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RADIO PRESERVATION TASK FORCE

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SAVING AMERICA'S RADIO HERITAGE:
RADIO PRESERVATION, ACCESS, AND EDUCATION

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RADIO ARCHIVISTS COMMITTEE

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SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 27, 2016

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The Committee met in the Room 0302J,
Hornbake Library, University of Maryland, 7649
Library Lane, College Park, Maryland, at 1:30 p.m.,
Patrick Feaster, Chair, presiding.

PRESENT

PATRICK FEASTER, Chair; Indiana University
RUTA ABOLINS, University of Georgia
JEANETTE BERARD, Thousand Oaks Library
ALAN BURDETTE, Indiana University
JONATHAN HIAM, New York Public Library
MARY HUELSBACK, University of Wisconsin
DAVID HUNTER, University of Texas
JERRY McBRIDE, Stanford University
LAURIE SATHER, Hagley Museum and Library
DAVID SEUBERT, UC-Santa Barbara, ARSC
JOHN VALLIER, University of Washington

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

1:39 p.m.

CHAIR FEASTER: So I think the final folks have been coming in after a tasty lunch. Welcome to the session of the Radio Archivists Committee, a group that I guess is coming into being just by virtue of us all assembling here today. I guess we're all members of the Radio Archivists Committee. Maybe that was the easiest line on your CV you ever earned.

(Laughter.)

CHAIR FEASTER: But so there hasn't been a great deal prepared here. I don't think we have a great deal of prepackaged comments to make, but that's because we're really envisioning this as kind of a general brainstorming session. Of all the sessions at this conference this is the one that strikes me as really most specifically dedicated to dealing with issues based by the people who have official care of particular holdings.

So I think this is probably the best use

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of our time is to just open things up to a general discussion of what are the issues that we face, what are the questions we have and how can we build on the momentum of having this many people together in the room to perhaps brainstorm towards a few solutions?

The folks up here at the front are listed in the program as invited participants, and so I think I will put them on the spot to go down the line and say something about general impressions about where things stand, what your concerns are that you would bring to this group and so on.

But since I wouldn't ask you to do anything I'm not willing to do myself, I have a few comments to kick things off with. But I just want to emphasize these are not meant by any means to be exclusive, so anything is fair game that is of interest to the folks here, particularly those who would fit the profile of radio archivists, but also sympathetic friends.

And I'll say that there are certainly

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things we could talk about involved in our own collections, those that we have personal responsibility for, but particularly useful I think are any observations or thoughts we can share about how to tackle issues that span collections, or that are involved in gathering in some of these materials that are particularly endangered out there that either are in the care of institutions that don't really prioritize that sort of thing, and certainly wouldn't send anybody here, but also those that are outside of this, the scope of institutional collections altogether.

And also just to point out that many of us are going to be here from institutions that hold radio recordings alongside large bodies of other types of recordings so that from a certain standpoint we want to focus on radio, but it strikes me that one of the valuable things about coming together with a focus on radio is it can in some senses serve as a model for thinking about other endangered subsets of our audio heritage. So I

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don't know that we necessarily need to be that prescriptive there, although radio will be the principal thrust of what I expect we'll be wanting to talk about.

This will just be a list of a few topics that we might want to discuss. I mean, one is the great challenge of gathering information, largely information about the holdings of radio archives. How many of you have been involved in this filling out of questionnaires and submitting profiles of various collections? Have you been part of the quotas that come up? Okay. Well, we need five collections by this date. Let's get your five collections by this date. Who's been filling some of those out? Anyone?

(Show of hands.)

CHAIR FEASTER: Okay. A few of you are familiar with that. Anybody else getting the emails?

(Show of hands.)

CHAIR FEASTER: Okay. So it's a

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daunting task, and I think a lot of us receive these summons to gather information about whatever institutions we're familiar with, but it's daunting. So I have familiarity from my work at Indiana University of what's involved in gathering information about holdings campus-wide. So just getting to all of the units on a campus. But what happens when you ratchet that up to the whole State of Indiana, or the whole Midwest? It is an incredibly daunting task, but it is one that the RPTF has set itself, so I think that that is something we may wish to discuss.

Kyle Barnett; is he here, was suggesting among other things this extension to town, county and state historical societies, among other places, but, you know, just this matter of gaining a general sense for what's out there.

This data that has been gathered in through these questionnaires, which essentially ask facilities of collections to describe their collections in rather broad terms are now being

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integrated into a database that William Vanden Dries is working on. It will ultimately be available through the ARSC web site. But that's collection-level information. At the same time we have these large aggregations of item-level descriptions like the AAPB material that we've heard about. But seeing what balance between these different levels of description we may need to strive for to cover everything that's out there as much as we can. What's the value to aiming for different levels of granularity?

Another piece, one of the great advantages of this conference is the bringing together of different communities that a number of different people have already commented on, and in particular how we can leverage the enthusiasm and knowledge of the radio scholars who are here to assist those of us who are charged with working with preserving particular collections to make decisions about prioritization for both preservation, organization, discovery and so

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forth. So how can we concretely make that happen rather than just talking about it?

But then secondly, enlisting these people's aid to write letters of support for funding efforts and so forth. How can we really take advantage of the proximity of these different groups to gain assistance in what we're trying to do?

Another big question though I think is going to be this matter of the practicality of scale in preserving radio, that the sheer numbers, the sheer quantities are staggering of what lies ahead of us, the timelines that we have to do this work and are incredibly distressing and humbling. So people have been saying there's a 10 to 15-year window for how many years?

(Laughter.)

CHAIR FEASTER: Presumably it does actually change over time, so whatever the window is now that's what we're looking at.

But there are different ways that we can approach this issue of scale, and at Indiana

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University we have a fairly industrial process built up now where I'm in charge of a group of graduate students that's sending about 3,000 items a week to be digitized largely through this industrial scale process handled by Memnon Archiving Services, our private partner. But that's only one model for this.

And one concern that David and I have discussed is that establishing best practices that are quite -- that set a very high bar serve an important purpose, but are they also excluding participants who otherwise could be part of letting a thousand flowers bloom, ensuring that in fact more material can get saved.

And just thinking here about Paddy Scannell's talk about what is crucial in radio, his view that it's this business of sincerity. Well, I wonder what sort of bit depth and sampling rate and A to D converters do you need to preserve sincerity?

(Laughter.)

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CHAIR FEASTER: It's a legitimate question. I'm not sure. But is posterity going to be more grateful to us for preserving 100 items very, very well, or 500 items pretty well, or 2,000 items that you can't hear and understand? And I don't know that this is a decision that any one constituency is qualified to make, but maybe we are a diverse enough crowd to tackle things like that.

Again, just a few initial thoughts, largely things that I just come up with attending the conference myself, but really I'd like this to be a general conversation and brainstorming session. I'll be taking notes. I am the chair of this session. I don't know if that makes me the chair of the Radio Archivists Committee or not.

(Laughter.)

CHAIR FEASTER: But I can be a good note taker, so please use this time for what concerns you. We'll take notes, we'll report those back. And if luck is with us, perhaps we'll even nudge our way towards some potential solutions.

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So we have a group invited participants here. I haven't spoken with many of them. This is all very ad libbed, so I just wanted just to emphasize that this will be sincere fresh talk, so not like Kate Smith where it's scripted and just sounds like it's coming from the heart. This really will be.

