

**The Future of Present Audiovisual Research Documents - Have we got strategies to ensure sustained access to primary source materials representing the basis of our present knowledge?**

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For many disciplines audio - and more recently video recordings - have opened new horizons, often forming the only basis for many aspects of academic disciplines like anthropology, ethnomusicology, oral history and linguistics. Our present knowledge is reflected in an impressive amount of publications based on original field recordings, which generally have been published & - if at all - only selectively in the form of LPs, CDs, or now DVDs. According to an estimate partly based on the outcome of Project TAPE, 80% of these primary audiovisual research documents are still outside archival custody, sitting on the shelves of research institutes or lying in the drawers of fieldworkers without adequate preservation policy. Mainly due to imminent unavailability of replay equipment, the time window left for bringing these sources into digital repositories is generally estimated to be only 15 - 20 years. In order to prevent their irretrievable loss, systematic measures must be taken to ensure their survival by bringing them at least selectively into safe digital custody. What strategies can be developed to ensure sustained access to these documents that reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of humanity?