



Simplified Audiovisual Item Inventory INSTRUCTIONS

Introduction & Resources

This page offers guidelines and explanations on how to use the Simplified Audiovisual Item Inventory provided by the Community Archiving Workshop and Recollection Wisconsin. You have been provided an Excel spreadsheet version of that inventory template in this packet--this is your copy, and you may modify the fields as you see fit for your own collections. In addition, a guide to identifying audiovisual formats is included in this packet.

Using this inventory template, you will be documenting metadata, or details, for audiovisual items that can mostly be gathered from looking at the objects themselves. The Guide to Identifying Audiovisual Formats included in this packet will aid you in visually identifying the many different formats you might encounter. Keep in mind that you may not be able to fill out every detail for every object, but if you decide you want to playback items in your collection to gather more details, visit Recollection Wisconsin's website to learn more about loanable kits for inspecting and playing back audio and video formats that will be available in summer 2021.

An item-level inventory can help you make plans and priorities for digitization of your audiovisual collections to preserve and increase access to the content. This inventory can be used to estimate the cost of digitization, and can be vital to tracking the progress of work whether you are reformatting your material in-house or with an outside vendor.

If you would like overall guidance on how to get started using this document to inventory the audiovisual collections at your institution, please contact [Recollection Wisconsin](#) to set up a short consultation.

Included below:

- Getting Started on Your Inventory Project
- Inventory Sheet Data Entry Guide
- Guide to Understanding Audiovisual Formats
- Simplified Audiovisual Item Inventory Template [attached as a separate file]

Getting Started On Your Inventory Project

- **Preparing your sheet & items**

The first step is to decide what you will be inventorying and to get your inventory sheet ready. We suggest saving the provided template as your master document, and creating a copy and renaming it to match your specific library, museum, or archive and collection. If you are working in Excel, remember to save your work often! If multiple people will be working on the inventory, you can upload the Excel file to google drive and share the link to the file with everyone who needs it to enter data. If your items do not already have unique IDs and you plan to add these items during the inventory process, you should gather some paper labels or a marking pen to write the identifiers on your object. Finally, a ruler can be useful when identifying formats.

- **Understanding how the inventory sheet works**

In the Excel inventory template, we have entered data for the sample item pictured here in the second row. It may be useful to look this sample data over before you start your own inventory. Remember that each row in the sheet represents a single physical item, and it will be common to not be able to fill out every field for every item. The inventory is the first step in a longer process and your goal for now is to get a baseline amount of information to start making preservation plans and priorities.



- **Understanding how to identify different audiovisual formats**

The provided guide to understanding audiovisual formats, located at the end of this document, contains a wealth of information and images which will assist you as you are inventorying. If you come across an item whose format you do not recognize, check it against the images included in the guide.

- **Understanding how to enter data in the inventory sheet**

An explanation for the meaning of each column and how to enter data can be found below.

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Storage Location | Enter the permanent storage location of the item here. Entering the permanent location, whether a box number, shelf number, or the name of a room, can help you link the item on this inventory back to the item itself. If unknown, leave blank. |
| Item ID # | Unique ID assigned to and written on the item that will help match the item back to this inventory sheet. Could be a barcode, or could be a temporary number or letter-number combination assigned by the person doing the inventory. For example, if you're assigning unique IDs, you can use the following format: year/period/fourdigit number (2018.0456). If you assign unique IDs, make sure to label it clearly on the item. |
| Accession # | Use if applicable. This is a number that would have been assigned to the item or collection prior to the inventory being taken. If unknown, leave blank. |
| Collection Name | If the item is part of a larger identified collection, please list the name of it here. If unknown, leave blank. |
| Title on Item | Clearly indicated title on label, or specified by collection stewards. If no title is listed on container or case, and you can't watch or listen to content, leave blank. You can also create a meaningful title based on the content if one doesn't exist. |
| Date on Item | Transcribe date written on the container. Add as much details as is available or leave blank if unknown. Format as: YYYY-MM-DD or YYYY-MM or YYYY |
| Duration of Content | Run time of content, if known. format as hh:mm:ss (hour:min:sec). If you are not sure of the runtime of the content, but the tape has a listed maximum runtime from the manufacturer, you can enter that to help with estimates. If unknown, leave blank. |
| Content Description | If information regarding content is available, list it here. This can come from labels or from viewing/listening to material. On audio or video info may be recorded on labels, on photos or films, it may be visible at a glance, recorded on labels. If unknown, leave blank. |
| Label Information | Any additional relevant info as it is recorded on item label(s). If no additional information is listed on the label or container or object, leave blank. |
| Condition Notes | Enter any information you can determine about the condition from looking at the object or from viewing or listening to the content through playback. For example: dusty, case cracked, case missing, evidence of mold, loose wind, slide cracked, sticky, smelly, footage is fuzzy, audio is unclear, etc. |
| Medium | What is the medium of the item? Film, video, audio, or a photo print or negative? See the included visual guide if you need help identifying an object. Do not leave blank. |
| Format | Additional detail about the medium if known. See the included visual guide if you need help with identifying the format of an object. If unknown, leave blank. |

