

**RBMS Manuscripts and Other Formats Discussion Group**  
**Saturday, June 25, 2011 10:30 am-12:00 pm**  
**Sheraton New Orleans – Napoleon B3**  
**New Orleans, LA**

Eighteen colleagues gathered on Saturday morning to ponder the merits of “other formats” in addition to traditional manuscripts and archives.

Attendees began with reports on grants received, recent acquisitions, and new initiatives, but the level of interest in other formats soon brought the conversation to the planned discussion of audio visual materials. Those present considered the expense of having material reformatted, particularly when it was acknowledged that staff rarely know the content of film, audio recording, or floppy diskettes prior to contracting the work, as few institutions possess the necessary equipment to preview the content of now obsolete formats. Examples of content mentioned included oral histories, athletics events, and home movies.

Turning attention to the cost of reformatting, participants agreed that audio appears to be much further along than video where reformatting technology is concerned, and is therefore thought to be more cost-effective. Some institutions are dependent upon patron-funded requests, which often prove to be prohibitively expensive.

Suggestions were made regarding means of reducing the cost of reformatting media, including establishing regional centers that would maintain the necessary equipment. Such a venture would likely need to be grant-funded initially.

In lieu of collaborative centers, institutions are able to contract services at a number of firms, including George Blood, Airshow, and Colorlab. We were fortunate to have in attendance a representative from George Blood, Inc., who was able to shed some light on the contract process. She observed that the majority of the firm’s work is to digitize oral histories.

Those present also tackled the difficult subject of audio transcription – difficult because transcriptions by the traditional route can be tedious and time-consuming. It was noted that “voice-recognition” software hasn’t progressed far enough yet to be useful.

Finally, interest was expressed in an RBMS workshop or seminar on the identification, preservation, and access to audio-visual materials.