

Case Study

The Political Commercial Archive: Management of Moving Image and Sound Recordings

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Abstract: The Political Commercial Archive is part of the University of Oklahoma's Political Communication Center. It is the largest and most comprehensive repository of its kind in the world. In this paper, the authors report the results of a project designed to manage more than 55,000 film, audio, and video recordings. Fields in the local database that provide access for item-level records are detailed, and the organization of the collection-level records for the MARC AMC format is noted. Also discussed are special problems related to preparing these items for scholarly use by individual researchers, universities, museums, and media professionals.

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Background

THE POLITICAL COMMERCIAL ARCHIVE (PCA) is part of the University of Oklahoma's Political Communication Center, which brings together faculty from several disciplines. The center was founded in 1984 and serves as an academic unit for the study of political communication as well as a resource for television networks in their election coverage and for political candidates and strategists in their need for information on political advertising, voting behavior, and general communication processes. Scholars at the center and throughout the world recognize that political systems have been altered extensively by the introduction of electronic media into the electoral and governing process. The importance of understanding the function of all types of communication in the political system has made political communication an area of study with potential for theoretical, practical, and policy outcomes.

Television's role in the political system has increased so dramatically that it is now the dominant form of communication. Television commercials are so important to the political process that they make up a substantial amount of the content used by other media and media formats in discussing political campaigns. Network campaign coverage in 1988 alone included more stories and usage of political commercials than in the 1972 through 1984 campaigns combined.¹ A natural consequence of the importance of television advertising has been an increase in scholarly research. Such increased interest emphasizes the need for well-designed access to original research materials.

The goals of the PCA are to appraise, collect, organize, describe, make available, and preserve political advertising. It is the largest and most comprehensive repository of its kind in the world, and the only one that covers all levels (from local school board to U.S. presidency) of political campaigning; it is nationally and internationally recognized as a major research resource. The American Association of Political Consultants has called the PCA the "Louvre and the Fort Knox of political commercials." The archive has the active support of the Democratic and Republican National Committees, the National Association of Broadcasters, the American Film Institute, the American Association of Advertising Agencies, the National Archives, and the Library of Congress.

Scope and Acquisitions. The Political Communication Center purchased the PCA in 1985. The original materials acquired from Julian Kanter of Highland Park, Illinois, were comprised of approximately twenty-five thousand items, including several thousand radio commercials dating back to the 1930s. The core of the collection was a group of twenty-one thousand television commercials dating from 1950 through 1984. About one-third of these items were on 16-mm film, one-third were on 2-inch videotape, and the remaining one-third were on 3/4-inch videocassettes. The materials had not been subjected to any type of systematic bibliographic control.

Since the purchase of the core materials in 1985, the archival holdings under the University of Oklahoma's ownership have more than doubled in size. An average of thirty-eight hundred new items is acquired by the PCA each year, although the actual number of acquisitions is much larger in even-numbered or election years.

The acquisition policy describes an active effort to collect radio and television commercials available in each electoral cycle, as well as items from previous elections. The

¹Lynda Lee Kaid, Robert H. Gobetz, Jane Garner, Chris M. Leland, and David K. Scott, "Television News and Presidential Campaigns: The Legitimization of Televised Political Advertising," *Social Science Quarterly* 74 (June 1993): 272-85.

highest priority is to acquire commercials from presidential campaigns and major state-level races—U. S. Senate, House of Representatives, gubernatorial, and other statewide offices. Items on film, video, and audio arrive daily from a variety of sources.

There are over fifty-five thousand film, audio, and video recordings of commercials aired between 1936 and the present. Over 65 percent of these holdings are not available elsewhere. The holdings include commercials from every election year between 1952 and 1994, advertisements for and against ballot issues (or propositions), and an increasing number of advocacy commercials that deal with public and social policy questions.

The PCA's holdings are mostly in one of six media formats:

16-mm film reels	4%
2-inch videotape [reel]	22%
3/4-inch videocassette	21%
1-inch videotape [reel]	18%
1/2-inch VHS videocassette	9%
sound tape reel	25%
sound disc and cassette	1%

Many current acquisitions from recent election cycles are arriving on 1-inch videotape.

Staffing. The personnel required to accomplish the goals of preserving and providing access to the holdings of the PCA are partially funded through research grants.² The most recent project for bibliographic control of the PCA was staffed with a full-time archivist and audio-video technician, two half-time cataloging assistants, and student assistants. The two project directors provided a quarter of their time during the academic year and half or more during the summer.

