Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

Describing AV in AT Resource Records

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McShea, Megan
3/13/2015

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Introduction: General Principles

These guidelines are designed to help processing archivists describe audiovisual records in finding aids using EAD [1] and DACS[2] standards in the Archivist's Toolkit environment. Instructions for processing and basic description of AV material in collections are integrated into AAA's general processing manual and general guidelines for using AT AAA, but more detailed guidelines for a variety of audiovisual description questions are found in this document.

Finding aids are designed to provide research access to all materials within the context of the entire manuscript collection. The objective is not to record every bit of technical metadata possible for AV media, but to provide enough information to enable intellectual access (the user should know what the content of the recording is), and physical access (the user and reference staff should know how to access the material), and to describe the relationships among records in the collection (the user should know how the recordings in a collection relate to each other, and to other things in the collection).

For any repository with AV material in its holdings, it is important to have procedures in place for providing reference access to recordings, and to fully understand a repository's capacity for playing and copying archival AV media for research access. The process of providing access to a recording may require knowledge of technical specs beyond those recommended for inclusion in AV description here, but those specs are discoverable on an on-demand basis, and/or they can be maintained in another system. For characteristics like playing speed or duration, for example, which are often unknown without playing media, the requirement to include such metadata in a finding aid puts an unnecessary burden on processing archivists. For collection management purposes at AAA, additional information about condition and other technical aspects of our AV material is kept in an internal database, but it is not included in our public-facing collection description.

AAA's processing manual and these guidelines advise against a couple of common tendencies for AV arrangement and description, namely, 1) the tendency to remove all AV material to its own series based on its format, or even to separate it from a collection, regardless of its relationship to other material in the collection, and 2) the tendency to describe AV material at the item level. While these practices may be appropriate in certain cases, they should not be automatically applied to AV recordings found in mixed-media collections. Following the general principles of archival arrangement and description outlined in DACS, archivists should always consider grouping and describing AV material in the aggregate, and taking advantage of the hierarchical structure of finding aids to allow AV components of description to inherit description from a higher level. Also as a basic principle, the arrangement and description of AV material should express its relationships to other records in the collection regardless

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[1] See the Encoded Archival Description Tag Library, Version 2002, Official site maintained by the Library of Congress: http://www.loc.gov/ead/tglib/element_index.html

[2] *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* is currently available in pdf format from the Society of American Archivists website: http://files.archivists.org/pubs/DACS-2007.pdf

of format. For further guidance on processing collections with AV material, see the companion documents "AV Arrangement" and "AV Levels of Processing."

The goal of these guidelines is to answer most of the potential questions that can arise with the variety and complexity that AV materials can present during processing, but for many collections, only a small portion of the guidelines will be applicable.

Organization of the Guidelines in this Document

Guidance is organized in three parts: collection-level description, series-level description, and folder/item-level description. Each part has sections for one or two of the main tabbed sections of the Archivist's Toolkit interface: "Basic Information" and "Notes, etc." AT field names are listed in bold with their corresponding EAD tag in red. Examples are highlighted in yellow.

Each section also notes whether the field is applicable for minimal, intermediate, or full processing. Fields marked MINIMAL are required at all levels of processing. Fields marked INTERMEDIATE are suggested for intermediate or full level processing. Fields marked FULL are suggested for full-level processing.

It is fine to include descriptive information labeled INTERMEDIATE or FULL when processing to a lower level. Archivists can use their judgment as to the effort involved and benefit to the researcher.

I.   Collection-level description

A. Notes, Etc., collection-level

1.   Conditions governing access note (<accessrestrict>), *MINIMAL*

If there are *any* audiovisual materials in the collection that do not have access copies, include the following statement in a "**Conditions governing access**" note:

Example:

Use of archival audiovisual recordings with no duplicate access copy requires advance notice.

2.   Existence and Location of Copies note (<altformavail>), *MINIMAL*

Include an "**Existence and Location of Copies**" note if there are any access copies, analog or digital, for any of the audiovisual materials in your collection at the time of processing. Use the words "all" or "some" rather than specific numbers.

Any digital copies made since 2008, either in-house or by a vendor, have item records in the DCD that are not yet on the public site as of this writing. To see if any AV items have been digitized in your collection, search the internal website http://aaastaff.si.edu/index.cfm?fuseaction=Items.ListCollections.)

