

AUDIOVISUAL ARCHIVES: AN ESSAY ON THE POLICIES OF ACCESS TO AUDIOVISUAL ARCHIVES FOR ACADEMICS, TEACHERS, RESEARCHERS, AND STUDENTS

Tedd Urnes (*Teddview Audiovisual Archival Management, Oslo, Norway*)

1. Introduction

The site is Oslo. The year is 2000. The month is August. The event is the 19th International Congress of Historical Sciences and the International Association for Media and History, August 11–12. For those of you who do not know much about Norway, Oslo is the capital. Thirteen years ago I attended the conference mentioned to present a limited report about the official access policies of the members of FIAT/IFTA. My main resource was FIAT/IFTA's publication *Guide to Audiovisual Archives*, eleventh edition, 2000.

2. The goal

The year is 2013. The issue highlighted thirteen years ago in Oslo is still on the agenda of international conferences and seminars. The main goal of presenting a paper on the same issued evaluated in 2000 is to see if changes have taken place among the most important libraries and archives that have dominated the debate and the agenda of international conferences throughout the last thirteen years. Most of these archives are still members of FIAT/IFTA, IASA, and BAAC.

The question I asked thirteen years ago was, "Access for university studies, a national responsibility: yes or no?"

Twenty-five members answered negative to the question, which meant that none of the archives were advocates for a policy for those who wanted to use the collections for university studies. Sixty-nine members gave a positive answer to the question, stating yes, we do support university studies.

The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) was one of the institutions that answered no to this question in 2000.

It is of great importance to study the reasons why twenty-five archives said they did not have a positive approach to academic studies in 2000 and to compare these reasons to information gathered in 2013. Has there been any change over these thirteen years?

3. Access policies thirteen years ago

What were the main reasons archives did not support access requests from academics, teachers, journalists, and students thirteen years ago?

- No access to equipment for viewing audiovisual materials was available for researchers.
- No rooms were ready for viewing the materials.
- No film viewing/editing tables were available.
- No viewing copies were available; only the original copy existed.
- No policies existed for making copies available for use by academics.
- The collections were used for new productions only.
- The sales departments wanted the collections to be used for for-profit endeavors only.
- Audiovisual materials needed to be available for new transmissions at any given moment.
- No librarian was available to assist teachers in identifying materials to use in the classroom.

4. The year 2013

The site is Oslo. The year is 2013. The task and aim for my paper is to make a critical evaluation about the current situation for the target groups mentioned: academics, writers, journalists, students, and researchers—who all want to make use of the content of audiovisual archives for the work they do. Has there been any change or improvement in the working conditions for these groups? Has there been any improvement for students who want to study television programmes?

I forwarded a questionnaire containing information and questions about the aim of my paper to a select group of individuals with whom I had worked during the last thirteen years, as well as to a selected group of television companies and national archives and libraries.

5. The content of audiovisual collections—some issues

Some years ago, I worked with academics doing research in archives with sound recordings, radio programmes, and television programmes. Why is it important to include information from TV programmes and other film and recorded sound collections in academic research?

Let us focus on some important sources: photographs, sound recordings, and moving images.

Some photos are famous worldwide because they document political events, wars, or dramatic situations. In many cases, photographers who took these photographs were risking their lives to capture such moments and to make it possible for archives to maintain a historical record of the past—a risky business so to speak.

6. Too close to the source

Two people are to be remembered. Two war journalists who came too close to the source—Robert Capa and Marie Colvin.

6.1. Robert Capa

The famous combat photographer and photojournalist, Robert Capa, was born in 1913 and he died in 1954. His life is legendary. His photographic style was a dangerous business. Robert Capa made the famous statement about the quality of a photograph: "...if your photographs aren't good enough, you're not close enough..."

Robert Capa came too close to the object. He was killed by a landmine at Thai Binh in Vietnam in 1954. The camera does the talking was his attitude. Personal courage was more important than the techniques of the camera. Catching a dramatic moment was the challenge for Robert Capa.

He covered five different wars: the Spanish Civil War, the Second Sino-Japanese War, World War II, the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, and the First Indochina War. *Robert Capa: In Love and War* is an interesting documentary about the life and work of Robert Capa [the programme was transmitted by Swedish Television (SVT2) in 2004].