Appraisal and Accessioning

The PCA has a policy that explains the conditions under which it will accept broadcast advertising items and items from other sources. Potential acquisitions are appraised by the director of the Political Communication Center and the curator of the PCA primarily for their informational value for reference and research. Uniqueness is an important attribute of these materials.

The items acquired by the archive that were used for original broadcasting are often copies because the commercials are copied and distributed to television stations. Items acquired from the producer may be masters. With materials of this kind, it may be impossible to establish what is a true master. The materials acquired and retained in the PCA are treated as if they were masters though not all of them are masters in a strict, technical sense. It is the policy of the PCA to determine masters by the age of the medium and the quality of the images or audio. Therefore, masters are distinguished by the format on which the spot is recorded. For example, if a spot is recorded on both film and video, the master is determined to be the film. If a spot is recorded on both a 2-inch videoreel and a 3/4-inch videocassette, the master is the 2-inch videoreel. In the opinion of video experts

²Funding for this project was from the U. S. Department of Education, Higher Education Act, Title II-C, Strengthening Research Library Resources Program for 1988–90 and 1992–95. The project directors were Dr. Lynda Lee Kaid, Professor, Department of Communication and Dr. Kathleen J. M. Haynes, Associate Professor, School of Library and Information Studies. Charles E. Rand was the archivist for the project.

familiar with this collection, and because of the way political commercials are prepared, broadcast, and discarded, it is likely that many true masters for these commercials no longer exist.

The archivist supervises the processing of new acquisitions from inventory to placement in the cold storage area and creates preliminary records to provide initial control over the items until they are fully processed and described. Data on provenance and other information, obtained through the inventorying efforts of the curator, are also noted.

Several problems confront the staff as they process materials and prepare them for scholarly use:

1. Duplicates. Producers and candidates often use different versions of a commercial during a campaign, and it is important for scholars to be able to view all versions. It is very difficult to distinguish between a duplicate and a version with different content. The distinctions may be obvious ones such as changes in text, changes in the images, translations, a different sound track, or a different sponsor. Other changes are quite subtle, noticeable only to a trained video specialist. When the changes are present on the tapes, original production identification slates are invaluable in identifying different versions. When a spot has any identifiable differences, however slight, it is treated as a distinct item and a new record is created. Recent work by Yee suggests that length difference in moving images is a good indicator that content is different.³ For political commercials, running time is often the same even when content has changed because of the standard length of thirty or sixty seconds.

2. International Scope. The expansion of the archive to include more international materials has enhanced the usefulness of the archive to researchers. Working with these materials requires specific language skills to describe the items and provide content analysis. The differences in television formats around the world also present a challenge. The archive does not have the facilities to effect format conversions from PAL or SECAM to NTSC, although it does have viewing facilities for 1/2-inch PAL and SECAM tapes.

Preservation and Security

Preservation activities have been limited due to a scarcity of resources, but the PCA project staff has set as one of its goals the development of a program for the protection of the holdings that is in accord with national practice.⁴ Additional funding through external grant proposals is being sought for these extended preservation measures. The current approach encompasses a number of activities designed to prevent new problems and to solve problems that have occurred.

As a preventive measure, the archive masters are stored on the University of Oklahoma campus in a climatically controlled area, which was remodeled in 1991 to house the PCA materials. In this cold storage facility, the temperature is maintained between 58

³Martha M. Yee, "Manifestations and Near-Equivalents of Moving Image Works: A Research Project," *Library Resources & Technical Services* 38 (October 1994): 355–72.

⁴Federation Internationale des Archives du Film, *Preservation and Restoration of Moving Images and Sound* (Brussels: FIAF, 1986); Paul Conway, "Archival Preservation Practice in a Nationwide Context," *American Archivist* 53 (Spring 1990): 204–22; Karen Garlick, "Planning an Effective Holdings Maintenance Program," *American Archivist* 53 (Spring 1990): 256–64; Henry Gilmer Wilhelm, *The Permanence and Care of Photographs: Traditional and Digital Color Prints, Color Negatives, Slides, and Motion Pictures* (Grinnell, Iowa: Preservation Publishing Co., 1993); Edward Blasko, et al., *The Book of Film Care* (Rochester, N.Y.: Eastman Kodak Company, 1992); Deirdre Boyle, *Video Preservation: Securing the Future of the Past* (New York: Media Alliance, 1993), 10.

and 60 degrees Fahrenheit, and the relative humidity fluctuates between 56 and 60 percent. This is within the normal ranges when different formats must be stored together. The shelving for all materials is enamelled steel. A hygrothermograph is used to monitor the facility. Charts are reviewed weekly and baseline readings are taken every other month with a sling psychrometer.