Examples:

All of the sound recordings in this collection were digitized for research access in 2009-2010 and are available at the Archives of American Art offices. Researchers may view the original reels for the archival notations on them, but original reels are not available for playback due to fragility.

Some of the video and sound recordings in this collection have been copied for research access and digital copies are available in the Archives of American Art offices.

If there are not access copies, either for a single item or series of AV material, do not make mention of this in the finding aid. We will not update the finding aids when we produce access copies, so any such note could soon become out of date and misleading to researchers.

II. Series-level description

A. "Basic Information" tab, series and subseries

1. Title **(<unittitle>)** *MINIMAL*

If the series is entirely composed of AV material, name the series by one of the following, in order of preference:

a. the formal title of the series if there is one; i.e. "Artscene" Radio Series; or

b.   the genre of the series, if the series contains one or two types of recordings; i.e. Interviews, or Writings and Lectures; or

c. the "general material designation(s)" for the type of media found; i.e., Sound Recordings, Video Recordings, and/or Motion Picture Films. Use one or more of these terms when the series contains a variety of content. Avoid using "Audiovisual Material."

See companion document "AV Arrangement" for typical placement of AV materials in standard series.

B. "Notes, etc." tab, series and subseries

1. Arrangement **(<arrangement>)** *MINIMAL*

If there are a large number of audiovisual recordings in the series, make reference to their archival arrangement in a series-level "**Arrangement**" note.

Example: *Sound recordings are arranged in rough alphabetical order by interviewee. Cross-references are provided for subjects occurring out of order on the physical tapes.*

2. Existence and Location of Copies (<altformavail>) *MINIMAL*

If a series contains a large amount of AV and most or all have archives-made access copies, enter a note in a series-level "**Existence and Location of Copies**" note.

Example*: <mark>All of the sound recordings have been digitized for research access.</mark>*

If there are not access copies, either for a single item or series of AV material, do not make mention of this in the finding aid. We will not update the finding aids when we produce access copies, so any such note could soon become out of date and misleading to researchers.

3. Scope and Content (<scopecontent>) *MINIMAL*

In your series-level "**Scope and Content**" note, include the intellectual content, format and quantity of any AV media as part of the narrative. Use the preferred terms for formats found in Appendix A.

Example: <mark>*This series contains 124 interviews with artists conducted by Colette Roberts, as well as scattered lectures, broadcast recordings, and other miscellaneous sound recordings created and collected by Roberts. Recordings are on 149 sound tape reels (1/4 inch) and 2 sound cassettes.*</mark>

III. Folder/Item-level description

A. "Basic Information" tab, folder and item-level

1. Level (attribute "level=" of the <c> tag) *MINIMAL*

Use file for folder or folder grouping from the AT drop-down list, or item for an AV item. Note that AV items are *intellectual* items and may be comprised of multiple pieces of media, or multiple copies of a single intellectual item. There can also be multiple intellectual items on a single piece of media, or multiple tapes comprising a single item. If listing AV items, d**escribe each *intellectual* item in a single component and record the number of pieces that make up the item, and/or copies of the item, in the physical description (see 3.A.4. Physical Description, folder and item level). If the extent is less than one, use one for extent number.**

2. Title (<unittitle>) *MINIMAL*

For folder and item titles, you can describe media singly or in groups, depending on the arrangement, level of processing, and the content of the material. You can use a formal title if one exists, or you can devise a title from some combination of the creator name, subject, genre, location, or some other logical descriptor.

Media can be grouped like other types of records, with an aggregate folder grouping, and items listed under that grouping. Groupings often make the most sense by genre (eg "Meetings," "Interviews," "Lectures," or "Television News Clips") or an existing formal title encompassing many pieces of media (eg "Lecture Series at University of Minnesota," or "Interviews with Graffiti artists"). Media items may also inherit description from a higher level of description. For example, in a series called "Interviews," a name of the subject of the interview would be sufficient as a component title.

If you are dealing with the records of a complex media production, you can describe the entire group at the series, folder grouping, or folder level with the formal title of that production, or you can break it into components based on their content. If you do break it down, create components based on content, not format. For instance, a finished documentary is different content from raw footage that was shot for it, and so these two things should be described separately. On the other hand, multiple copies of the finished documentary on film and videotape should be described in a single component with multiple physical descriptions.

