

Making Media Visible

Finding new pathways for discovery and access

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Serials and media
are now
subscription-based
digital content.

Guide to Video Acquisitions in Libraries: Issues and Best Practices



Media used to be tied closely to place.



What can this place
that reminds us of the
past tell us about the
present—and future?

The Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision

[10.18146/2213-0969.2014.iethc069](https://doi.org/10.18146/2213-0969.2014.iethc069)



Key takeaways:

- Collections that were very distinct from the rest of the library have dissolved into the vast undifferentiated mass of our digital collections
- Attitudes about media developed in the pre-digital era have been carried along. We may be using assumptions that are not one, but two generations old.

Video collections have undergone many changes over the recent decades, but have library circulation policies and practices kept up.... Are we living in the past, still using policies that were appropriate for 16mm films[?]

Barbara J. Bergman, “Making the Most of Your Video Collection, Trends in Patron Access and Resource Sharing” (2010)

True or false?

- Multimedia is more like a textbook (assigned by faculty) than a part of a research collection (used by students as part of self-directed learning).

- Searching for and finding media is not a necessary skill for students in entry-level information literacy classes since media is not used for research.

If you said these were both true, how confident are you that they are 100% true?

If you said these are now false, how has your library evolved in response?

When a media collection was a place

- Stacks were closed, loan periods were short, interlibrary loan was rare.
- Patrons were primarily faculty not students.
- Materials were difficult to access, but staff were on hand to help.

We have freed ourselves from place. Our media collections are richer than ever.

How can we better incorporate free and subscription-based resources into our website/collections/services?

We can ask questions.

What would a survey or audit of the collection reveal?

Multi-format databases: Is their video content sufficiently discoverable?

Such databases may have hundreds of short instructional videos mixed in with other formats: How visible are individual items to users?

Are feature-length films and short instructional/educational videos equally discoverable?

Are some items cataloged at the item level and others only at the database level?

How are video databases represented in A-Z list? Does a database need to be all video to qualify as a “video” database?

Pathfinder style research guides, designed for use in brick-and-mortar libraries, may not be best for digital collections.

Do your usability studies incorporate media (even though it is not generally thought part of the research process)?

Can we rethink our assumptions about media at the same time we revamp our ways of moving students through the digital library?

Can a collaboration between technical and public services create pathways through the digital library that makes the media collection visible once more?

“The library is commonly seen as a site for information seeking and directed research, yet it may also serve as a site for exploration and inspiration. The library as *Wunderkammer*, or a cabinet of curiosities, explored through the senses, is not a new idea, but one that is commonly lost in today's disembodied digital universe.”

*Martin Aurand, Teaching and Learning with Collections:
“The Library as a Site for Exploration and Inspiration”*



A multimedia collection is a potential site for multisensory exploration. How might we begin to think of it that way?