Sustaining Television News for the Next Generation

Workshop Working Group: Sustainability

Summer 2018

On March 8-9, 2018 Vanderbilt University hosted a group of library and archive professionals to discuss the current challenges of television news archives. The event was sponsored by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The group split into three working groups charged with specific issues. Each working group was given some questions to start the discussion, but they were also encouraged to raise other concerns or challenges they saw to their topic.

The sustainability working group met to discuss the role of television news archives in the academic, public, and private environments. The group discussed the current state of archival programs and they noted the differences between public and private archives and the different roles they play. The public archives have a different audience that is broader, which requires a more defined collection scope to ensure the collection is truly 'the news.' Comments were made about defining the audience and stakeholder populations to predict the needs or desires of the users.

The group considered preservation metadata and possible standards for adoption. The group had many thoughts about this and reflected on the presentation by Stuart Myles. They noted the five different standards and the group suggested one approach might be finding the lowest common denominator. Consortium or hub models were also discussed as means of standardizing metadata because aggregation requires some consistency. DPLA and HathiTrust came up as possible models or consortia for joining. This working group also mentioned the importance of closed caption and voice-to-text textual indexing.

The conversation moved to the funding sustainability of news archives and some found

parallels to efforts by universities to preserve newsprint. It was suggested that universities should invest in television news archiving as a matter of civic responsibility. Other group members mentioned the dropping costs for news archiving and the importance of the public sector to preserve news archives before bigger private entities lock down the content. This led to a conversation about the possible or current involvement of big tech companies. The group had different views on this matter, where some thought our community should engage with these companies as they have the experience and resources for video news archiving beyond any other groups, while other group members were skeptical the values of nonprofit libraries and archives can harmonize with the values of big technology corporations. Issues of censorship, costs, and bias were discussed.

The group wrapped up their meeting with a session discussing financial models. They thought consortias could help by distributing the content collection tasks, a HathiTrust model. Memberships and subscriptions were mentioned as ways to generate a stream of funding and also build collections. The group also noted grants have proven a valuable source, like the *Chronicling America* example. Grants can also be a good way to launch a new initiative. The group also mentioned the software-as-a-service financing model.

The Center for Research Libraries (CRL) is continuing to explore two possibilities discussed by the group. First, they are investigating membership and subscription by CRL libraries as means to generate a stream of funding to support broadcast preservation activities at Vanderbilt, UCLA, and WGBH; they are also studying the capabilities of the larger news media organizations (e.g., Associated Press, CNN, Agence France-Presse) to determine the feasibility of exploiting their experience, capabilities and resources for video news archiving.