If you are including item-level unit-titles, you should be listing them as either box/folder/item, box/item, or a repeating box/folder listing, with a separate component for every item. Even if multiple items are found on a single tape, it is often easiest to understand if each item has separate item-level components. It is better to avoid using multiple item titles in a single component just because there are multiple tapes in a folder, or multiple items on a tape. See Appendix B for examples of these different cases.

Avoid using ambiguous labels found on the media as a unit title or folder heading. Strive to convey what the recording is, rather than what might be written on its case. If you don't understand what a label means, researchers won't either. Better to play the media to describe it adequately, or use the title "Unidentified (Sound or Video) recording" or "Unidentified Motion Picture Film" (See under MINIMAL, below). If that ambiguous archival label seems to add something to the description, but is not descriptive enough to be a unit title, you can include it in the "physical detail" field under physical description. See section 3.A.4.d for more guidance.

Note that motion picture film that is unlabeled can often be identified or at least dated by looking at the first few frames of the film, and identifying labels often appear on the leader (often white or colored plastic spliced to the head and tail) of the film. It will not hurt the film to unwind it for a few feet to inspect the film for labels or other information. It is also easy to mount the reel on rewinds to inspect the film for titles, dates, and content to aid in description.

See AV Archivist for help playing/identifying poorly labeled media.

MINIMAL

For minimally-processed collections and for media that we do not have the capacity to play in-house, it is acceptable to describe an unlabeled or ambiguously labeled recording as

"unidentified." In these cases, include its general material designation, e.g. "Unidentified Sound Recording." ***Do not use the media format as a title. Format should be recorded in a physical description.***

INTERMEDIATE and *FULL*

For collections to the intermediate or full level, all poorly identified recordings should be played if possible to describe their content in the finding aid. If we do not have a machine that can play the recording, or if it is in poor condition, it is still acceptable to describe it as "Unidentified" when processing a collection to these levels.

3.   Date **(\<unitdate\>)** *MINIMAL*

Include a known or estimated date for the unit being described.

FULL:

If the unit being described is from radio or television, and the date is a broadcast date, you may choose the date type "broadcast" under "Date Type" (attribute "type=" of the \<unitdate\> tag). You can also indicate the type of dates for a series in the series "Scope and content" note.

If you are entering components using Rapid Data Entry (RDE), if you want to specify date type, you will have to exit RDE and open the component's date element to do so.

4.   Physical description: **(\<physdesc\>)** *MINIMAL, INTERMEDIATE, & FULL*

Click on "Add Description" to open a physical description popup window.

Extent number and extent type are required for AV description at all levels of processing. The only other pieces of metadata that are required in the physical description at all levels of processing is 1) when there is a transcript, it should be noted in the Container Summary field (see section 3.A.4.c, below) and in the case of motion picture film, when you must enter the gauge (16 mm, etc.) in the Dimensions field (see section 3.A.4.e, below).

If you are using Rapid Date Entry (RDE), you can enter both the extent number and the extent type in the RDE screen. If you are using RDE and want to enter data in the Container Summary, Physical Detail, or Dimensions fields, you will have to close the RDE screen. A quirk of AT is that physical description entered in RDE does not appear in the resource record until it's been re-opened. To edit these fields of the physical description when using RDE, you must therefore save and exit your resource record, re-open the resource record, and open the physical descriptions from the component record.

a.   *Extent Number: (\<extent\>, along with extent type) MINIMAL*

Type the number of pieces of media being described in the component.

You can only count a single type of media in each physical description. If there are multiple types of media present in the unit being described, use multiple physical descriptions. Also, if there are physical pieces of media that are duplicates or access copies, create a separate physical description for them and distinguish between "original" and "duplicate" in the "physical detail" field (see section 3.A.4.d, below).

b. **Extent type: (<extent>, along with extent number). MINIMAL**

This is the drop-down list to the right of the "extent number" field. Choose the appropriate term from the list in Appendix A. See AV archivist for help identifying formats.

For motion picture film reels, the gauge (e.g 16 mm, 8 mm, and Super8 mm) will be noted in the "dimensions" section of the physical description (see section 3.A.4.*e* below).

c. **Container summary (an additional <extent> tag within the <physdesc> tag) MINIMAL for transcripts; FULL for anything else**

Use this field to add another way of expressing extent, such as duration, or to note the existence of a paper record that's filed with the media, such as a transcript, lab records, or tear sheets (a broadcast news media term for a form accompanying a recording that describes its content). **If you have multiple notes to add to a single field, separate them with a semi-colon.**

- Transcripts or other related paper records (*for transcripts, a note must always be included in the container summary. For other types of records, only include note about them for INTERMEDIATE processing*)

  Examples:

  Includes transcript. (note is required for transcripts at all levels of processing)
  Paper note found with original box.
  Film lab records found in film can.