The facility is secured against theft or intrusion by an electronic security system and materials are protected from fire by a halon fire retardant system. Duplicate and user copies of all materials are stored in an alternate location, which is also security controlled and protected by a smoke alarm.

1. Video. Videocassettes are stored vertically within inert plastic cases to prevent wind separation that can cause stepping and edge damage. Videoreels are stored vertically in the original cardboard or plastic containers. Some fading has been noticed in older 2-inch tape, indicating the need to transfer the items when possible to a more stable medium. Funds have not been available to provide labor or supplies to place the videoreels in individual, vented plastic bags to provide dust protection. Drop-outs and scratches caused by dust are a concern. Whether the storage boxes for the videotapes have a degree of acidity is of minor concern to engineers in the field when compared to the average shelf-life of the items, according to Jay Zacharias and Ron Shiban (pers. com. 1994).⁵ There is no scheduled rewind or exercise of the videotape in both the cassette and reel formats, a key measure in preventive activities. The items are played and rewound at least once because of their duplication on reference copies. Specific afflictions caused by the inherent composition of videotape such as print-through, shedding, adhesion, stiction, cinching, stretching, and shrinkage are to be addressed in the next phase by improving the storage conditions. Boyle⁶ reports that the ideal storage condition for videotape is a temperature between 60 and 65 degrees Fahrenheit and a 30 to 35 percent relative humidity. This lower humidity prevents hydrolysis and the chemical deterioration of the binder. The reels on which videotape is wound should be anti-static, dust-free products.

2. Film. Film is stored in metal cans in a separate section of the cold storage area, although not in sealed polyethylene bags, as plans are in progress to purchase a photoarchive chamber. Film suffers from the greatest problems; it is dirty, with some color fading, and there are scratches, sprocket-hole damage, and splicing problems. Preservation activities for the future will ensure that all of the film is repaired (sprocket holes, leader and trailer, and splicing). The film will be cleaned ultrasonically, rewound onto polystyrene cores, placed into vented, inert polypropylene film cans, and stored in a low temperature and humidity-controlled photoarchive chamber (extended-term storage at 35 degrees Fahrenheit and between 30 and 35 percent relative humidity). This storage increases the useful life of color film by preserving the dye image, film base, and gelatin emulsion.⁷ One of the problems with the PCA film, which is cellulose acetate stock, is the breakdown of the acetate film base, known as "vinegar syndrome," that causes an increase in the rate of dye fading. In a survey of film deterioration, cited in Wilhelm,⁸ Horvath concluded that cellulose acetate film was not a permanent film base. While there has been no overt signal

⁵Jay Zacharias, Technical Engineer with Ampex and Ron Shiban, manager with the Plastic Reel Corporation, May 3, 1994.

⁶Boyle, *Video Preservation*, 10, 22-23.

⁷Wilhelm, *The Permanence and Care of Photographs*, 302.

⁸Wilhelm, *The Permanence and Care of Photographs*, 320.

of such deterioration among the PCA holdings, condition reports reveal a fair percentage of footage exhibiting varying degrees of color shifting and brittleness.

Access to the contents of the film will be provided by copying to videocassettes so the film, once in the chamber, will be removed only on rare occasions. Consequently, it will not be subjected to the humidity peaks associated with chamber door openings. When it is needed for digital format transfer, or for other reasons, the film within its can will be placed in a single-layer polyethylene bag to prevent moisture condensation and placed outside the controlled storage area for approximately two hours to warm up to room temperature.

3. Sound. More than 6,000 items in disc, reel, and cassette formats are in the cold storage facility, and all are in good condition. Currently plans are to begin copying the presidential commercials and other identified older commercials to satisfy user requests. Sound tape on reels or in cassettes may have a life span of only twenty-five years.⁹ Proper housing, shelving, and climatic controls prolong the life of all magnetic tape products.

4. Copying. Preservation copying of materials is done because it is necessary to copy materials for use in creating the item-level and collection-level records. The duplication process spares the archive masters from additional handling and use that can cause mechanical wear and image loss. The video technician removes several masters from the cold storage area to the duplicating area (temperature and humidity change from one area to the other is minimal so condensation is not a concern), records each unique shelf number in a log, and begins making preservation and reference copies. A preservation copy (P-Copy) is made on a 3/4-inch videocassette and given a unique tape number. As each P-Copy is made, an identification number is assigned to each commercial or spot and put on the slate.