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Medium Carrier | What is the media stored on? For example, audio & video can be in plastic cassette cases (VHS, audio cassettes, etc) or on open reels. See the included visual guide if you need help identifying the media carrier of an object. If unknown, leave blank. |
| Brand | Brand of media, if known. If you are having difficulty identifying other aspects of the object, like format or media carrier, noting the brand may be a good clue to help a digitization lab figure this out. This will often be stamped on the case or the object itself. For example, SONY, Fuji, etc. If no brand is visible on the object, leave blank. |
| Color/B&W | If the item has visual content, is it in color or b&w? Might be listed on tape label or visible while inspecting film or slide. If unknown, leave blank. |
| Audio Information | If there is audio content, list here. Copy whatever is listed on label, or discovered through playback. If unknown, leave blank. |
| Access Restrictions | Are there any known restrictions on who can view this item based on the content for legal or ethical reasons? If unknown, leave blank. |
| Notes | This is a field to include any additional information you think could be useful that did not fit into any of the other fields. If nothing to add, leave blank. |
| Date Inventoried | Enter the date the item was inventoried. Format as follows: YYYY-MM-DD, 2018-10-09. |
| Inventoried By | Enter your name here. |

Audiovisual Formats

A guide to identification



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IDENTIFICATION AUDIO – MAGNETIC

Sound recordings on analog magnetic tape: may be tape cassettes or reels.

1/4 inch audio tape (reel-to-reel)

- Introduced widely in 1948, though earlier prototypes developed as early as 1928
- Used for professionals and amateur recordings
- Either polyester or acetate substrate



1/8 inch audiocassette

- Introduced in 1962
- aka Compact Cassette or Standard Audio Cassette
- Used for professionals and amateur recordings
- Likely polyester or acetate substrate



IDENTIFICATION AUDIO – MAGNETIC

Microcassette

- Introduced in 1969
- Aka mirco-cassette
- Used primarily for dictation and amateur recordings
- Polyester substrate



Minicassette

- Introduced in 1969
- Aka mini-cassette
- Used primarily for dictation and amateur recordings
- Polyester substrate



IDENTIFICATION AUDIO – MAGNETIC

WIRE

- Introduced in 1939
- Small spool of fine metal wire
- Spools about 2 ½" diameter, 5/8" thick
- Used primarily for dictation and amateur recordings
- Superseded by magnetic tape recording in 1950s



DIGITAL

Sony Digital Audiotape (DAT)

- Introduced in 1987
- Most common digital magnetic audio format
- Similar in shape to audiocassette, but thicker
- Used for professionals and amateur recordings
- Likely polyester substrate



IDENTIFICATION AUDIO – GROOVED MEDIA

CYLINDER

- Introduced in 1877, manufactured through the later 1920s
- Used for professional and amateur recordings
- Foil, wax and celluloid substrates
- Black is most common color; also brown, blue and beige
- Name of the recording often inscribed on the beveled edge of the cylinder



DISCS

- Introduced in 1895
- AKA gramophone, phonodisc records
- Used primarily for professional, but amateur and dictation recordings exist
- The dominant form of domestic audio in the 20th century
- Various coatings and substrates. See following examples



IDENTIFICATION AUDIO – GROOVED MEDIA

DISCS continued:

Shellac Based

- Manufactured between mid 1890s and 1950s
- 10" and 12" diameter are the most common sizes
- Brittle and will shatter if dropped
- 78rpms
- Commercially produced



Nitrate or acetate coated, metal or glass based

- Manufactured between mid 1890s and 1950s
- Used as instantaneous recording discs, likely unique objects
- AKA acetates, instantaneous discs, lacquer discs
- 16" diameter



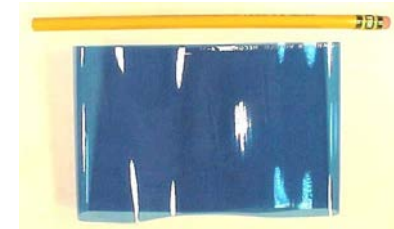
Vinyl based

- Introduced in 1948
- 33 1/3rpms, 45rpms & 78rpms
- 7", 10" or 12" diameter
- thinner and lighter in weight than shellac or coated discs

IDENTIFICATION AUDIO – GROOVED MEDIA

BELT

- Introduced in 1947
- AKA Dictabelt or Memobelt
- 3.5" wide 12" circumference
- Color: red (1950-1964), blue (1964-1975) or purple (1975 onwards)
- Used primarily for dictation and amateur recordings



IDENTIFICATION OPTICAL DISCS – Audio & Moving Images

CD

- Introduced in 1989
- Variations of CDs: R/RW/ROM
- Used for professional and amateur recordings
- Typical capacity 700MB / 80min of audio



DVD

- Introduced in 1995
- Variations of DVD: R/RW/ROM, etc.
- Used for professional and amateur recordings



LaserDisc

- Short-lived consumer video disc format (late 1970s-1990s)
- Looks like a DVD or CD but larger and heavier
- Will usually be in a cardboard sleeve like an LP



IDENTIFICATION MOVING IMAGES - FILM



35mm



16mm



8mm



Super 8

35mm

- Introduced in 1895
- Primarily used by professionals but amateur recordings exist
- Nitrate, Acetate and Polyester substrates
- 35mm wide, perforations on both edges.
- Silent or sound, color or black and white
- Negative, positive, sound only (either magnetic or optical), composite.