But by virtue of you being here in the front of the room, can I just ask that we start on one or the other end of the table and just throw out some initial thoughts here? What should we be talking about as a committee or a caucus? I'm really not sure what the administrative distinctions are here, but let's see what we can make happen.

MS. SATHER: Should we introduce ourselves?

CHAIR FEASTER: Yes, please do that as well. And apologies for not being able to do that myself.

MS. SATHER: That's all right.

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CHAIR FEASTER: But you know yourselves better than I do at this point.

(Laughter.)

CHAIR FEASTER: We'll all get to know each other quite well over the next hour or so. But we have to pick an end of the table to start.

MR. McBRIDE: Well, I vote for John.

(Laughter.)

MR. VALLIER: Okay. My name is John Vallier. I'm from the University of Washington in Seattle. And concerns? I have a concern for the ways in which sound recordings are seen on an institutional level. For example, it can be challenging to, at times, simply to locate collections or discover which archivists are responsible for their care.

Related to this are my concerns regarding institutional interpretations of IP issues and copyright. In short, I find some libraries to be overly cautious in applying fair use in ways that could otherwise promote access to

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their collections. This is especially the case with audio. I hope with the support of scholars who are interested in radio, for example, we can come together and persuade institutions to assert fair use and put more of this material online.

MR. HUNTER: Yes, hi. I'm David Hunter. I'm the interim head of the Fine Arts Library at the University of Texas at Austin. I'm also the curator of the Historical Music Recordings Collection, which does not have radio in its title, but actually includes quite a few radio materials including the collection of Irving Feld, who was the last producer/owner of various radio dramas such as *Inner Sanctum*, *Scarlet Pimpernel*, *Third Man* and that kind of stuff.

Another collection that we have on campus in the Benson Latin American Collection is called the "Human Rights Documentation Initiative." Again, that title wouldn't tell you that it has radio materials in it, but it does. It has recordings from the rebel radio station in El

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Salvador, Radio Venceremos, from 1981 to 1992. So if anybody wants to listen to Spanish language Latin American rebel radio, we have that.

The third thing I would say why Austin might be significant to y'all, and that is we're the only School of Library and Information Sciences, they used to be called, and now called the School of Information, that teaches audio preservation. William here is a fine graduate, and there are others around. Sarah Cunningham teaches this class. She is the audio archivist at the LBJ Library, the presidential library on campus and has been very active in ARSC. And if you have students who are interested in getting a thorough education, two semesters, an introductory class and an advanced class in audio preservation, please come to us.

MS. HUELSBACK: I'm Mary Huelsbeck from the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. We don't have a lot of radio audio in our collection. We have a lot of paper documentation, a lot of scripts. But

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I was part of the team in Madison who helped work on doing the survey throughout the Midwest of trying to find radio collections.

Yes, I think everyone has concern of copyright and funding and staffing. A concern that I would like to throw out for hopefully discussing is equipment, the technological obsolescence, trying to find machines, equipment to play the older formats, as well as the expertise of the engineers, the people who used to use the equipment on a daily basis. You can easily find manuals for a lot of machines online, but there's a lot of hands-on knowledge that engineers have that never got written down into manuals. So I'm hoping maybe that's something we can talk about, maybe work with the collector community as well on to address.

MS. SATHER: Hi, I'm Laurie Sather. I'm an audio-visual archivist at the Hagley Museum and Library. And for those of you who don't know, it's located in Wilmington, Delaware, and it collects on the history of American enterprise. So

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we collect papers of various companies like Wawa, the United States Chamber of Commerce, Avon, DuPont Company, etcetera. So in my department I have more than just audio. I also have moving images, sound recordings and photographs.

And I would say the concerns that I would have is that -- or comments I'd like to throw out there would be for audio-visual archivists, people that would consider themselves audio-visual archivists to empower archivists who would not consider themselves audio-visual archivists to not ignore the audio or video in their collections and to teach them how to process it and include it in their finding aids so that it will be discoverable.

And I definitely -- I'm a strong believer that you should process your collections before you digitize them. It makes it so much better. It's just a better work flow and better results in the end.

And then also just that not to discount the smaller institutions that maybe aren't

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radio-focused. Obviously we have a lot of business collections, but we do -- a lot of businesses had radio programs and had radio spots and commercials and things like that. So places that you wouldn't necessarily think to look.

MS. BERARD: Hi, I'm Jeanette Berard. I'm at Thousand Oaks Library. I don't know if you can all hear me. I'm not real loud. We have the American Radio Archives, which also hosts some early television, but it's a very large collection. We have an enormous number of transcription discs from radio, mostly scripted entertainment programs. We recently got in the Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters collection, which is a slice of everything that the members collected from paper to equipment to awards to recordings of every single description.

And we are slowly, slowly serving our finding aids out onto our web site, so you can find those now. It's gradual. We don't have a big staff or a lot of funding, but we are getting them out there. We do make things available to the public,

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but you do need in most cases to come in. Now for the print resources we do do remote research requests, so you can write in or call into us.

And I think our major issues all come back to funding. The main thing is the expense involved in doing any kind of processing or digitization is not well funded by our city. We're a city library, so we have the support of one city council, and if they don't fund us, they don't fund us. So grants are a big issue these days.

MS. ABOLINS: Hi, I'm Ruta Abolins and I'm at the University of Georgia at the Brown Media Archives and Peabody Awards Collection. It says Peabody Awards in the program, but that's not the only thing we've got. So we have the Peabody Awards. You all familiar with that? Okay. We turned 75 this year, the university had a mandate to collect everything that was going to be judged for the Peabody Awards. Almost every entry exists within the collection. That all started in 1940 obviously with radio.

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I'm just going to give you some stats about the collection. We have TV, radio and web entries and there are about 65,000 items in that collection—19,500 are radio. Radio is about 30 percent of the collection. 703 radio programs have been digitized. That's 3.6 percent of the collection, which is tiny. There's about 4,600 transcription discs, 7,800 CDs, 11,300 quarter-inch audio tapes, and then about 7,500 quarter-inch audio cassettes.

We're at the place now with our archive where we're digitizing by request. We don't have a lot of time to just go through our collections and digitize, so as folks want content, they can request it online and we will digitize it for them and make it available online. We are definitely -- and I'm in agreement with Sam about this, about pushing fair use and what you can be put online. We will put audio recordings online for people to listen to.

Most of our users don't come through the

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door at all. They are virtual users, which I think is something really important to what we do is to provide as much access as we can online, because that's what our users want. That's what the expectation is.

We also need to be very creative about our funding and how we get funding. And if someone wants to donate a collection, to ask for money for processing, for digitization, for preservation, I think those are really important things. We're now working with an Athens band. I don't know if you've heard of Widespread Panic.

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MS. ABOLINS: We have a really nice facility now and they want good storage for their materials, and they've got a bunch of DA 78s. And it's just a terrible, terrible format. But anyway --

(Laughter.)

MS. ABOLINS: -- so they came to us and we came back with, well, if you want this all

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digitized, you'll need to pay for someone to do the work. Now that actually is happening. We provide the space, we hired the person, but they're providing the funding for that person. And I see that as a good model. If you've got a collection out there where there is money behind it, use that to your advantage and not take it all on your institution.