From the 3/4-inch P-Copy, a 1/2-inch reference copy (R-copy) is made for catalogers, other support staff, and reference use. This copy is labelled with the same tape number as the preservation copy, except that the letter R precedes the number. The R-copy is viewed to transcribe the start time for each commercial, which is determined from the machine's counter and added to a log sheet.

The priorities established for the making of 3/4-inch and 1/2-inch reference copies are:

- Presidential items because of high usage requests
- Color film because of dye fading, color shifting, and brittleness
- 1-inch and 2-inch videotape because it cannot now be viewed or conveniently used until transferred
- Items for which special user requests have been made

5. Equipment. Most of the equipment used in the archive's cataloging and access process is of industrial quality. Professional equipment is generally beyond the budget of the facility. Although not professional or broadcast-quality equipment, industrial-quality equipment provides a considerably higher standard than consumer-quality video equipment. Industrial-level equipment (whether 3/4-inch or 1/2-inch) not only yields a higher video resolution but supports interface with more sophisticated electronic editing, synchronizing, and color-stabilizing equipment. Consumer-quality video equipment is gener-

⁹Christopher Ann Paton, "Whispers in the Stacks: The Problem of Sound Recordings in Archives," *American Archivist* 53 (Spring 1990): 276.

ally not adequate when working with archival materials, although it may prove sufficient for dubbing routine copies for user viewing.

Most video editing is done on SONY VO5800/5850 3/4-inch edit decks with an RM440/450 edit controller. The archive has recently purchased a high quality Sony 3/4-inch SP unit which, with an adapter, can be integrated with the older 3/4-inch equipment to produce even higher resolution when needed for specialized purposes. Similar industrial grade Panasonic units are used for 1/2-inch compilations on VHS. With both systems, a time base corrector helps provide stable synchronization, and a character generator provides titles and numbering for the bibliographic control process. A Studiomaster sound board allows sound correction and mixing when necessary. An Otari sound reel recorder is used for working with the sound recordings.

The 1-inch and 2-inch videoreels present particular problems because playing such tapes requires professional equipment. The archive was given two older model AMPEX 2-inch videotape machines from television stations in Oklahoma. With funds from the U.S. Department of Education, the project was able to purchase a used 1-inch videorecorder. These machines are used primarily for transferring items to 3/4-inch cassettes for viewer access and cataloging and are not used on a regular basis for user access. In the transferring process, it is also helpful to integrate a waveform monitor and vectorscope into the overall system in order to ensure that stable, true-color copies are generated.

There is also a Mitsubishi videoprinter that allows color or black-and-white still frames to be printed from videotape. This unit provides prints for finding aids, displays, and for the research and publication needs of users.

Description

Bibliographic control over the PCA's holdings is accomplished through two databases. A local database designed using R-Base, System V software provides access to detailed information about individual spots and the Online Computer Library Center's (OCLC) Union Catalog that supports the creation of collection-level records. Collection-level records are created to alert scholars, researchers, and other potential users to the existence of the PCA and direct them to it. In creating these records, the project helps further the important goal of universal archival control for all types of materials.

Ideally, records created for the local database could have been converted for use in creating parts of the records for OCLC. The fields for the local database records were designed to ensure that their structure and content allowed for maximum reciprocity and compatibility with the MARC format. However, efforts toward compatibility or convertibility were not allowed to restrict the categories for recording information in the local database or the development of the local database in a timely manner.

Input for both databases is prepared following equally high standards. The item-level database is the primary control product of the project and when conflicts arise, the needs of the local database are given priority. The local database has 32,611 records of individual commercials, and 2,418 collection-level records have been created and added to the OCLC Online Union Catalog.

Item-level Records. The local database serves the research needs of those primary users who require access to individual political commercials. This includes searching for known items, as well as searching for specific content, issues, and visual images. Archivists working with audio-visual collections in other subject areas also report that users of these

materials need item-level access.¹⁰ In addition to the direct searching of the database, specialized reports of all, or subsets of, the database can be produced. Currently, the database is searched by project staff for clients who contact the PCA. Information which is useful for the administration of the archive and the preservation of its holdings is also maintained in the local database.