- Duration *(FULL)*

  Duration is not a type of metadata that we have regularly included in finding aids because it is so rarely known, but if you know it and want to include it, put it in a container summary note. Include the label "Duration" and write the duration out using numbers and words, without abbreviations.

  Examples:

  Duration 2 hours, 35 minutes
  Duration circa 90 minutes

Be aware that the tape stock length (such as a 90 minute sound cassette or a 30 minute videocassette) is different from the known duration of the recording on the tape. Do not record tape stock lengths as duration.

d. *Physical detail* **(<physfacet>)** *INTERMEDIATE or FULL*

In general, use physical detail to record any aspect of the item's appearance, sound, or generation. **If you have multiple notes to add to a single field, separate them with a semi-colon.**

● Color or black and white, silent or sound (*FULL*)

These aspects of media recordings are often a part of item-level catalog records, but we don't typically include them in finding aids. If you want to include this information, "physical detail" is the place for it.

● Duplicates (and Originals) *(INTERMEDIATE)*

If the media has a duplicate copy in the collection, make a note in the "physical detail" section of the physical description for **both the original media and the duplicate media**. This note can be a single word: Duplicate(s) or Original(s). Only note copies that have physical media, not digital files.

If the duplicate is an old access copy made at AAA, you'll also add an "Existence and location of copies" note at the component level. See section 3.B.1, below.

Sometimes we have duplicates that have no corresponding original recording in the collection. The most obvious examples are recordings with content that pre-dates the existing media format, like a VHS video containing 1950s home movies, or a CD with 1970s interviews. Make a note of this in "physical detail" or, if it describes an entire series, note it in the series scope and content note.

This type of duplicate is considered an "archival original" because it is the only copy we have, but since we cannot verify its faithfulness to the original, it can be useful to note its status for researchers.

Examples:

Duplicate
Original
Copy of motion picture film original
Cassette is a copy made from an original sound tape reel. Location of original is unknown.

● quality of recording *(FULL)*

Examples:

Poor sound quality.
Sound is distorted at the beginning of the recording.
Poor video quality.

- Media labels *(FULL)*

    Use physical detail to transcribe labels on the media if you think they add to the description or are important to understanding its content or the context of its creation.

    Examples:

    Handwritten note on original box: "Iceberg"
    Handwritten note on original cassette: "Telephone conversation for article"

- Type of production element *(FULL)*

    This is particularly relevant for motion picture film and video, when you have multiple versions or types of elements that were created as artifacts of the production process. Although there are many terms used to describe parts of a film, typical types of elements found at AAA include:

    negative
    soundtrack
    workprint
    outtakes
    sound on film
    composite print
    optical soundtrack

This piece of description can also be put in a Unit Title for a component if you are listing multiple media parts of a production, as long as a more descriptive title for the production is also included, or is included at a higher level. See the AV archivist for help sorting out media from productions.

e. Dimensions *(<dimensions>)* film gauge: MINIMAL, other dimensions: FULL

Use this section of the physical description window to note the gauge of film reels (usually 16 mm, 8 mm, or Super8 mm).

You can also record other dimensions like diameter (for a sound tape reel, e.g. 7 inch or 3 inch) or footage length (for film, e.g. 1200 feet), but these are not required, and are often not very helpful to researchers. If you do list them, spell out the dimension label ("inch" not "in." or ') and separate by a comma and a space. List gauge first if applicable.

Examples of populated physical description screens in Archivist's Toolkit:

Physical Descriptions — Record 2 of 2

Extent Number: 4 — Film reels

Container Summary:

Physical Detail:
color, silent; film boxes labeled "stripe paintings" and numbered 1-4

Dimensions:
Super 8 mm

First | Previous | Next | Last | Cancel | OK

Physical Descriptions — Record 1 of 1

Extent Number: 1 — sound tape reels

Container Summary:
Includes transcript

Physical Detail:

Dimensions:

First | Previous | Next | Last | Cancel | OK

5.   Instances (attribute "label=" for <container> tag) *MINIMAL*

Click on "add instance" and choose "Audio" for any sound recording, "Moving Images" for any video recording *or* motion picture film, and "Mixed materials" if AV is found with other types of materials, or if sound and moving image are being described together.

