



Power of the VHS



storing and transferring older broadcast content

recorded on VHS cassette under licence

a BUFVC one-day meeting

9th December 2009

10.30 am to 4.30 pm

BFI Southbank (NFT3)

London

UK Universities and Colleges have been permitted to record television and radio content under licence and exception since 1989, and the sizeable collections of recordings that have been made, often held on VHS cassettes in academic libraries around the UK, could now be considered a form of distributed national collection. However, many university librarians, in their quest to reduce storage space and to move to other carrier media such as DVD or Bluray, have started to dispose of their VHS collections without transferring the original content to a new medium.

The humble VHS cassette is, rightly, regarded as a disposable commodity and not an archive medium, but the recordings these cassettes carry are sometimes unique and valuable. In one university some 5,000 catalogued VHS recordings, taken off-air during the last 20 years, were disposed of as waste during the summer of 2009. This is now a common story around the country. Unlike the arrangements for printed works in the UK Research Reserve (UKRR) (a cross-institutional collaborative process which maintains access to low-use print research journals) there is no equivalent referral system for off-air recordings of television or radio prior to their disposal. We are therefore certain that very rare licensed

recordings of UK broadcasts are being destroyed in the rush to reduce physical storage costs.

It is worth remembering that the overall cash investment for acquiring these original off-air recordings has been significant, bearing in mind the combined costs of the annual licence, the process of recording, cataloguing, storage and the management of access. The total cash value is high, running beyond thousands of pounds to millions. It would be worthwhile therefore to consider the development of an agreed national process of triaging to check recordings and to ingest or transfer the important ones before they are disposed of.

The forthcoming meeting which the British Universities Film & Video Council (BUFVC) is organising at the BFI Southbank on Wednesday 9th December will address these urgent issues and include sessions exploring the following:

- results from the recent BUFVC national survey of off-air recording collections and policies in UK universities
- proposal for extension of 'shared services' for off-air recording in UK higher education and online access
- low-cost digitisation and content ingest from VHS
- the creation of a union catalogue for copies of broadcast programmes retained in educational establishments under licence

The meeting on 9th December is planned to commence in NFT3 at 10.30 am and run to 4.30 pm. Lunch will be included and the BUFVC will run its formal Annual General Meeting in parallel for an hour at lunchtime. Full programme will soon be available at www.bufvc.ac.uk

The cost of registration is £35.00 pp (or discount charge for staff from subscribing BUFVC member institutions – £25.00).



Power of the VHS Booking/registration Form



a BUFVC one-day meeting – 9th December 2009

10.30 pm – 4.30 pm, BFI Southbank (NFT3), London

Please complete and return this form and enclose a cheque or arrangements for payment in full (official purchase order number or credit card details). I wish to book places to attend the above event
Charge: **£35.00** per place or £25.00 per place (for staff in BUFVC member institutions). If you are unclear about the status of your employing institution, please call 020 7393 1519 or e-mail ask@bufvc.ac.uk

Total charge:

Name:

Position:

Department/Institution:.....

Address:

e-mail: phone:

Please tick one of the boxes below

I enclose payment by signed cheque

or Please invoice my employer for payment:

against the following official purchase order no:

or Please take payment from my credit card (details below)

Full name on credit card:

Credit card type (Visa, Mastercard etc.):

(American Express and Diners charge cards not accepted)

Credit card account number:

Expiry date:

Signed:

Do you have any access or dietary requirements?

.....

When completed please return this form with payment to:

**Power of the VHS, British Universities Film & Video Council,
77 Wells Street, London W1T 3QJ**

tel: 020 7393 1512 fax: 020 7393 1555 events@bufvc.ac.uk