MR. SEUBERT: Hi, I'm David Seubert. I'm with the University of California-Santa Barbara. I'm part of a special collections department that handles all sorts of materials: books, manuscripts. I happen to be the curator of the Performing Arts Collection, the largest component of which is the historical sound recordings collection, which for the most part is not radio.

And as I thought about the conference today and in listening to people talk, what has struck me is that what while we didn't intend to be a radio collection, by developing the specialty

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in terms of audio preservation in general we make a natural place for these sorts of collections.

Some of the collections we have, some have been there for a while, some are relatively new, but the Bernard Hermann CBS Symphony, which is a split collection with Library of Congress, the Eddie Cantor papers, David Rubinoff's radio collection. We have the Screen Guild Players collection. We have a much more recent -- which is kind of a counter-cultural political radio program called *Other Americas Radio* that was syndicated back in the '80s and '90s. So these collections have gravitated towards us even though we don't have radio in our title because they know that we can preserve them.

Like Ruta, we've moved into a brand new building with -- finally we have proper climate control for not just general archival collections, but specifically for audio-visual materials. So people see us as a partner for doing this kind of work. And I welcome that and I'm happy to be here

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because I think there's a lot of material out there still that is in closets and places like that that need homes.

But I guess my observation as well would be that I think like Patrick said this needs to be about a thousand flowers blooming, though. The work has to be pushed down. It all can't centralize up to big national libraries and ARL institutions and things like that. It's just not going to get done if we rely on that strategy.

I think there's a danger as well -- I've heard a lot of talk about funding from various agencies for preservation. I think that's a dangerous pill to swallow. They do provide funding, but most of these agencies, you have to demonstrate national significance for the collection. And to be perfect honest, a lot of the stuff that needs preservation doesn't have national significance, but regional significance is just as important to our history and culture.

And I think if we're all fighting for the same

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scraps from the endowments or whatever -- I don't know whether Josh or Jesse are in the room, but there are going to be a lot of important collections that are left stranded, and we need to convince our own funding structures to -- of the importance of our work.

And I think I believe in bootstrapping and I believe in pushing the work down to the bottom. And if you show that there's ambition and energy and you got grad students doing volunteer work or whatever it is, the funding does eventually start to trickle and can -- it won't ever turn into a torrent, but it's a slow building process. And I think that is an important component, and I'd love to hear more about what you all think about strategies for preservation as well.

MR. HIAM: All right. Good afternoon. My name is Jonathan Hiam. I'm the curator of the American Music Collection and the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound at the New York Public Library.

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I wouldn't really start with concerns, except that I just want to make sure people understand that the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives, often just called R&H, are actually -- Rodgers and Hammerstein materials actually comprise only a tiny bit of what's in there. I mean, this is -- it's a major archive. There's a good 700,000-plus audio items, let alone film and video, which is very -- is relatively ancillary to the collection, and a huge amount of text-based resources for all aspects of recorded sound, but in this case particularly for radio.

I just want to give you a quick background on what's going on now because I think it has some positive implications for everyone here who's presumably interested in radio, and that is NYPL has made a commitment to raising upwards of \$100 million over the next couple years to digitize all of the at-risk audio and moving image material. And that's across the entire institution, which many of you may know lovingly and others hatingly, is --

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it's a massive system.

There's four research libraries, which is what we're talking about in this case. And within those four research libraries there are actually nine curatorial divisions that have audio and/or moving image. R&H is the largest holdings, but by no means the only. And the reason I mention that is it's pertinent to a lot of the discussion here, which is even in a large institution, let alone a national or international kind of discourse about broadcast holdings we've discovered -- in the process of preparing for mass digitization we have learned what's being held down the street by our colleagues in other divisions in just that process alone of kind of creating an institutional awareness of our holdings has worked miracles in terms of the way in which we're able to serve our researchers across our research libraries.

As items become digitized, and more importantly described and can be surfaced on our digital assets, one of the great aspects to that

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is these materials become somewhat agnostic in their curatorial holdings, and which for radio I think is very important. Because as we've already talked, everyone's pretty much identified or made note of that unless your institution or whatnot is collecting specifically as a radio collection, most radio, at least in my experience, exists in archives because it entered through the side door, meaning it was part of a different audio collection, just one asset in a larger collection. Or in the case of R&H, which is situated in the performing arts library, the overwhelming bulk of the material entered the collection with some performing arts relationship, but not exclusively.

And so, these materials exist all over the place in lots of different ways, but I think one of the powers of digital curation in that sense is it becomes easier to put the pieces back together and it permits ways for people to come in with the varied lines and points of interrogation that we can see here. People have very different points of

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access to this material. So I think in that sense we're in a good place at NYPL to serve some of these needs.

I wanted to give you an example of some things. I was just looking at our quickly developing sort of archival portal, and I just put in radio, which is a scary thing to put in. Eight hundred seventy-seven collections came up across all the library, research libraries. Now not all of them have radio audio. In fact, most of them are text-based. I was just looking here. There's a collection from Ernest Hemingway's lawyers that have files on all of the permissions as for radio usage. And that's in the manuscripts division. And that's the first time I've seen it. So there are huge sort of resources available out there for everybody. And I think part of what institutions are bringing are identifying collections for people.

But I would just make this point as to one of the last sessions I was in. It's really

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important for researchers to meet an archivist or an curator, even if they're not somebody that's working with that material specifically to say this is what I'm interested in, because when we're down in the stacks in the back rooms and beautiful lovely annexed storage spaces we all have, we will come across something and think, dear Lord, we've collected this. It's been here for 50 years. I know there's somebody out there who wants it. And if -- most archivists strangely enough do have a pretty good memory for that. So we'll find you --

(Laughter.)

MR. HIAM: -- because we have all your information.

(Laughter.)

MR. HIAM: But I just wanted to -- a quick point. There's a lot of good stuff going on and people have to be patient and willing, but also let us know what you're interested in.

PARTICIPANT: Real quick question. Did you say \$100 million?

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MR. HIAM: Yes. I mean, it's not in the bank yet, but it's --

PARTICIPANT: But over --

MR. HIAM: As quickly as possible, yes.

PARTICIPANT: Okay. Thank you. Sorry. I about to tweet that and want to get it right.

MR. HIAM: We're getting there. Yes, we're getting there.

MR. McBRIDE: I'm Jerry McBride. I'm at the Stanford Music Library and Archive of Recorded Sound. It's a large sort of broad -- a large archive with a broad focus, but it contains a fair amount of radio programming.

I guess a few of my concerns have been touched upon quite a number of times during this conference. The metadata is one I think is one of the big concerns that I have. And I'm wondering if as archivists we can stop -- if we could not decouple metadata from digitization so much as we do. I find it kind of alarming that there are funding agencies

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who are ready and willing to step up and digitize your collection, but they say but we don't want to -- no, no, nothing for metadata. Well, okay. Well, that cuts out about a good half to more of the things that I have to digitize and preserve.

And I think we need to start talking about metadata and digitization really as a unit, because they don't -- they really have to -- you really have to have both if you're going to preserve these collections. You can't have one and not the other for preservation. So I think they're really -- when we're dealing with projects, they're one of a piece regardless of how our libraries may be organized into different units or divisions to deal with the different kinds of work flow.