About 70,000 of his photographic negatives are preserved.

6.2. Marie Colvin

Marie Colvin was also too close to the source. Marie Colvin was born in 1956 and was killed on duty in Syria in 2012. She was an award-winning American journalist who worked for the British newspaper, *The Sunday Times*. Marie Colvin died while covering the siege of Homs in Syria. She produced documentaries, such as *Arafat: Behind the Myth*, and she is featured in the 2005 documentary film, *Bearing Witness*.

Marie Colvin covered conflicts in Chechnya, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, East Timor, as well as the Arab Spring in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. Her last mission was the Syrian Civil War where she was killed.

Marie Colvin was a legend. The Colvin family has established a memorial fund for Marie at the Long Island Community Foundation. The humanity of Marie Colvin's work is admired worldwide.

7. Two filmmakers and their attitudes towards archival footage

7.1. Philip Kaufman

The American filmmaker, director, producer, screenwriter, and actor, Philip Kaufman made a public statement about making use of archival footage in movies. The statement was published in an interview conducted by Ellen Engelstad in Sodankyla, Finland. The Norwegian newspaper, *Klassekampen*, published the interview on June 24, 2013.

“People are too eager in throwing away materials (films) wishing to create something new. The result is the fading of the authentic. I like archival footage because it is like stones you find on the beach and are cleaning in the water. The colours are emerging and you are wondering where they came from ...”

Philip Kaufman has adapted novels of different types in his movies, which include *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1988), written by Milan Kundera; *Rising Sun* (1993), by Michael Crichton; Tom Wolfe's heroic epic *The Right Stuff* (1983); and the erotic writings of Anais Nin, *Henry & June* (1990).

Archival footage was used in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* to show the political environment in Prague in 1968.

Philip Kaufman directed the film *Hemingway & Gellhorn* (2013). The story is told with active use of archival footage, attempting to make the film a true story about the life of Ernest Hemingway and Martha Gellhorn. Archival film footage was used in a fascinating way where the actors appear to enter historical shots from the Spanish Civil War and other events. Footage for this film was selected from archives and libraries, including the University of South Carolina moving image research collections, the Imperial War Museum, Thought Equity, Getty Images, Producers Library, John E. Allan, Inc., HBO Archives, the Library of Congress, the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, the Russian Archives of Documentary Films and Photography, the WPA Film Library, Macdonald & Associates, UCLA Film-Television Archive, as well as shots from the film *Spanish Earth* made by Joris Ivens.

The past, the future, and the present are nested through the use of archival film footage.

7.2. Ingmar Bergman

In many of his films, the late Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman comments on the role of the artist. In two of his films he uses archival footage: *Persona* and *A Passion*.

In his films, actors portray both reality and fantasy. Why, in these two films, does he replace actors with archival footage? Ingmar Bergman made this statement about the matter: “... political activity today is precipitated by the news, by television's immediate closeness to what is going on all over the world. In this respect art has missed the boat completely. Artists are hardly the social visionaries they used to be. And they mustn't imagine they are! Reality is

running away from artists and their political visions...”⁶²

The scene selected for the movie *Persona* is TV news footage of Vietnamese monks in Saigon burning themselves to death with gasoline. TV newsreels make the past as real as possible. No fiction. The stock footage for the film *A Passion* is the famous event in Vietnam where South Vietnamese National Police Chief, Nguyen Ngoc Loan, shoots a Vietcong in the head in the street of Saigon.

8. Movie industry—film history—historians

American historians have been worried about the influence of historical movies in schools in the U.S. One hundred movies were studied and evaluated. The results of the studies were published in a book, *Past Imperfect: History According to the Movies*.

A positive cooperation between historians and film directors does not always take place during the preparation for the production of historical films. Historians are not always a group from whom film directors seek advice while making a movie. While film companies may want to talk to historians about the film, the film director makes his own decision about the final content of the film even if the historians have a negative opinion of the film. The main concerns of the director are the economics of the film, not historical facts.

