

Nebraska State Historical Society
based on Paul Eisloeffel's presentation at the 2003 AMIA meeting.

The Nebraska model works off of three factors for appraisal:

Institutional: Does the material fit our mission?

Individual Factor: How good of a resource is it, by itself?

Contextual Factor: How well does it fit the collections as a whole?

Based on those three factors, Nebraska Historical Society (NHS) developed a survey that could profile their holdings. The survey's data elements are as follows:

Value- historical and cultural

Demand- potential or actual

Description- type and accuracy of existing finding aids

Condition- of the material itself

Housing- condition and adequacy

Chronological- representation of date(s)

Geographic- representation of the State

Topical- representation of the subject

Genre- this could be related to function for creation, ie- advertising, home movie, theatrical newsreel, local TV program, public service film, etc.

Each of the data elements is examined in detail, with emphasis on Value and Demand as having top priority.

Value sub data elements include:

Aesthetics- taking into account the photographer's skill, the technical aspects of the moving image: smooth motion, exposure, well composed shots, etc.

Volume and Completeness- does it cover an unbroken time span

Intellectual Worth- how well does it cover the subject matter

Artifactual Worth- the film as an artifact itself, age becomes an important factor here

Accompanying materials- supporting documentation like scripts and production notes

Condition- physical condition

Demand sub data elements include:

Demand specific to the institution's mission or needs

Demand needs of clientele

A brief review of the NHS Moving Image Collections Survey was also given. Listed below are those fields that have a broader context (some are very specific to NHS).

Value: rate the historical value of the images in the collection, keeping in mind the following:

How well do the images illustrate the subject matter contained therein?

How good are the images (give credit for the photographer's skill).

Does the collection contain a lot of footage sho over a long span of time?

How old are the images (generally, the earlier they are, the more rare and therefore the more valuable).

Do we have camera original or film copies, or only video copies?

Enter: HIGH VALUE or LOW VALUE

Demand: Rate the potential demand of use, by researchers or NHS staff, of the materials in the collection based on the significance of content and/or subject matter they represent.

Enter: HIGH DEMAND or LOW DEMAND

Description Types: Indicate the type of description(s) currently available for a collection. Mark all that apply:

- Automated catalog-level description
- Automated indexing
- Shotlist
- Database
- Coversheet
- Other (elaborate in comment)
- No description

Description Status: Examine any existing descriptions for the collection, regardless to type. Consider whether they adequately and accurately represent the contents of the collection. Are the existing descriptions easy to understand?

Keep in mind the level of Value and demand assigned to the collection. Materials with Low Value and Low Demand ratings may not require the same level of description as those rated High Value and High Demand.

A “Yes” in this field indicated that existing descriptions for a collection are “Good Enough” for use. A “No” indicates that an available description is inadequate in accuracy, detail, format, etc. Explain in the Comments field.

Arrangement Type: If the collection is made up of a number of individual reels, are they arranged in a logical, useful and consistent order? Use one of the following to indicate the type of order found in the collection:

- Fully arranged
- Partially arranged
- No arrangement
- Not applicable (no discernable order or only a single reel)

Arrangement Status: consider the existing arrangement of the collection. Does it present the contents of the collection to the user in a manner easy to understand?

A “Yes” in this field indicates that the arrangement of a collection is “Good Enough” for use and/or requires no further ordering. A “No” indicates that further arrangement is needed.

Condition: Examine each reel of film (or samples from large collections), and rate the physical condition of the film itself, not its container, reel or core (exception: the casing is an integral part of a video cassette, this should be considered part of the media). Look for: problem splices, soiling, tearing, warping, twisting, shrinkage, lack of leader, tightness of wind, smell of acid hydrolysis.

Enter one of the following codes:

Good- film does not exhibit any problems

Poor- one problem evident

At Risk- several problems evident in collection

Housing: Rate the physical condition and appropriateness of the films' containers and if their overall position in storage is of the correct orientation and provides adequate support and ease of retrieval.

Enter one of the following codes:

Good- films stored properly

Poor- some ideal storage conditions not met

At Risk- film is stored in damaged, rusty or original cardboard cans or boxes. Use the comments field to specify housing problems.

Dates: Enter the bulk dates covered by the materials in the collection. Enter as a span of years, or as individual years if there are years skipped, or a combination of both.