Copyrights is another huge issue. I should say that at Stanford we not only have an archive, but we've also recently become a radio station of our own in a way. We had a project, the River Walk Jazz Archives, and we're currently streaming continuously that -- two streams

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simultaneously of that program. And in order to do so we got a non-commercial radio license to do it.

And working on that project it became -- it was very interesting, when the donors originally came to us and said, well, could you do this? We have all the rights. We thought, okay, well, fine. That's easy. But it didn't take long to drill down to find out there was a certain amount of third-party content there, and that immediately became pretty much a rights nightmare overnight.

So I think still many of the copyright things that we're dealing with are problematic. We've done a lot of work on it. We continue to do a lot of work on it, but there are still areas that are not really that favorable to institutions like ours trying to do this kind of work. So maybe we need to come up with creative ideas on how we can get our users still to the materials that we want them to have.

And I think the other thing is that just in looking at the entire scope of what's facing us

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in terms of radio preservation, how do we deal with large collections that sort of suddenly materialize as needing preservation? All of a sudden there's a radio station that goes out of business, changes hands or whatever and there's a large body of material and someone will come to you and say, oh, here, I've got all this stuff and I have to move it in X-number of days or weeks. And sometimes it's simply not possible to do that. And maybe there's not a real great solution for that kind of issue, but I think it's one of the concerns that's out there.

And possibly I'm also concerned about the current situation where as with radio stations in the past there's -- a number of things get saved simply because there's a physical thing that it resides on. And I'm wondering if we're getting more and more into a situation where there isn't really a physical thing out there anymore and what will happen as we move more and more into this -- into born digital materials that are moved from servers

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to servers or are somewhere up in the cloud or wherever they may be and how do we sort of deal with that kind of issue?

CHAIR FEASTER: Thanks to all of you. And it occurs to me that I didn't introduce myself, so I probably should do that. Apologies.

My name is Patrick Feaster. I am a media preservation specialist for the Media Digitization and Preservation Initiative at Indiana University. I wear a few other hats as well. I'm currently the president of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections. Go ARSC.

(Laughter.)

CHAIR FEASTER: But so there's a lot of things we could pursue here and I hope we'll pursue a number of them and also invite a number of folks out there in the audience to participate in that as well.

But just in terms of what I'm doing at Indiana, one thing that I would be interested to perhaps start with is this question about the

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relationship between digitization and metadata and processing; which a couple of you have mentioned, and I think rightly so, just because this is something that Indiana University has been handling in a very distinctive fashion that I think runs counter to what you would advise.

For those of you unfamiliar with it, we have this initiative currently underway where our president has pledged resources to enable us to fulfill this mandate to digitally preserve all material on all our campuses that are deemed important by experts by the university's bicentennial. What that translates to in effect is having to digitize about 280,000 items in about 4 years.

And we have a facility that's set up. It's divided into two halves. There's one half run directly by Indiana University that handles the difficult things that really require an engineer to concentrate on individual items. So for example, lacquered discs are categorically done by

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that site. Open-reel tapes that shift speed part way through. Anything like that that really requires special attention.

One the other side, it's Memnon Archiving Services. They're running what they refer to as an industrial approach process where you're saying running four video decks at once, shifting between them to monitor them and doing some fairly robust QC, but still not doing this as a one-to-one transfer situation.

And one thing that we've done to sustain this throughput is as we're processing material -- I should emphasize we're not drawing from any one single collection. This is really units scattered all over campus. And I of course understand that most institutions, most archives will have material that's more or less processed, more or less cataloged, more or less well understood.

But in our case we're dealing with multiple unit cultures of how they approach things; think about their holdings, radically different

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cataloguing systems among them and ranging from material that have full marked records to the box of cassettes in a professor's closet, and just to enable things to go through our digitization process. All that's required to get something digitized is to slap a bar code on it and to fill in some basic technical metadata. So track configuration for open-reel tapes, copying down a title if it's there, but skipping that if it's not. So again, I'm just pointing this out.

The goal here is really to avoid being held up by the need to process material. Again, this window of 10 to 15 years that's staring us in the face. We figure we may have 10 to 15 years to digitize certain material. We probably don't have 10 to -- we probably have longer than that to copy material reliably off tape boxes, but I also concede that this comes with some severe down sides. So I wonder if we could talk a little bit about that the risks that we face perhaps in following the approach that we're taking.

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MR. VALLIER: I think this approach sounds great, personally. However, institutions such as ours, those that don't have massive digitization projects, instead rely on small grants and the occasional rock star graduate student, such as Susie Cummings, who's sitting here in the front row, to take an interest in audio preservation or a certain collection and really become invested in it.

CHAIR FEASTER: But I could see a concern that we end up with a lot of material that's been digitized but that is very minimally described. And it is a concern with some units on campus having strategically -- I understand the urgency, but --

MS. SATHER: It's going to be a nightmare later. I mean, it's going to be great for getting it all digitized, but I mean, a digital object without any metadata is essentially useless. It doesn't mean anything. It has no context. It has no relevance. And going back and trying to do it later is an exorbitant amount of work, that had

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it been -- taking the time to do it at the time of digitization makes the process so much smoother and easier and it's less work later to try to fix. And fixing things is way more time than doing it that way the first time. So -- and I'm speaking from experience of people that didn't take the time to do the metadata the first time and didn't take the time to do it nicely, or to process it well, or to scan it before it was processed. And if it wasn't processed it didn't --

I'm so sorry. I know you guys have your hands up.

But if it wasn't processed first, that means that all the metadata that could exist isn't there yet. It also means it didn't go through conservation yet. So that means you might be digitizing something that hasn't been cleaned or that hasn't been taken care of. And then you're not getting the best quality scan or -- of it.

MS. ABOLINS: What is process to you?

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What does that look like? What is that --

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MS. SATHER: That's a range of a description that has a -- resulting in an organized collection and a finding aid.

MS. ABOLINS: Okay. Very traditional --

MS. SATHER: That's what processing means.

MS. ABOLINS: Very traditional --

MS. SATHER: Yes.

MS. ABOLINS: Very traditional approach. Okay.

MS. SATHER: Yes.

PARTICIPANT: Can I just speak to that because --

MS. SATHER: Yes.

PARTICIPANT: -- I'm familiar with this problem. I work in public broadcasting in the University of Illinois. We did -- by the way, we followed your example in doing a campus-wide media

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census. But I hear you, and I agree with you. In the best possible world I would love to do that, but we're dealing with tapes with no label, you know? And --

MS. SATHER: So am I.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, right. So is my choice then to say, okay, grab random tapes -- because I can't grab them all, right; I have limited resources -- grab random tapes and then view them before digitizing or while digitizing? That's going to slow us down. And we have a window of opportunity here that means that I'm not going to be able to save everything if I do that. So that's the dilemma.

MS. SATHER: Sure, but I mean, there's so much metadata that can be captured while you're digitizing that I don't know why you would just not capture it while you're doing it.

PARTICIPANT: Labor.

CHAIR FEASTER: Well as you said, one distinction would be technical metadata is quite

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easy and --

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

CHAIR FEASTER: -- and essential to capture doing that state, but then the descriptive metadata that would make it more discoverable, I think, in the sense that you're concerned about, would not necessarily occur at that point.

There are situations that we have run into, incidentally, where someone at a unit has wanted to do this kind of descriptive work, but would have to listen to the items to do that, and they're really looking forward to getting the digital files back so that they can listen through each one and then carry out the cataloging at that point. So there are, at least in the case particularly on legal --

(Simultaneous speaking.)

