelines for motion picture film. Same comment as for the video guidelines. Members of the group highlighted the fact that current demands on their organizations were for “access copies,” e.g., for television production; preservation reformatting is still film-to-film.

Following the pattern established by Federal Agencies Still Image Digitization Working Group and the earlier precedent from NARA, the process will include identifying relevant categories of original materials and stating the reformatting objectives for each category.

Two topics received a bit of discussion that highlighted their importance to the group and the need to treat them in the course of writing guidelines. One was the concept of authenticity, i.e., document authentication in what is sometimes a legal sense. The second had to do with the role played by physical media that may be used for the storage of digital content during its life cycle. The group recognized that both topics are relevant to digital content in general and not specific to audio-visual content.

Three subgroups were formed: Recorded Sound, Video, and Film. Meetings will be scheduled soon for the recorded sound subgroup and for the video and film subgroups combined.