Subject: Assign at least one subject, and no more than three, to each collection from a selected Survey Subject List. (an appendix was provided).

Comments: Enter any information that elaborates on the Survey fields above or provides significant additional information about a collection

Ratings Criteria

Historical Society of Pennsylvania, revised October 2001

A much more concise criteria but similar to the Nebraska model in what it evaluates. A brief description of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP) ratings elements follows.

Intellectual Access Rating: Assess the finding aids to the collection. A good finding aid includes some overall description of the collection and a folder- or item-level inventory for the entire collection.

5. Researcher has excellent access to collection: good finding aid, RLIN online catalog record, card catalog with added entry cards

4. Researcher has good access to collection: finding aid with folder- or item-level inventory but no overall description, RLIN online catalog record, card catalog entry

3. Researcher has fair access to collection: finding aid is substandard or there is no finding aid but there is RLIN online catalog record or it has card catalog entries that are sufficient

2. Researcher has poor access to collection: there is no finding aid but there is RLIN online catalog record or card catalog entries not sufficient for access

1. Researcher has no access to collection: there is no finding aid, no RLIN online catalog record and no card catalog entry

Research Value Rating: A collection is considered valuable to researchers to the extent that it includes relatively rare, extensive, or detailed information on topics that have received

considerable prior attention, are gaining currency, or have apparent potential to attract significant researcher interest. This ranking also looks at the rarity, extensiveness and detail of the documentation on a topic.

How frequently over the past five years have researchers sought material on topics in a collection?

How rare is a collection's documentation of a topic?

How extensive is that documentation?

How detailed is it?

<u>Interest Ranking</u>	Value	<u>Documentation Quality (DQ) Ranking</u>
Very High	5	Very Rich
High	4	Rich
Moderate	3	Moderately Rich
Slight	2	Incidentally Valuable
Negligible	1	Slight

The sum of the Interest Ranking and the DQ Ranking can range from a high of "10" to a low of "2" and comprises the Research Value Rating (RVR).

For instance photocopies lose interest points and possibly DQ points.

Physical Condition Rating: This rating applies to the paper, photographs and other types of materials found in individual collections.

5. Excellent: little damage with no further deterioration expected.
4. Very Good: little damage with some further deterioration possible, due to the mixed quality of the material
3. Good: expected deterioration with some further deterioration possible
2. Fair: somewhat worse than expected deterioration with some further deterioration possible
1. Poor: significant damage/deterioration that makes collection difficult to use

Quality of Housing Rating: This is the containers, not the physical items within them.

5. Collection housed completely in acid-free boxes and folders in good condition, have reasonable amount of material in them, and are the correct size for the materials housed.
4. Collection housed partially in acid-free boxes and folders in good condition with most having reasonable amount of material in them, and most are the correct size for the materials housed.
3. Collection housed in non-archival boxes and folders that are in good condition with most having reasonable amount of material in them, and most are the correct size for the materials housed.
2. Collection housed in non-archival boxes and folders with a significant number not having reasonable amount of material in them, and not the correct size for the materials housed.

1. Collection housed in non-archival boxes with some items loose on shelf and the majority do not have reasonable amount of material in them, and are not the correct size for the materials housed.

Physical Access Rating: This rating measures the level of a collection's physical arrangement.

5. Full arrangement to item level.

4. Arrangement to file level.

3. Rough arrangement by date, document type, function, source or other characteristic. Series not fully established, researchers often must work through voluminous extraneous material to locate pertinent items.

2. Partial or superficial arrangement and /or non-standard housing and labeling discourage use except with special staff assistance.

1. Totally unarranged, documents not yet removed from envelopes, unfolded or flattened.

Physical Condition and Access Questions:

Given the research value of a collection, what needs to be done to make that collection physically accessible?

What needs to be done to make that collection intellectually accessible?

How does the physical condition of the collection affect access?

When do the damage/deterioration and the value of the collection justify copying, filming or preservation/conservation treatment?

**Toward an Appraisal Model for Audio Materials in Regional archives & Historical Societies
By David Baldwin, Association for Recorded Sound Collections Journal, XXXV/ ii 2004**

Although aimed at sound recordings, Baldwin's appraisal model could be broadened to moving images. A brief review of his Appraisal Model for Audio Materials (AMFAM) follows.