PARTICIPANT: And perhaps extract some text from the audio to help you catalog the thing without somebody listening to it. And then maybe narrow down all those things that you can consider

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most valuable based on that metadata.

Sorry.

CHAIR FEASTER: That's all right. Did I see a hand over there?

MS. BERARD: I would also add -- oh, I'm sorry.

CHAIR FEASTER: Go ahead, Jeanette.

MS. BERARD: I would also add that as you're pulling things randomly one thing is you can slap a bar code on it, but I have collections coming in where the owner had put Post-Its on it. And if you pull it out too quickly, that Post-It falls off. Guess what, try and find where that Post-It belongs.

So there is -- I mean, you have to have some sort of a happy medium or a happy minimum of what you capture, because if you break that box, if you have a 50-year-old tape box or a nearly 100-year-old record sleeve and it gets damaged when it's being pulled, if you don't capture that data right then, the chance of it becoming permanently lost is very, very high. And it's hard to deal with.

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I don't have a good answer for that, but it's a problem.

CHAIR FEASTER: David?

MR. SEUBERT: I think there's lots of right ways to do things, and part of the fun of archives is just that as opposed to say librarianship where there tends to be more of a right and a wrong way of --

(Laughter.)

MR. SEUBERT: -- doing things. And I think archivists gravitate toward archives because it's perhaps more creative.

But one example is we routinely digitize 16 channels simultaneously, and I have a student technician doing that where they'll have four cassettes, stereo, four open reels all running. And the great thing -- I believe in the 10-year window. Whether it's a moving window or not I can't say, but I think we have to take that seriously despite the fact that it's been kind of -- has become a cliché that we can all pretend is not real, like

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Peak Oil or whatever else. But when you're doing 16 channels at once you're not doing any kind of metadata capture and you're not doing any sort of listening to the participants or whatever.

But we rely on kind of four-point crucial metadata, which is title, creator, date and -- what's the fourth one? Well, whatever the fourth one is that I've forgotten right now.

(Laughter.)

MR. SEUBERT: But that's enough.

PARTICIPANT: Material type?

MR. SEUBERT: And I also believe in the distinction between -- which was it?

PARTICIPANT: Material type?

MR. SEUBERT: Material type. Right. So between -- archivists aren't researchers and I think we need to get away from that, that we're providing the stuff. And if you want to figure out what's on the tape; that's called research, then go and listen to it.

So now your shop where you're serving

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a role where you're providing producers with a very detailed idea of what's on the tape, that's different. But I don't have to. I don't have to do that. So anyway. But I think there's lots of right ways to do it and we need to approach it to whatever. And Patrick's shop, if they're trying to get 280,000 tapes done, that's fine.

MS. SATHER: That's amazing.

MR. SEUBERT: Yes.

MS. SATHER: And I would agree with that that there -- every institution is different and they all are going to have their unique struggles and their unique obstacles, and they're also going to have their unique strengths and they're going to have their unique resources, and everybody should capitalize on that. And so I do agree there are many ways of doing it and doing it successfully. So I'm not trying to say my way is the only way.

(Laughter.)

MS. SATHER: But I'm just saying my preference --

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PARTICIPANT: I was just going to say really quickly that I feel like at the Wisconsin Historical Society we might have found a pretty good happy medium where we're kind of trying to go industrial, but we're also kind of trying to at least ensure a basic level of metadata. So I feel comfortable with what we're doing. I don't feel worried about it, and I feel comfortable with researchers coming in later and helping us out.

We do like a basic-level bib record, holdings record, and then we have undergraduates who are awesome and just like slap bar codes on things, give them a call number, and then we do the cross-referencing later, a data entry. And they do it quickly. They get through like 1,400-item collections in like a week sometimes. It's hard to catch up, like for us to keep up with.

We make sure that it has references to the accession and that there is documentation about it, but then I feel really comfortable of digitizing, giving it a call number and then putting it into

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our service space so that later a researcher can come and help out with the descriptive metadata.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, I think all of points are very well taken, but they're all very general to the field of recorded sound. And we're here to talk about radio. And this came up in the caucuses meeting. Where do you go for the information, because the information about radio programs is often as ephemeral as the programs themselves. You've got to go back to what records, what paper records survived, what's in the serials, the local press, the national press, the trade press, which is very important.

So I think that's -- when I think of metadata for radio, that's what I'm thinking about. I mean, okay, you've got a box full of tapes on a radio show that somebody found and all you know is the name of the show. Where do you go from there? Those are the kinds of situations that we face.

CHAIR FEASTER: That is research with a capital R when you get to that point.

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PARTICIPANT: Yes, so I mean, I hear what David is saying, but for my purposes I'm researching all the time, which is fun, but I can't get away from it either even if I wanted to.

MS. BERARD: I'd like to at least partially respond to that with we do have huge script collections and papers collections and journal collections that go on, and we catalog and index those. We have an online index to *Radio Digest*, for instance. And that does help. When you find something with just a date on it, you can match it up sometimes.

MR. SEUBERT: Well, and the other thing is -- you know, Ruta and I were just whispering to each other, but for every audio-visual archivist there's 10 paper people. I'm just simply worried about serials, scripts, papers, photographs. I mean, we need to find it, we need to identify it, we need to say it's -- if it's radio, ephemera or whatever, it's valuable and important to bring in. But it's not a time bomb, you know?

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PARTICIPANT: No. That is a good point.

PARTICIPANT: I've got two examples to answer you about finding things. About three years ago David Giovannoni came up with three discs that were very, very unusual. And I figured that they looked like Western Electric experimental recordings, they were broadcast. One of them was a concert. Then the other two discs were some talking and three or four different people singing.

We put them online and we went to about four or five particular people. We found an opera expert that told us that all of the music from the first disc was from the operetta "Sweethearts." I conjectured that the guy who was doing the announcing -- or not the announcing, the introduction of the people on the second and third disc was Roxy. And we heard one little name. And there was also a name on -- written on the sleeve.

And I did some work in the *New York Times* and I found out that the week after the composer

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of "Sweethearts" -- not Grove Currin -- Victor Herbert, I think, died. Roxy at the Capitol Theater had a concert, a stage concert performance on Sunday night. And that was also the same night that *Roxy's Gang* was on WEA. And we pieced it together and we figured we found the date that that would have been. I think it was June -- either June or July of 1924.

So it took some work going -- having several different people who could identify part of it, and we found the information in the *New York Times*.

Last week or last -- a couple of months ago a friend of mine said I've got some glass-based discs. So he gave me this box of 25 12-inch glass-based discs. I figured, okay, wartime. Started listening to them. No, it was a DJ for -- some of them on 78, a DJ program with records that were not hit records, but they were obviously not wartime.

And then two of them; I mention this, turns out to be Arthur Godfrey programs. Then those

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were recorded -- those are recorded in 33. I'm playing these things in 78. My daughter's across the room and we hear this sound, and I quickly picked it up and I said you know what that is? She says no. You're playing it at the wrong speed. How do you know what it is? I said -- I put it down to 33. I said it's Arthur Godfrey.

And so, she started looking up, and from a few words and clues -- and started looking through radio listings from 1953, 1954. And we figured out the name of the DJ, that I'd never heard before. And it was on one of the -- from one of the New York City radio stations.