In the "Add Instance" pop-up screen, there are three levels of containers you can use to indicate the location of the component being described. For each, container type is equal to the EAD attribute "type=" in the <container> tag, and the container indicator is the number or other identifier for that container. At AAA, we use Box/Folder, Box/Folder/Item, or Box/Item for AV media in collections as follows. **See** Appendix B, Instances: 4 ways of describe an AV group **for examples of the different approaches.**

In general,

- Use *Box/Folder* for scattered AV items in a series with paper and other materials present, or when each intellectual AV component has its own folder, or spans multiple folders.

- Use *Box/folder* or *Box/folder/item* for describing multiple AV items in a folder. In these cases, you can simply add the item-level instance where it's needed to list out items within a folder. You can also repeat the box and folder number for each item in the folder, without assigning item numbers. In either case, each intellectual AV item will be described in an individual component.

- Also use *Box/folder/item* for special boxes used within collection boxes, such as when cassette tapes are stored in shoeboxes. In that case, the shoebox can be numbered and treated as a folder, and the cassettes within it treated as items.

- *Box/item* may be best for series of all AV material that span an entire box or multiple boxes, particularly large-sized media that can be stacked or stored on end in a collection box. When using the Box/Item listing, you may still use folders to maintain physical order within the box, recording all item titles and item numbers on the physical folder. If you do not use folders, label the physical item's enclosure or case with its box and item number.

B.   "Notes, etc." tab, folder/item level

1.   Existence and Location of Copies (<altformavail>) *MINIMAL*

Use a folder/item-level "**Existence and Location of copies**" note when an access copy made by the Archives exists for single or scattered items in a series. The physical access copy should also have its own "physical description" in the basic information tab with the quantity & format of media, and a note in the "physical detail" field that it is a duplicate.

Examples:

Videocassette (VHS) is access copy.
Access copy available on 3 sound cassettes.

We will not update finding aids as items are digitized, but existing copies found in the collection during processing should be noted here. **If there is both a digital and analog access copy at the time of processing, the analog access copy can be discarded.**

2. General Physical Description **(<physdesc>)** *INTERMEDIATE or MINIMAL*

- Use when an audiovisual record exists in a folder or folder group with paper or other materials. (*MINIMAL)*

    Examples:

    Includes 1 videocassette (VHS).
    Includes 2 sound cassettes.

- Use to summarize the physical description of a complex audiovisual component being described in a single, simple note, rather than broken out into all the fields described above under physical description (section 3.A.4). This approach may be appropriate for media productions where a single component might have dozens of pieces of media associated with the component. *(MINIMAL)*

    Example: *Includes 4 film reels (16mm workprint), 4 soundtrack film reels (16mm full-coat mag), 2 original sound tape reels, and duplicates on 6 videocassettes (3 U-matic, 3 VHS).*

3. Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements **(<phystech>)** *FULL*

Use to include the technical facets of an audiovisual recording that require specific hardware or software capacities to access its content. Such details may include track formation, speed of recording, or recording mode such as PAL or SECAM for video. **We do not normally include this level of detail in AAA finding aids, but if you know something of this nature about the recording and want to include it, this is the place.**

Some descriptive standards that are more oriented towards audiovisual description include this type of metadata in the physical description area. The preference at AAA is to not include it at all. An assessment of the Archives' ability to play AV media is generally made in response to a reference request, at which time the capacity of the Archives to play an AV item is evaluated, and all efforts are made to share equipment across SI units to make material accessible if at all possible. Because that capacity is always evolving, it is best to avoid absolute statements of accessibility in our archival description.

4. Scope and Content (<scopecontent>) *FULL*

At the folder/item level, use a "Scope and Content" note for any added description of the content of recordings.

In most cases, there is no need to include this type of information, but if you have discovered something about the content of a specific recording during processing and want a place to put it, "Scope and Content" is usually a good place for it.

Use for:

- Unexpected content is found in a recording, such as fragments that are partially taped over

    Example: *Reel begins with a 70 minute fragment of a circa 1977 interview with Robert Irwin.*

- Content that does not match the label on the media

    Example: *Original label on reel reads "Josh Young, tape #2, side 1," but there is no recording of Josh Young on the reel.*

- Blanks or unrelated content, particularly at the beginning of a recording.

