

# **How do Small Archives Steward their Moving Image and Sound Collections? A Qualitative Study**

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## **Abstract:**

In assembling the book *Moving Image and Sound Collections for Archivists* (SAA, 2017), the author engaged in interviews with archivists to address the following research questions: how do non-audiovisual specific archives, especially those run by lone arrangers or small staffs, address their audiovisual collections? Specifically, what formats do they steward, how is format obsolescence and migration addressed, and how is long-term preservation attended to? Interview subjects were sought after via SAA's lone arranger listserv in November and December 2016. Interviews were conducted over the telephone and detailed notes were taken. The characteristics of the interview subjects include: one lone arranger for a religious organization in Oceania, one archive for performing arts non-profit in the Midwest, two archivists for small college archives in the New England and the Mid-Atlantic, and one archivist for a private college preparatory school in the Southwest.

Results reveal that small archives steward a wide variety of formats, including film, videotape, and audiotape, among other formats, and they are not necessarily limited to formats that were popular with consumers (e.g., VHS). Archivists are becoming increasingly aware of the need for format migration to more sustainable digital formats, and some have begun this work where others hope to begin. Vendors are used exclusively to reformat media, which are used not only for completing the work but also for their expertise on vintage media (e.g., identifying obscure formats). Some efforts to provide a digital preservation infrastructure have been made, however, the adoption varies across sites.

## **About the author:**

*Anthony Cocciolo* is Interim Dean and Associate Professor at Pratt Institute School of Information in New York City. His research and teaching are in the archives area. He completed his doctorate from the Communication, Media and Learning Technologies Design program at Teachers College, Columbia University, and BS in Computer Science from the University of California, Riverside.