IDENTIFICATION MOVING IMAGES - FILM

16mm

- Introduced in 1923
- Used by amateurs and professionals
- Acetate and Polyester substrates
- 16mm wide, perforations on one or both edges
- Silent or sound, color or black & white
- Negative, positive, sound only (either magnetic or optical), composite.



8mm

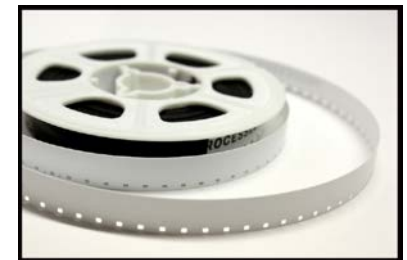
- Introduced in 1932
- Used primarily by amateurs, but commercial productions were made available on this format for home use.
- Acetate and Polyester substrates
- 8mm wide, perforations on one edge*
- Color or black & white.
- Usually silent, but magnetic sound available
- Negative, positive, composite



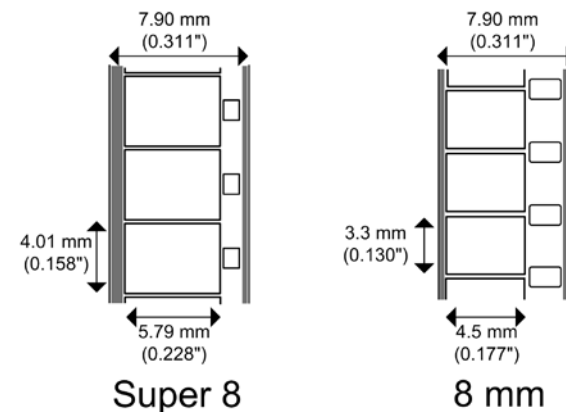
IDENTIFICATION MOVING IMAGES - FILM

Super 8mm

- Introduced in 1965
- Used primarily by amateurs, but commercial productions were made available on this format for home use.
- Acetate and Polyester substrates
- 8mm wide, perforations on one edge*
- Color or black & white.
- Silent or sound (mostly magnetic, rarely optical)
- Negative, positive, composite



* Super 8 and 8mm are both 8mm wide, but the perforation of Super 8 is smaller.



IDENTIFICATION MOVING IMAGES – VIDEO (Magnetic)

Sound recordings on analog magnetic tape: may be tape cassettes or reels.

Many formats, especially cassettes, will have format names on the object.

VHS

- Introduced in 1976
- Variation: S-VHS
- Used for professional and consumer recordings
- Cassette, 1/2" tape width



3/4" Umatic

- Introduced in 1971
- Variation: 3/4" Umatic SP
- Used for professional and amateur recordings
- Cassette, 3/4" tape width



IDENTIFICATION MOVING IMAGES – VIDEO (Magnetic)

2" Quad

- Introduced in 1956
- In use through early 1980s
- Used for professional recordings
- Open reel, 2" tape width



1" Type C

- Introduced in 1978
- In use through 1990s
- Used for professional recordings
- Open reel, 1" tape width



1/2" Open Reel

- Introduced in 1965
- In use through later 1970s
- Used for professional and consumer recordings
- Open reel, 1/2" tape width



IDENTIFICATION MOVING IMAGES – VIDEO (Magnetic)

ANALOG continued:

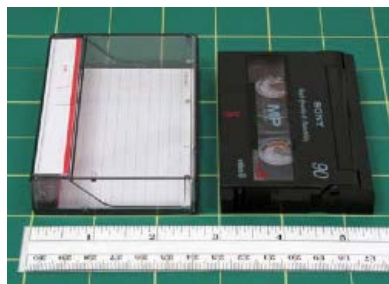
BetacamSP

- Introduced in 1986
- Variation: Betacam, introduced in 1982
- Used for professional recordings
- Cassette, 1/2" tape width
- Cassette & case is usually grey and/or black



Video8

- Introduced in 1986
- AKA 8mm
- Variation: Hi8, introduced in 1989
- Used primarily for amateur recordings
- Cassette, 5/16" (8mm) tape width



Other Analog video formats to look out for:

- Betamax

IDENTIFICATION MOVING IMAGES – VIDEO (Magnetic)

DIGITAL

Video recordings on digital magnetic tape will be in cassettes

Many formats, especially cassettes, will have format names on the object.

Digital Betacam

- Introduced in 1993
- AKA DigiBeta
- Used for professional recordings
- Cassette, 1/2" tape width
- Cassette & case is usually blue and/or grey



MiniDV

- Introduced in 1995
- AKA DV or DVC
- Used for professional and amateur recordings
- Cassette, 1/4" tape width



Other Digital video formats to look out for:

- D2
- D3
- DVCam/DVCPro
- Digital 8