The description of the individual items is based on categories devised by the project directors, with advice from the original expert consulting panel.¹¹ In developing these descriptive elements, information considered appropriate for scholars doing research in political communication was used, along with standard bibliographic descriptive elements. The discipline-specific fields are used by scholars in the area of political advertising.¹² The intercoder reliability was determined by having catalogers record data for a sample of items in the collection. A check was made to determine the extent to which catalogers agreed on the application of the specific field definitions across items.

The intercoder reliability has averaged +.91 across all categories. The process for establishing intercoder reliability as part of a content analysis methodology is described in more detail in Kaid and Wadsworth, and the formula used to compute intercoder reliability is the one given by Ole Holsti:¹³

$$R = \frac{2(C_{1,2})}{C_1 + C_2}$$

$C_{1,2}$ = number of category assignments both coders agree on

$C_1 + C_2$ = total category assignments made by both coders

There are more than sixty elements used to code each political commercial. An example of a coded record for the item database is shown in Figure 1. The database was designed with as many logical fields as possible. Such fields require the keying of a single character that represents a true (Y) or false (N) state in a logical comparison, which reduces input error and coding time. Some of the fields are described below.

1. Name (Candidate, etc.). This is the name of the candidate as used in the commercial in name authority form. It may be the name of a party, a committee, a proposition, or issue campaign. In a commercial with multiple candidates, the name of the candidate

¹⁰Helen P. Harrison, "Conclusion from the Exercise," in *Documents That Move and Speak: Audiovisual Archives in the New Information Age* (Munich: Saur, 1992), 159 and 165; William T. Murphy, "Access to Moving Images and Sound Documents," in *Documents That Move and Speak*, 245.

¹¹The panel consisted of: William T. Murphy, Chief of the Motion Picture, Sound, and Video Branch of the National Archives; Jerry D. Saye, Associate Professor in the School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and Wendy White-Hensen, former Senior Cataloger for archival moving image materials at the Library of Congress.

¹²Lynda Lee Kaid and Dorothy K. Davidson, "Elements of Videostyle: A Preliminary Examination of Candidate Presentation through Televised Advertising," in *New Perspectives on Political Advertising*, edited by Lynda Lee Kaid, Dan D. Nimmo, and Keith R. Sanders (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986); Anne Johnston Wadsworth and Lynda Lee Kaid, "Incumbent and Challenger Styles in Presidential Advertising" (paper presented at the International Communication Association Convention, Montreal, May 1987); Lynda Lee Kaid and Anne Johnston, "Negative versus Positive Advertising in U.S. Presidential Campaigns, 1960-1988," *Journal of Communication* 41 (Summer 1991): 53-64; Christina Holtz-Bacha, Lynda Lee Kaid, and Anne Johnston, "Political Television Advertising in Western Democracies: A Comparison of Campaign Broadcasts in the U.S., Germany, and France," *Political Communication* 11 (1994): 67-80.

¹³Kaid, Lynda Lee and Anne J. Wadsworth, "Content Analysis," in *Measurement of Communication Behavior*, edited by P. Emmert and L. L. Barker (New York: Longman, 1989), 197-217; Robert C. North, Ole Holsti, M. George Zaninovich, and Dina A. Zinnes, *Content Analysis: A Handbook with Applications for the Study of International Crisis*, (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1963).

Figure 1. Coded record for the item database

CATALOG

ID#:

56123

REF CASE#:

R1260

ORIG#:

V9896

BEG TIME:

46:26

MAIN ENTRY

ME SURNAME:

Brown

ME FIRST NAME:

Kathleen

NAME IN COMMERCIAL

NIC SURNAME:

NIC FIRST NAME:

TITLE:

Kathleen Brown for Governor

PRODUCER:

AGENCY:

Clinton Reilly Group

MEDIA CONSULTANT:

SPONSOR:

Friends of Kathleen Brown

PUBLISH DATE:

10/4/94

 COPYRIGHT:

☐

 COPYHOLD:

PHYSICAL DESCRIP:

1 videoreel (30 sec.) : sd., col. ; 1 in.

FORMAT

BETA:

☐

V1/2":

☐

V3/4":

☐

V1":

☒

V2":

☐

FILM:

☐

8MM:

☐

COLOR:

☒

WIND:

AUDIO R:

☐

AUDIO C:

☐

LENGTH:

2

FEET:

SOUND:

AUDIO TRACK:

TAPE SPEED:

ORIGINAL CONDITION:

PROBLEMS:

LOCATION OF ORIGINAL:

LOCATION OF DUPLICATE:

V10692, #60345 (R1311)

SLATE ID OR CODE#:

KB-G94-30-2501A

GENERAL NOTE:

RESTRICTIONS:

SUMMARY:

Cand.'s VO speaks about need for plan to rebuild state; montage of shots of cand. in crowd handing out copies of plan; anncr. VO alternates w/cand.; shot of plan w/800# super.