This model allows for three essential areas of analysis in the identification of sound materials: Provenance, Modality and Form. It also provides three basic criteria for making archival appraisal decisions: Cost, Value and Control (each of which are divided into subsections, providing a total of fourteen criteria to be applied to each potential acquisition). The AMFAM model was conceived to deal primarily with 20th Century recordings and provides a weighted template to be applied within the context of an institution's own mission and collecting policies.

Provenance: can also be thought of as "source."

Government or Institutional: This includes material generated by government agencies or programs. This also includes internal records such as dictation or committee conference tapes as well as publicly released materials such as instructional cassettes and publicly funded

broadcast programming. The records can be either internal or external in nature and are produced to document one or more essential functions of the creating body or agency.

Business & Corporate: This includes audio materials created by corporations and for-profit businesses in the course of their routine functions, mergers, bankruptcies and other disruptions. This encompasses both internal and public records including dictation tapes and all forms of sound-oriented media advertising.

Non-Commercial: Sound recordings created by individuals that are unrelated to their official functions within an organization or business. Such items as audio diaries, private musical functions and other home recordings would be included here. This category is most closely akin to personal papers and manuscripts within a paper-based archives collection.

Commercial: This final subcategory encompasses all recordings produced and sold commercially, whether a business enterprise or a private organization, group or individual generates them. The master tapes and assembly materials that generate them would fall under the "Business & Corporate" subcategory. Government generated materials that are sold to the public would be classed under "Government or Institutional".

Format: can also be referred to as "modality."

Mechanical: Formats that do not utilize magnetic tape or wire to reproduce sound. This includes all forms of analog audio discs and cylinders and other obsolete grooved and/or stamped media.

Magnetic: Sound recording on analog magnetic tape, wire and belts. This includes all analog and digital audiotapes, including audiocassettes, carts and open reel tapes.

Digital: Sound recordings on digital media, including but not limited to all configurations and formats of digital audio discs. This does not include MP3s and other cyberspace files that fall outside the scope of the present AMFAM.

Type: can also be thought of as "specific form." This AMFAM typology includes all existing non-cyberspace-generated varieties of recorded audio material produced. Type can be thought of as an open-ended field to accommodate a wide-ranging universe of different recording 'products.'

Cost: Cost is often the pivotal factor in appraisal. The AMFAM model takes a pragmatic approach to budgetary limitations except in cases where the host institution becomes the repository of last resort and there are no overriding control issues with the material. The four constraints to be considered are: **storage, preservation, reformatting, description & access.**

Value: Value is the most "visible" factor in appraisal. The AMFAM model takes a comprehensive approach with "absolute" value and value specific to the repository involved in appraising the material. The value constraints in this model are:

Relevance to Collection: A "relative" value. How does this material fit within the context of my institution's mission and collecting policies?

Rarity and Monetary Value: An "absolute" value relating to the commercial market demand and selling price for the audio material in question.

Uniqueness of Content: Another “absolute” value. Unique and proprietary audio materials with significant primary mission-based value to the repository involved should be retained even in spite of other preservation and storage issues.

Sound Quality and Reproducibility: Another “absolute” value. Dictated by the physical recording medium, its current condition and the original quality of the audio recording itself.

Completeness and Documentation: An “absolute” value. This is a primary consideration when appraising any form of audio material. Documentation provides provenance information and often other information that is necessary to determine the other values listed here.

Informational Content: Either an “absolute” or “relative” value depending on the type of archival repository involved and its mission and collecting policies.

Control: The AMFAM model takes a pragmatic approach that delineates four variables relating to the intellectual, legal and physical control of recorded material.

Copyright and Intellectual Property Ownership: Archivists should be mindful that copyright is a finite protection and that a repository can sometimes “wait out” and expiring copyright.

Retention and Access Restrictions: How will your repository be empowered to dispose of the collection, in part or entirely, when internal policies or conditions create a need to divest?

Stability and longevity of Format: This is the fragility of the media themselves. Does the repository have the resources to properly store, maintain and/or reformat the materials being appraised?

Security and Risk Management: It is the responsibility of the archival management team to provide a safe environment from flood, fire, other environmental threats and theft.

Each of the values and constraints can be given a weighted value from 1-4. Weights are based upon both the University of Maryland Libraries Preservation Committee’s *Numerical Data for Setting Preservations Project Priorities* as well as the author’s own experience.

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