    Examples:

    First 37 minutes of recording is popular music.
    Interview begins 10 minutes into recording.

- When sequence of multiple pieces of media needs to be explained.

    Example: *Sequence of original recordings unclear, but appears to be cassette marked "afternoon tape" first, cassette marked "eve one" second, and reel marked "tape at house" third.*

- Use a scope note when creating a dummy component for a cross reference, such as when a separate recording is found on the same physical tape. Follow instructions for intellectual "see" and "see also" references in the AAA AT guidelines.

    Example:

    In the component that refers to the physical tape, note the additional recording:

    Reel also includes circa 43 minute interview with Bruce Conner, October 1974, on side 2 beginning around 46 minutes into tape; also found is a brief fragment of an interview with Paul Karlstrom

In the cross reference, create a dummy component with the subject of the additional recording as a unit title (in this example, Bruce Connor), and note the physical location in a "scope and content" note:

See Joan Brown, Box 1 item 11

For more instructions on "see" references, see the general AT guidelines, section 2.3.7.

- Use to note broadcast station and its location, if the recording was a radio or television broadcast. (If describing multiple episodes from a broadcast series, this information may fit better in a series or subseries title or scope and content note.)

  Example: *Broadcast by KPFK in Los Angeles, California*

- Type of media artwork (*FULL)*

  For collections containing media that is an artwork or part of an artwork, it may help researchers to specify exactly what the media object is and how it relates to the artwork. A useful resource for terminology is the "Inside Installations Glossary" (http://glossary.inside-installations.org/categories.php).

  Examples:

  Multi channel closed circuit video performance.
  Recorded artifact of interactive video and sound installation.
  Multi channel video and sound installation.

Multiple Scope and Content notes for a single component should be entered into a single note field in the following order, separated by a period: Content/AV content notes; "see" and "see also" references; oversized references.

Appendix A: Audiovisual Extent Types

The following extent types are available to use in the Smithsonian's Archivist's Toolkit production database. They are found in the dropdown list of the Physical Description popup window. As of this writing, other AV terms that are *not* to be used are still in the dropdown list. Please only use the following terms as described.

For series titles of AV series with mixed content, or folder/item titles when a recording is unidentified, use one or more of the three "general material designations":

- Sound recordings
- Video recordings
- Motion picture films

At the folder/item level, choose from the following terms in the drop-down list of the physical description pop-up window.

- sound cassettes
    - o   note: do not use "audio"
- sound cassettes (DAT)
- sound cassettes (microcassette)
- sound tape reels
- sound tape reels (NAGRA SN)
- sound wire reels
- sound discs
- sound discs (lacquer)
- sound discs (vinyl)
- sound discs (aluminum)
- sound discs (CD)
- sound discs (Minidisc)
- sound cartridges
- sound cartridges (Fidelipac)
- sound cartridges (8 track)
- sound cylinders
- sound track film reels
   videocassettes
- videocassettes (VHS)
- videocassettes (VHS-C)
- videocassettes (S-VHS)
- videocassettes (U-matic)
- videocassettes (Betacam)
- videocassettes (BetacamSP)

- videocassettes (Betamax)
- videocassettes (Video 8)
- videocassettes (Hi8)
- videocassettes (Digital Betacam)
- videocassettes (MiniDV)
- videocassettes (D-1)
- videocassettes (D-2)
- videocassettes (HDCAM)
- videocassettes (DVCAM)
- videocassettes (DVCPro)
- videocartridges
- videodiscs
- videodiscs (DVD)
- videodiscs (Blue Ray)
- videodiscs (laser)
- videoreels (2 inch)
- videoreels (1 inch)
- videoreels (1/2 inch)
- film reels
    - o   put gauge in "dimensions" and type of element in "physical detail"
- film cartridges
- film cassettes
- film loops

Appendix B: Instances: 4 ways of describe an AV group

Below are examples of 4 different ways to handle the container list for the same group of AV recordings. The first is the most minimal. The 2nd lists items but does not use an item instance, just repeats the folder number when there are multiple items in a folder. The 3rd uses the box/folder/item instance approach, with more detailed notes. The 4th uses a 2-level box/item instance, and should only be used when creating an item-level box inventory for an entire box.