It takes a little research, it takes a little knowledge and finding people with knowledge of radio from particular eras. And so we're talking about the '50s versus the '20s and formats of discs. Glass-based discs in 1954? What idiot would do -- somebody found a box of unused discs that were 10 years old and probably dried out, but he figured, oh, what the hell, and he recorded stuff which was

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not very important on the discs just to record it. That's the kind of research that you have to do when you're faced with it -- the broadcasts.

CHAIR FEASTER: But you have opportunities there for great detective work and triangulation.

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

CHAIR FEASTER: I want to make sure that we get to other hands up. Gene?

PARTICIPANT: I just want to say the idea of parallel transfers, it's absolutely essential that we're doing this with these collections because we can't do them one at a time. The easy stuff has to be done that way. And we heard in the metadata meeting this idea of minimally acceptable cataloging documentation. We've got to at least get that for these things. That's essential.

One thing I want to -- even doing that we don't have enough time to get to it all. So we've got to extend the life of the physical media if we're

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going to save these things that are still in a closet. And physical storage is something that is a recommendation, you know, build centralized, build regional physical storage. Well, I don't see that particular addition to the plan being undertaken, so it's going to fall to archives and institutions that have this storage. Frankly, digitizing materials is going to have to come up in the next decade. We're looking at probably (coughing) some of these digitized tapes to make room to get these other collections into cold storage, because they will last longer -- well, if they're going to last longer, it's going to be in a controlled environment, environmental storage. And that's just a fundamental archival thing that science tells us we have to do. Otherwise, we are going to lose it.

PARTICIPANT: Well, just, Gene, let me just say that actually raises something that came up in the other session that was against the metadata one. John was there this morning when we were

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talking about the fact that so many collections, radio collections especially from local radio remain with collectors who aren't necessarily people you would think of as record collectors. They're people who loved radio, who had something to do with local radio or college radio and they had these collections that they think are very important. They do not know what to do with them.

And so, I think one very important thing that is not -- that this whole RP -- that the task force can do and I think that -- a little project of the task force putting it together into the database can do is helping to find out -- putting together where these collections are and where an archive that can have the proper storage, but then also the proper digitization facilities nearby.

Because I think putting these things together -- but we were also talking about the fact that sometimes it's going to take actually more than that. It's going to take human contact, I think, between the archives or this group and the

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collectors to convince them that actually getting them to a place that can make them available, can properly transfer them into a digital format and keep them -- store them properly is important. And I think that that hasn't been happening.

CHAIR FEASTER: I think we have comment over here and then over here.

PARTICIPANT: Sorry. I'll be quick. I'm about to contradict everything I said just a couple minutes ago.

(Laughter.)

PARTICIPANT: So, no. I think that we need to -- we're not the New York Public Library whose board has said we're going to raise \$100 million, or Indiana University where the president says we're going to fund this digitization center. And I think a lot of the sort of distributed archives all over the planet probably are facing the same thing, which is that the archivists care a great deal about these materials, but not enough people who make the funding decisions know or care about

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them. And so there are cases -- and I think this goes back to your point, right? It depends on where we're talking about --

PARTICIPANT: It does. Everything in archives it depends.

PARTICIPANT: -- the nature of the collection and resources available and the size also, right, the scale. And I think in many cases it would really help for us to bear down on specific collections; rock star archives, so to speak, that really demonstrate the value for anyone to see. If they look at it, they go, wow, this is incredible, you know, the moon landing. That was one that got lost, right, and sort of got recovered. But there are other examples like that that then highlight the value, the social value, the economic value, the institutional value of these things that then gets the funders' attention.

MS. SATHER: I think that's great. What I was going to say was sort of commenting off of what you had just said about it seems like most

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radio collections seem to be in the hands of private collectors. And so my suggestion was going to be that maybe the Radio Task Force, in an effort to reach out to these types of people, should maybe take a cue off of -- I don't know if you're familiar with "The Witness." It's a human right project, video project. And they put together a guide on -- for people who are making recordings, teaching them about basically how to best prepare it for being sent to an archives or how to take care of it themselves.

And so maybe that's something -- like putting together some resource for radio collectors explaining to them sort of things that they should do it they -- or resources that they have or people that they could reach out to so that they could still have it as their private collection, but that it's being taken care of or that it's going to be preserved in a way that other people can maybe benefit from it, too.

PARTICIPANT: I'll use an example from

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the film -- well, David Pierce did a study for the Library of Congress that showed that 70 percent of all feature films released in the Silent Era, 1914 to 1929, no longer exist. Many of the 30 percent that do exist are only in the hands of private collectors.

So we had started the Silent Film Project where we're reaching out to collectors, who are a delightful bunch.

(Laughter.)

PARTICIPANT: We're starting out with the -- not the normal ones, and we are borrowing these; they're 16 millimeter, 16 millimeter prints. We're bringing them in. We're scanning them. We're providing them with a copy. We're asking them if they can make those films available. Some of them are in the public domain, the ones that are right sales. That's completely different, but there a lot that are in the public domain. And that's been an incredibly successful program mainly because we have the wherewithal to do that.

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So we were able to hire a person whose job it is to organize that program and working with the collectors. I mean, we've really only been doing this since July. We've already scanned nearly 200 titles.

MS. SATHER: Oh, wow.

PARTICIPANT: So it's working really, really well. But as the collector community -- they all talk to each other. So once you get the ball rolling and they understand, yes, but you know what, they turned around my film very, very quickly, and that gives them a level of comfort. And that's something else that perhaps the task force can look at as a model.

PARTICIPANT: We have a different copyright situation --

PARTICIPANT: Oh, no, absolutely.

PARTICIPANT: -- which is slightly different.

PARTICIPANT: I understand. But the fact of the matter -- I mean, you can still get that

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material into an archive some place, or at least available for researchers.

MS. SATHER: And I don't think that copyrights should prevent -- like the issue of copyright -- just because you can't digitize something and put it online doesn't mean that it shouldn't be digitally preserved.

MR. SEUBERT: Well, you can't digitally preserve it anyway, so --

MS. SATHER: Right.

MR. SEUBERT: -- we're breaking the law by doing digital preservation.

MS. SATHER: Right.

MR. SEUBERT: So the fact that we're borrowing copies and digitizing them, we're just double breaking the law.

PARTICIPANT: But if we borrow a copy and digitize it, can we keep a copy of that in our archive?

MS. SEUBERT: I'm not a lawyer, but if I don't own something, I can't digitize it if it's

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in copyright.

PARTICIPANT: That's right.

MR. SEUBERT: If I'm a library I can digitize my collections under Section 108 --

PARTICIPANT: That's right. So we're not allowed to --

MR. SEUBERT: -- except for music, except for digital.

PARTICIPANT: My library will not let me do that and keep a copy.

MR. SEUBERT: Well, okay. Yes.

PARTICIPANT: So I guess --

MS. BERARD: Can I make a suggestion?

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

MS. BERARD: Perhaps we should put up public guidelines that if you are the collector and you don't want to part with a collection or it doesn't fit someone's scope that's near enough that it appeals to you, that perhaps it would say if you have this, rerecord it in this way, document it in this way and take of it so that in the fullness of

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time it will still exist, whether we have it in the archives world or if it just exists out there.