LANGUAGE:

ENGLISH

COUNTRY:

USA

STATE:

CA

 DISTRICT: ELECTION YR:

1994

PARTY:

D

 ELECTION TYPE:

G

 INCUMBENT:

☐

RESULT:

L

 OFFICE:

GOV

 SEX:

F

 RACE:

WHITE

Downloaded from https://prime-pdf-watermark.prime-prod.pubfactory.com/ at 2025-07-02 via free access

Figure 1. Continued

CANDIDATE APPEAR:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SONG/JINGLE:	<input type="checkbox"/>	QUES/ANS:	<input type="checkbox"/>
OPPONENT:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HUMOR:	<input type="checkbox"/>	TEST/END:	<input type="checkbox"/>
COMM TYPE:	ISSUE	TALKING HEAD:	<input type="checkbox"/>	USE OF FAMILY:	<input type="checkbox"/>
ANIMATION:	<input type="checkbox"/>	MDS:	<input type="checkbox"/>	GENRE:	COM
COMPUTER GRAPHICS:	<input type="checkbox"/>				
MUSIC:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
SUBJECT 1:	Change				
SUBJECT 2:	Economy				
SUBJECT 3:	Plan				
SUBJECT 4:					
SUBJECT 5:					
NAME 1:					
NAME 2:					

in the major campaign is used first and the other candidate names are included in other fields. For acts, initiatives, or propositions, the two-letter code for the state follows the name of the act, initiative, or proposition, and a note is made in the summary if the spot is for or against an issue.

2. Title. This is the title of the item as found on the title frame, the slate, or the original container. A descriptive title is created when none is found.

3. Producer, Agency, Media Consultant, and Sponsor. These are the names of the producer of the spot, the advertising agency, or the media consultant for the campaign.

4. Physical Description. This is the description of the master according to standard cataloging rules and it is detailed in several sub-fields. Other fields note the condition of the original tape or film and any problems with its condition. Information on the type of sound for film items is coded in a separate field.

5. Summary. A brief summary or abstract of the item is given. The summary may include the contents of the spot, the issues it stresses, or the approach or special production characteristics.

6. Location. This is the country in which the election was held and both the state and the district number for U.S. Congressional or state legislative races.

7. Election Characteristics. Elements in this field are the election year, the political party of the candidate, the election type (general, primary, run-off, proposition, bond, etc.), whether the candidate is an incumbent or challenger, and whether the candidate won the election.

8. Spot Characteristics. A field cluster that states whether the candidate appears in the spot, if a song or jingle is used, if humor is used, if the spot is a testimonial/endorsement, if the candidate's family is used, and the type of spot (issue, image, negative, combination).

9. Spot Production Techniques. This is the production style of the commercial (talking-head, animation, computer graphics, and other special effects).

10. Subjects. Five subject fields reflect the natural language used in the commercial. Terms taken from the commercials are maintained in an alphabetical list that is used for guidance. Free text searching of the summary field is also possible.

The project staff is exploring the possibility of creating a controlled vocabulary to aid in searching for the item-level records. As Yee notes, some users may need to distinguish between what the image is of, what the item is about, the form of the item, and the physical format.¹⁴

Collection-level Records. The project directors had to resolve many complex problems related to the materials not previously addressed in the literature. A summary of the approach taken is given below. A fuller discussion of collections organization, format choice, descriptive elements, name access, and subject access has been published.¹⁵

The materials are typically about a candidate, although they were not generated or retained by the candidate. They are created for the candidate's use by various agencies. These materials are brought together in the PCA to aid further research on political communication—they constitute an artificial collection. The collection-level records are organized based on the political career of an individual, incorporating commercials from all of his or her campaigns. Information about creators and custodians is retained in the item-level database and in other files.

The candidate approach does not work well with those few commercials that promote a proposition or issue, for example gun control or tax reform. Commercials sponsored by advocacy groups around an issue that indirectly affects the candidacy must also be organized in a different manner. Because access by campaign is needed by researchers, this is provided in the local database and other finding aids.