Having the item-level instance will presumably be important down the road for linking digital AV surrogates to finding aids, so using either box/folder/item or box/item is recommended for collections where online access to the AV recordings is anticipated.

1. **Group described as a single component, with 3 physical descriptions, and 1 scope/content note:**

Processing archivists should not feel obligated to use the item instance, or even to include all the item-level labeling found on recordings in their description. A component-level scope note for a grouping with key access points can save time when entering data. In this case, the instance is box/folder.

Box   folder

6   20-24   Interviews with Graffiti Writers, 1972-1974

> *2 sound tape reels*
> *7 sound cassettes*
> *1 sound disc (CD)*
> Includes interviews with Tracy, Chi-Chi, Martinez, Lonnie, Phase 2, T-168, Cat, Cliff, Zest, and Cyde Pel

2. **Items listed individually, but with box/folder instance:**

Note that multiple items filed in a single folder are described separately, with the folder number simply repeated in the instance. This saves a couple of steps when entering data. The item list allows details like specific dates, titles, and physical descriptions to be associated with individual items.

Box   folder
6   Interviews with Graffiti Writers
6   20   "Graffiti Tapes," undated
> *2 sound tape reels*
6   21   "Meeting in studio with Tracy, Chi-Chi," undated
> *1 Sound cassette*
6   22   "Martinez Graffiti," 1973 December 20
> *2 Sound cassettes ; 1 and 2 of 3; 3 not found*
6   22   "Lonnie, T-168, Spring 1973," 1973

		1 Sound cassette
6	22	"Phase 2,T-168, Cat, use 1," 1974 March
		1 Sound cassette
6	23	"Jack in studio with graffiti writers," 1974
		1 Sound disc (CD) ; label reads
6	24	"Lonnie," 1972
		1 Sound cassette
6	24	"Tracy, Chi-Chi, Cliff, Zest, Clyde Pel in Studio," 1974 April 19
		1 Sound cassette

3. **Same as example 2, above, but using a box/folder/item instance method. Depending on how the items are filed, you can alternate between using box/folder and box/folder/item instances:**

Box	folder	
6		Interviews with Graffiti Writers
6	20	"Graffiti Tapes," undated
		2 sound tape reels
6	21	"Meeting in studio with Tracy, Chi-Chi," undated
		1 Sound cassette ; label reads "First side transfer from reel 2"
6	22 (1)	"Martinez Graffiti," 1973 December 20
		2 Sound cassettes ; 1 and 2 of 3; 3 not found
6	22 (2)	"Lonnie, T-168, Spring 1973," 1973
		1 Sound cassette
6	22 (3)	"Phase 2,T-168, Cat, use 1," 1974 March
		1 Sound cassette
6	23	"Jack in studio with graffiti writers.," 1974
		1 Sound disc (CD) ; label reads "Cut from the film Wild Style, which follows"
6	24 (1)	"Lonnie," 1972
		1 Sound cassette
6	24 (2)	"Tracy, Chi-Chi, Cliff, Zest, Clyde Pel in Studio," 1974 April 19
		1 Sound cassette

4. **Same as example 3, above, but using a box/item instance method:**

Use this method only when an entire box is being described at the item level. If mixed with folder-level description, AV components should have folder numbers, too, as in examples 2 or 3 above. Folders are still recommended to maintain physical order in the box, and multiple headings and item numbers should be written on the physical folder when there are multiple items in a folder.

Box	item	
6		Interviews with Graffiti Writers
6	1	"Graffiti Tapes," undated
		2 sound tape reels
6	2	"Meeting in studio with Tracy, Chi-Chi," undated
		1 Sound cassette ; label reads "First side transfer from reel 2"
6	3	"Martinez Graffiti," 1973 December 20
		2 Sound cassettes ; 1 and 2 of 3; 3 not found
6	4	"Lonnie, T-168, Spring 1973," 1973
		1 Sound cassette
6	5	"Phase 2,T-168, Cat, use 1," 1974 March
		1 Sound cassette
6	6	"Jack in studio with graffiti writers.," 1974
		1 Sound disc (CD) ; label reads "Cut from the film Wild Style, which follows"
6	7	"Lonnie," 1972
		1 Sound cassette
6	8	"Tracy, Chi-Chi, Cliff, Zest, Clyde Pel in Studio," 1974 April 19
		1 Sound cassette