PARTICIPANT: Most of them can't play them. In my experience most of them cannot play them.

MS. BERARD: So let's give them the referral to a place that can.

MS. ABOLINS: Well, this sort of brings up what the Association of Moving Image Archivists did with some folks when they created Home Movie Day, because most people don't have the projectors anymore, or whatever, the equipment. Well, that's kind of an interesting idea. What if we had this sort of Radio Day? I don't know. But it's a thought. I mean, I'm just throwing it out there.

PARTICIPANT: I like that.

PARTICIPANT: Is there a centralized place where people can -- where civilians can post what they have? Because I know that I get a lot of emails saying I -- my father had the following collection. He's passed away. I can't store it.

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What do I do with it? And then I'll randomly contact the few people who I know in archives. But it might be useful if everyone used the same place to post. Let's say individuals -- it would be hard for them to discover this site, but when they do go to an archive and you at the archive don't necessarily need it, you could post it in this centralized place everybody checks. Because that would be good for the private radio archive collections and then -- and sound and (coughing) --

PARTICIPANT: There is a place to do that. It's called the Internet. And I'm being a little facetious, but there are --

(Laughter.)

PARTICIPANT: -- and they exchanged this stuff all the time. Some through social media, but some through more formal web sites. I mean, there is a ton of them out there. I've been a collector and I've been dealing with collectors for more than 45 years and they all know what each other has. But I think it's also worth mentioning -- and

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this is going to focus on the negative side of human nature, for which I apologize, but there's going to be a fair amount of collectors who are going to have the what's-in-it-for-me factor. I've got a big collection. I've spent years collecting it. Okay. I will turn it over to you to digitize it, but what's in it for me? What will I get access to for doing that? That's a factor that I think will add to the discussion.

PARTICIPANT: There's the black-hole factor that when you're dealing with collectors what they -- when they take a look at institutions, they say if I give it to this institution, it's putting it into a black hole. And if we're worried about the copyright situation, then you have turned your organization into the black hole that the collectors do not want to deal with.

The other is the fear factor, because if they publicize what they have, (A) it opens them up to theft; (B) it opens them up to theft from the record companies that -- and it happens with

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broadcast material as well. Why do you have this material?

This was what the motion picture industry was very much -- a problem with until like with the Vitaphone project. The only reason why the Vitaphone project works is because they were able to get the assurances from Warner Brothers and several other companies that used sound on disc that if we locate (A) the picture; (B) the sound, you're not going to confiscate it from the collector. And because supposedly there was no first sale on those materials, therefore the collector should not have them.

But the motion picture companies realized finally that this was something that was totally to their benefit to say, okay, we're not going to take your discs, we're not going to take your films.

And so the institutional collections, the private collectors, all the films are now in a database. That's the database that you were

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saying we would need for our broadcast recordings. They have it for all of the disc-based soundtrack-type of films. It is known where every -- around the world where every soundtrack disc is located, where every picture element is located. And there have been hundreds in the last 10, 12 years that have been married and have been released on DVD or -- and there's going to be a showing of some of them at the Film Forum in two weeks. So that -- so it can be done, but these are the things that the collectors are wary of.

PARTICIPANT: But there's a whole other class of people who might hold such material which are the people who inherited it one way or another. And I would imagine that would be especially true of radio collections where my brother was obsessive and recorded all of this, or my father, or my mother, or whomever. And they don't know what to do with it. They sense that it's valuable, but where would they go? So hopefully they would go to a local library or a local collection or whatever, but a

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lot of people who approach the foundation have no idea how to go about it and they just don't want to throw it away because it was important to their parent or whomever.

CHAIR FEASTER: Well, it's possible that some of the databases that we've been pulling together for RPTF could accommodate that kind of information.

One more comment and then I do want to make sure that we get a chance to talk about funding a little bit. But go ahead.

MR. HIAM: Oh, okay. Well, I was actually going to return to something earlier, which is clearly a big issue, which is the process of description. And this is a different way of thinking about collaboration, but I can at least speak for R&H at NYPL, which is we privilege their -- hopefully everyone's had this experience, but if not, the spirit is to privilege the researcher and their needs.

So while we're trying to preserve a lot

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of materials en masse, which by its nature restrict the amount of description that can be done, there is usually enough description there to say, hey, look, here's something that's got 12 radio broadcasts. We don't necessarily know what's on them, but if as a researcher you've worked with staff or you've seen that information listed in a catalog or something -- under a catalog, for example, if you request that to -- for further research, it will then be prioritized in the cataloging department. So it will get a nice fat record.

And so, there is a way of -- while there are different institutions that will do that kind of digitization on demand, in this case it's more like cataloging on demand. And that seems to be a model that might be developing.

So what that requires is for researchers to notify the institutions they're working with that -- what they're interested in, actually putting in requests. Sometimes they -- if you put in 50 lacquers, that's -- be reasonable. But I do think

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that we're going to go back now. We've got the files. We can listen to them more quickly. We can catalog them more quickly. And so there's going to be for a while at least this kind of granular collaborative way of pulling out radio in particular, because you just have to sniff it out a little bit. And some of those things don't smell very good.

(Laughter.)

PARTICIPANT: The smell of palmitic acid.

MR. HIAM: Exactly.

CHAIR FEASTER: Okay. One more.

PARTICIPANT: I'll make it quick, because I know you wanted to talk about --

CHAIR FEASTER: I think I will be doing a disservice if we don't talk at all about funding, but go ahead.

PARTICIPANT: Fair enough. The question I have comes from a different tack. And I'm not an archivist. I recently retired as senior

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technologist at NPR, which kind of makes me a curmudgeon at times. And I wanted to ask the panel if there are general recommendations or guidelines governing the audiometrics, since audio is the principal media here, that are shared? Are you concerned about things like meanwhile-ness, the peak margin in recordings, the effects of transcoding and cascading of your recordings, things like that? Are those things -- have those developed? Are they being shared? Or is there actually any interest in that? Is just recording good enough? Obviously preserving is the first most important thing. This is more is the quality something that will be appreciated years from now?

MR. SEUBERT: This is the first time that I've ever even considered those issues, but -- because we almost always deal with something that's already fixed. And by the time it's fixed, all that -- whether somebody's normalized or equalized or whatever, that's all kind of baked into the product by the time we get it. But I think as we

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move to born digital all those things are thrown out the window.

And if we were to work -- with born digital we're -- archives are going to have to partner. It's not going to be a passive process. It's going to be an active process of -- like Santa Barbara's going to have to say, okay, what is within our mission to preserve born digitally. And we're going to say, okay, well, the local radio station and this community organization and that whatever -- and then we're going to engage with them. And that's when all those issues are going to come into play, because we could get things at any point in that production when they're coming in. So it's a really interesting topic that I've never thought about before.

PARTICIPANT: From my perspective I think that's something the task force can contribute to.

PARTICIPANT: Great. Can you take that on then?

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(Laughter.)

PARTICIPANT: I am retired, so --

(Laughter.)

(Simultaneous speaking.)

CHAIR FEASTER: So as I said, I do want to make sure that we could at least briefly address -- oh, there are so many things that we would like to address, but this issue of funding which came up a few times, and we've skirted around it a bit here. Just one point that was raised was this dilemma about how to present the significance of radio collections in particular that are of primarily regional significance or local significance when guideline from so many granting agencies are looking for something that at least on the surface appears to be broader.