9. History studies, access to audiovisual archives, and the selection of sources

For years historians have paid little interest to using films and television programmes to highlight different political events or issues related to world events. The written word, the main decisions made by politicians at meetings, official reports, and documents, have been the main sources for the work done. Due to new possibilities for research, the negative attitude among historians has changed. It is important to include information about different social and political events by showing the recordings of the events captured by television reporters or journalists. The main problem for years has been the lack of access policies of the producing television and radio companies for letting university scholars get access to their historical broadcasts.

Even today some find the use of books as a tool and as a source to be better than viewing a film in a cinema or viewing the programme on television. It used to be complicated making notes while viewing films and television programmes. It was easier to read a book, make notes, turn to the first part of the book and then return to the last pages.

The use of videocassettes, DVDs, and modern file formats has made it possible to view programmes and at the same make critical studies of their contents. Researchers can start and stop the programme when they want to make notes or discuss the content with other scholars or students. These tools are good for studies. But you must first get access to the audiovisual archives.

The Norwegian professor Knut Kjeldstadli reflects on these issues in his book, *Fortida er ikke hva den en gang var: En innføring i historiefaget*. The book was first published in 1999; in 2005 a revised edition was released. The discussion about the importance of history studies and the use of sources is very interesting for all of us who have worked in the field of research and in the field of audiovisual archives

To make people interested in history as a subject, historians have to communicate with ordinary people about the results of their efforts. Television programmes about historical events are popular. People watch dramas about the history of their nation and about wars and politi-

62 Bergman, Ingmar. 1993. *Bergman on Bergman: interviews with Ingmar Bergman* by Stig Björkman, Torsten Manns, Jonas Sima. New York: Da Capo Press.

cians. Even if the producer states that the story is a mixture of facts and fiction, many viewers believe in the stories as true historical reports.

The content of audiovisual archives brings researchers closer to the historical event than a written document or an official report or a published book.

Those who make documentary recordings live a dangerous life. In 2012 approximately 141 journalists were reported killed on duty. Robert Capa and Marie Colvin are two important people who should be remembered for such documentary work.

The driving force behind the use of audiovisual sources for research is the need for dependable primary documentation. Like the statements of the American combat photographer, Robert Capa, the historian needs to come as close as possible to the past. Films, photos, and sound recordings are documentary forms that make research of the past as close as possible to actually being in the past. It is true, however, that footage of historical events may be edited by a producer to create a story by and for the producer in which a new reality is created to satisfy the aim of the programme. A scholar must evaluate historical footage with reference to facts already known. Even in films, you will find the need for the use of additional facts in order to help viewers understand the subject. Some movies make use of facts listed at the end to tell why the story ended like it did or why the characters behaved the way they did. For instance, at the end of the well-known movie *Y Tu Mama Tambien* the viewers are informed that the woman who is travelling in Mexico with two young boys has cancer and that she has to face the fact that she is dying.

Professor Knut Kjeldstadli wrote about the issues of using audiovisual archives, but he did not approach the practical problems of getting access to audiovisual collections.

10. Experiences working with academics, writers, students, and television producers

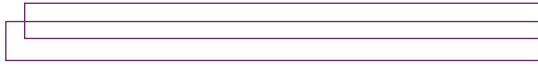
You have to come close to the sources when you are working with the groups mentioned. You get a feeling that you take part in an important work making an official report about a certain subject. The aim of the work has to be defined at an early stage of the work. The life of the researcher is not the same anymore. If the audiovisual collection has been digitized, it is an easy task to find the shots or the sound recordings. The challenge is to get access to footage that has not been digitized. Even then, it is not a question of getting access, but of what you get access to? An organization can give you permission to search the archive by yourself if you know what you want. Access to an archive can be given to you as an official policy of an organization because the content is of value to all of us. But what about all the programmes that were transmitted and later wiped out and deleted?

11. Selection—deleting archival footage—the content of the archives

In 1993, the Norwegian historian Henrik G. Bastiansen was working on a project about the Apollo moon landing and the broadcasts of the event. The report was presented at the international conference of FIAT/IFTA in Sofia, Bulgaria in September of that year.