For the description of the film and video commercials, either the *Visual Materials* (MARC VM) format or the *Archives and Manuscript Control* (MARC AMC) format would be appropriate. The MARC VM format is for all types of visual material; the AMC format is for material intended for treatment according to archival methods. The decision of which format to use was made early on by project staff and the panel of experts, and was based on the following:

1. A description of conventions and cataloging rules based on the use of *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules* (AACR2R), interpreted by *Archival Moving Image Materials* (AMIM) for archival quality materials, relating to the use of MARC VM format.
2. A description based on the use of *Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts* (APPM) relating to the use of MARC AMC format.
3. A search of OCLC files using the AMC qualifier is not obvious to all users.
4. Fields in the AV format that are appropriate only at the item level were incorporated into the local database.
5. OCLC standards expect AMC to be used for collections of mixed media.¹⁶
6. The coming format integration.

¹⁴Martha Yee, "Subject Access to Moving Image Materials in a MARC-Based Online Environment," in *Beyond the Book: Extending MARC for Subject Access*, edited by Toni Petersen and Pat Molholt (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1990), 97–115.

¹⁵For a more complete discussion of the collection-level description, see Kathleen J. M. Haynes, Jerry D. Saye, and Lynda Lee Kaid, "Cataloging Collection-level Records for Archival Video and Audio Recordings," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1994): 19–32.

¹⁶*Archives and Manuscript Control Format*, 2nd ed. (Dublin, Ohio: OCLC Online Computer Library Center, 1987).

Figure 2. Example of updated collection-level record

040	POI \$e APPM \$c POI
049	POIA
100 1	Simon, Paul, \$d 1928-
245 00	Paul Simon : \$k commercials, \$f 1972 1990.
300	26 commercials (on 11 videoreels) : \$b sd., col. ; \$c 2 in.
300	18 commercials (on 15 videoreels) : \$b sd., col. ; \$c 1 in.
300	50 commercials (on 15 videocassettes)(U-matic) : \$b sd., col. & b&w ; \$c 3/4 in.
300	11 commercials (on 2 film reels) : \$b sd., col. ; \$c 16 mm.
300	9 commercials (on 1 sound tape reel) : \$b analog, 7 1/2 ips.
500	Political Commercial Archive, Dept. of Communication, University of Oklahoma, Burton Hall, Norman, OK 73019.
520	Commercials used during Simon's campaigns for the 1972 gubernatorial, 1974 U.S. congressional, and the 1984 and 1990 U.S. senatorial elections in Illinois and the 1988 presidential election, Democratic party.
555 8	Computer database of ca. 50,000 individual commercials.
650 0	Advertising, Political.
650 0	Radio advertising.
655 7	Political spots \$2 MIM
710 2	University of Oklahoma. \$b Political Commercial Archive.

The second edition of APPM¹⁷ was chosen as the primary tool for description. Other tools used to provide additional guidance include AACR2R and AMIM.¹⁸ The archivist compiles all workforms used in the local database for a candidate for all political elections throughout his/her career to create a collection-level record. Collections are updated when commercials are added to the collection or further information is found. An example of an updated collection-level record is shown in Figure 2.

Two standard lists are used to provide broad subject access to the collection-level records: the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* (LCSH) and *Moving Image Materials: Genre Terms* (MIM).¹⁹ The headings from LCSH are form headings, which are applied using Library of Congress guidelines for topical films that are commercials. MIM provides standardized terms for genre and form for all types of moving image materials, and it is recommended by the National Moving Image Database (NAMID) Standards Committee. These headings alert users who may want political commercials (or political spots), television advertising, and/or radio advertising to the fact that a significant repository is available.

¹⁷Steven L. Hensen, comp., *Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts: A Cataloging Manual for Archival Repositories, Historical Societies, and Manuscript Libraries*, 2d ed. (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1989).

¹⁸*Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, 2d ed., 1988 revision, edited by Michael Gorman and Paul W. Winkler (Chicago: American Library Association, 1988); Wendy White-Hensen, comp., *Archival Moving Image Materials: A Cataloging Manual* (Washington, D.C.: Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, Library of Congress, 1984).

¹⁹*Library of Congress Subject Headings*, 14th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1991); Martha M. Yee, *Moving Image Materials: Genre Terms* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1987).

Use of the Materials

Access to the materials in the PCA gives scholars a rich array of data that may be approached from their respective research stances. The primary users represent the disciplines of history, literature, philosophy, communication, journalism, and political science, but an increased interest in women's roles and presentations in the political system also draws users from other areas of study.