So perhaps we could talk about that, or more broadly just what strategies have worked to sell radio collections in particular, stating their significance, articulating it in ways that have been persuasive.

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MR. HIAM: Well, I can say one distinct strategy at least at my institution is the development officers -- there's the upward administration which is charged with the big money, right, but there's also the local communities. And although we're a large institution we still have a pretty strong focus on the local communities within New York City and the area. And what tends to work with the administrators who once they're on your side they're going to hold -- at least ours will hold you accountable. So once they decide we're going to support this, you need to like be ready for that, which is not always something people are used to.

They like to have personal stories, very short, distinct, sometimes even a little melodramatic, but I do think those personal stories from people, particularly in the community, not necessarily at the library, are extremely valuable.

So when somebody comes in and says, oh, I heard my great-grandma Nellie sing on this

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Railroad Hour, write it down. Maybe even record a tidbit of that person speaking, because having those kind of testimonials goes a long way in sort of demonstrating a love and a need.

And so that's a much more grassroots approach, but having an arsenal of stories from actual people that don't work with you necessarily, those are -- I found those to be really important. And they're often what are asked of me. So I can sit down and do metrics and stuff all day. That's not as helpful actually in -- I mean, you have to cough that up eventually, but no one's going to read it until you've given them a reason to.

MS. BERARD: I would like to add that you could make the argument that some of the most hyper local stuff is at the most risk, because when you have syndicated programs, you know, if you have suspense that was broadcast all over the place, chances are there's 100 copies of every program out there. If you have something that was only broadcast on a local station in a local town and

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maybe a few towns around it, chances are no one else has it and there's no way of getting that. And so, if you lose that, you lose the only thing that exists. So you have uniqueness then.

MR. SEUBERT: I think that's also really hard to tell with radio. Some collections are obviously commercial and other collections are obviously unique, but there's a ton of radio that's really difficult to tell and to know whether you have the responsibility because you don't know whether you're the only place with that stuff.

CHAIR FEASTER: It's hard to prove something's unique. It's like proving a negative.

PARTICIPANT: Can I add something? Sometimes having it survive with the announcements and the commercials, the local announcements and commercials that contextualize even something that was broadcast that there may be many copies that survive, but not with that contextual material that went around it. And that's really important because often you will get the actual content of

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the show, but you will -- but a lot of the other stuff just immediately surrounding it gets cut out. So that's really important mentioning. Sometimes a more local copy of it will provide something that is very unique in itself.

MR. HUNTER: Let me just say about fund raising there are plenty of regional or statewide foundations, private and quasi-public, who could be interested in funding this kind of work if you make contact with the appropriate person at the foundation. But it's also incumbent upon us; if I can follow up on Jonathan's point -- is to become friendly with the development offices in our own institutions. And there's everything to be gained by having lunch with them on a pretty regular basis, because they are the ones who have the contacts with the philanthropic community and can really benefit from learning that you have this need.

MR. VALLIER: May I also suggest developing courses around archives. It is something I've done with music from the Pacific

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Northwest, something that may speak to potential funders and administrators. For example, to see students interested in not only learning about the history of Pacific Northwest music, but also actively going out, and archiving out, that can raise the interest of funders who are concerned with teaching and learning.

MS. FERRAILOLO: So I feel the need to identify myself in this discussion. My name is Nicole Ferraiolo. I work at the Council on Library and Information Resources, or CLIR, with the Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives Program. I know David has been one of our PIs.

Anyhow, I wanted to talk to the point about local versus national significance, just because we -- we started the first -- we had a cataloging program from 2008 to 2014 and then switched over to a digitization program in 2015. So we just went through the first cycle of the program. And during that cycle we added the word "national" to the value of significance. And it's

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something that like we keep kind of thinking was this the right thing to do?

And the reason why we added the word "national" -- I think this is helpful in thinking about it, is because we received so many applications from institutions that picked a topic that was beneficial to their development office. And what we really wanted was scholarly significance. And a lot of the cases that were made to us is that this will help our institution and like we have this great alum in the program and we want to digitize these files.

And it's not necessarily that a lot of people on our RP panel though this -- it wasn't necessarily that it was a high-priority collection that's at the institution. It's just the one that benefits the institution the most. And maybe this is the sort of thing that should be funded by the institution itself.

And so it was just because we felt really bad about having to like turn down so many

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collections when there are other ones that weren't being proposed that that was added. And maybe the better word would just be simply "scholarly" significance, that's something that's in our core values.

But, yes, like this year I believe that NHPRC dropped the word "national" from their significance thing in their applications. So, and we actually have in this year -- this past year we did actually fund a lot of local-based collections. The one that comes immediately to mind with this crowd is the Duke University Frank Clyde Brown collection, which is about like recordings of like Appalachia and field recording from Appalachia. And reviewers thought that although it was local, it had national significance, absolutely, because this is part of like America's cultural history, but like through a local lens and a really important local lens.

And so if you can make that case to like the broader scholarly significance outside of our

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region, I think that that's what most scholars are looking for. And I'm sorry that this session conflicts with the NEH session, because we have three amazing program officers talking in the other room. But we're just one little program.

But, yes, just to kind of give you a sense of what our thought process was with that I think could be helpful for your applications.

CHAIR FEASTER: That's a good point, that the significance of national may not be as literal as we might assume.

PARTICIPANT: I should probably identify myself, too. I'm the grants director for the Radio Preservation Task Force. First of all, I should make clear; I don't know if this has been said, but like we don't have like actually money to give.

(Laughter.)

PARTICIPANT: We don't receive grants, but (coughing) some work that you're doing to apply for a grant. That doesn't have to be at the national

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level, but that's a -- as David said, there are lots of radio grants and people may be aware of the Library of Congress and foundation centers -- foundation grants for preservation in libraries, archives and museums. It'd downloadable and you'll see a listing by state and region.

Many of those, like you're looking for people to write letters that can speak to the significance of your collection. We have (coughing) I think now 75 research associates as part of the task force and particularly if you can tie it into something that's related to some of the caucuses that are going on, they are as we speak identifying areas that they feel they can intervene in to try to help identify collections, and they can sort of speak to the value of.

So feel free to get in touch with me. I'm in the program.

CHAIR FEASTER: Alright. Closing remarks.

PARTICIPANT: Can I just say one last

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quick thing?

CHAIR FEASTER: We're right at time, but go ahead.

PARTICIPANT: I know that this task force is mainly interested with a certain kind of radio, but also local radio. I just want to put forth a comment that I am really interested in born digital and podcasts and I am really interested in something like an offshoot or a subcommittee of archivists like us who can get ahead of the game and be proactive about Internet radio as we have it. I've been planning something like a two-page guide to do for podcasters because I have significant relationships with a lot of podcasters. I write the newsletter *Audio Signal*.

So I just want to put that forward that I think because we're so conflicted and talking so much about this, if it all gets lost, we also have the opportunity to get ahead of the game with the future.

CHAIR FEASTER: That's a nice little

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point.

PARTICIPANT: That's a very good point.

CHAIR FEASTER: Great. No, that's actually a perfect forward-looking --

(Laughter.)

CHAIR FEASTER: Well, we're at time. Thank you so much for being the invited participants.

(Applause.)

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 3:07 p.m.)

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