The users themselves are students, faculty, political practitioners, and the media. An expanding group of international scholars interested in comparative media and election research also uses materials from the PCA for joint projects in Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and other Western European countries.²⁰ In 1990, 1,782 items were requested, an increase of over 400 percent in archive usage from the period 1986–87. Overall, the requests during the past seven years resulted in the archive receiving inquiries from 420 university scholars, providing materials for 124 public broadcasts on radio and television, and making presentations of archive materials that were viewed by more than 8,760 individuals.

Accurate records on usage are not available before this time, but examples have been documented. The requests came from individual scholars pursuing research projects, museums seeking materials for display, and media professionals using materials for columns, writing projects, television and radio news, documentaries, and special programs.

Such use indicates the unique value of the collection and the diversity of the public interested in the resources. More recently, inquiries are coming from persons interested in studying United States campaign material for projects relating to new uses of media in Eastern European elections. Other international use includes invitations for presentations by universities in France, England, and Germany.

Despite the importance of political advertising to the modern electoral process, there are few substantial collections of materials available for scholarly research. The other available resources for political television and radio commercials are the presidential libraries, which have commercials related to the career of that particular president. The Library of Congress, the National Archives, and the Smithsonian Institution have small collections, but they make no claim as to comprehensiveness.

Because there is active acquisition of new materials, finding aids such as the catalog and guide must be updated frequently.²¹ Project staff also keeps users aware of activities through the *Political Advertising Research Reports*.²² A home page on the World Wide Web is another way to provide rapid dissemination of general information.²³ Documents that could be included are issues of the research report and guides to the collections. Examples from the guide are shown in Figure 3.

Access would be improved by migrating to a new local system and providing remote searching of the item-level records. Also, the technological advancements that link digi-

²⁰The international expansion of the PCA is the result of the efforts of Dr. Lynda Lee Kaid. In addition to requests for items from the PCA, Dr. Kaid appraises acquisitions from several countries. She is currently exploring a reciprocal arrangement with a new archive for European political television spots, to be located in Germany.

²¹Lynda Lee Kaid and Kathleen J. M. Haynes, *Political Commercial Archive, a Catalog and Guide to the Collection* (Norman, Okla.: Political Communication Center, 1991).

²²Lynda Lee Kaid and Kathleen J. M. Haynes, eds. *Political Advertising Research Reports*, 1, #1- (1993-).

²³The web page for the Political Communication Center is now available at the URL <http://www.ou.edu/pccenter>.

Figure 3. Examples of entries from page 245 of Lynda Lee Kaid and Kathleen J. M. Haynes, *Political Commercial Archive, a Catalog and Guide to the Collection* (Norman, Okla.: Political Communication Center, 1991).

SILVESTRI. 1 sound tape reel (7 1/2 ips.).

Collection contains 1 radio commercial used during Silvestri's 1982 campaign for State Supreme Judge in Pennsylvania.

SIMKINS, Joe. 1 videocassette (3/4 in.).

Collection contains 8 television commercials used during Simkins' 1984 primary campaign for U.S. Congress in District 5 of Michigan. (Republican Party).

SIMON, Paul. 1928-. 11 videocassettes (3/4 in.). 2 film reels (16 mm.). 21145078.

Collection contains 11 television commercials used during Simon's campaign for the 1972 gubernatorial election, 6 television commercials used in his campaign for the 1974 congressional election, and 71 television commercials used in his 1984 campaign for the U.S. Senate election; all in Illinois. Includes 17 television commercials used in his campaign for the 1988 presidential election. (Democratic Party).

SIMON, Seymore. 1915-. 2 sound tape reels (7 1/2 ips.). 22044450.

Collection contains 1 radio commercial used during Simon's campaign for the 1962 President of Cook County Board election in Illinois. Also contains 4 radio commercials from his 1980 campaign for Supreme Court Judge in Illinois. (Democratic Party).

tized moving images to descriptive records and indexes of the visual content will eventually be cost-effective. Although much of this technology is not suitable for preservation purposes for archival materials, it is of great value in increasing access to sub-collections that can be compiled in a number of ways.

Commitment

The University of Oklahoma believes that the PCA, when fully described and made widely available using standard bibliographic control methods, will become a national and international resource. Many of the holdings could not be replaced from another source if lost or damaged. Continued acquisition of new materials and preservation of all formats are essential aspects of the management of the PCA, and the University of Oklahoma is committed to seeing that these valuable assets of the American democratic process endure.