“It was a shock for me as a historian to find out that every record of the live broadcast from the studio in Oslo was destroyed and lost forever! ... The only parts of the whole broadcast that are preserved today, are the interviews with the Norwegian artists and experts that were done on 16 mm film in advance... Many recordings of the Norwegian live broadcast were videotaped, but were later deleted from the videotapes. Why?”

Bastiansen was awarded his doctorate at the University of Oslo in 2006 with his thesis, “Da avisene møtte TV: Partipresse, politikken og fjernsynet, 1960–1972” (When the newspapers



met TV: Party press, politics, and television, 1960–1972). He has published books about topics such as freedom of speech in Norway, the Norwegian press, the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation, and general media history.

Bastiansen was not the only one who was shocked by the reality of using archival footage as a primary resource. Many of those who were in charge of the productions transmitted worldwide were worried about the absence of preservation policies in the television companies. I was worried too. I disliked the situation of deleting historical facts and sources.

12. Avoid the void—a struggle for decency—a journey from a soviet asylum to a forgotten paradise

The Norwegian scholar, Gunnar Gjengset, wrote a book about his escalating experiences with alcohol abuse due to a posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after having been sentenced to one year in a labour camp in the Soviet Union in 1970. As a young student, Gjengset went to the Soviet Union to take action against violations of human rights involving Yoli Galanskov and Pjotr Grigorenko. Gjengset was released from the labour camp only as a result of international pressure.

Making use of audiovisual archives was important for Gjengset's writing. Some years ago he approached me, searching for films made in connection with a television production in Norway. He had abandoned his search due to too many regulations and formal obstacles. So I assisted him in the search, and led him to films of which I was aware. And he managed to do his work. The experience of approaching a television company for a single academic researcher, such as Gunnar Gjengset, was not a positive experience. Therefore, this summer, I spoke with him about his efforts to make contacts with different archives. The National Archive of Norway did a good job for him. But he still remembers the negative answer from television companies some years ago when he was busy writing a lecture and wanted to make use of new sources.

Gunnar Gjengset has a Ph.D. from the University of Umeå in Sweden. He has written a book about the Norwegian sculptor Gustav Vigeland and the writer Matti Aikio. He is a highly respected and satirical aphorist who has had his own columns in leading Norwegian newspapers for more than 20 years.

13. The responsibility to support academics and their use of collections in audiovisual archives: television corporations and national archives

Television companies are production units making new programmes every year for transmission, like a publishing company where the goal is the production and the publication of books. National archives and libraries are set up to support education and research and to steward the cultural heritage of a nation. The demand for production is not the main aim of these archives and libraries.

Students working to finish a Master's degree or a doctorate must evaluate the sources available. If audiovisual resources are on their list of sources, students will most likely face a problem getting access to them. The main reason for this problem is the official policy of these two mentioned bodies: television companies and national archives and libraries.

The researchers also face a technical problem in asking to view the archival footage.

14. The turtle revolution—a slow but important change in technology

About thirteen years ago we talked about a new technical change in making television programmes and radio programmes available. We also discussed transmission possibilities and preservation policies for old movies, TV programmes, and archival footage. The resistance towards assisting scholars in their research had to change—we all were of the opinion that the revolution would come, even if slowly.

In academics there is a traditional approach to research. The written document was traditionally more important. Document archives were a need for all scholars.

15. Military history—selected sources

The year is 2013 and I decided to conduct an experiment myself to study the list of sources printed in approximately fifty books published over the last thirteen years. The subject: military history.

My assumptions were pessimistic. I assumed that military historians are a conservative group of people who do not want to use new sources available on the Internet or stored in audiovisual archives. I was right. I found only five books where the historian had used movies, documentaries on film, radio programmes, or sound recordings.

16. Bjørn Fontander in Oslo—the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK)

The year is 1979. The Swedish television producer, Bjørn Fontander, was making a documentary about Norwegian refugees during the Second World War. The Norwegian title for the programmes is *På flukt over Kjølen*. Four programmes were made. They were all transmitted in Norway in 1979. Later, I was informed that Bjørn Fontander also had written a book based on the programmes. The title of the book is *Flukten over Kølen*.

My research on the sources used by military historians led me to an interesting book about Norwegian soldiers in Sweden during World War II written in 2008 by Anders Johansson, *Den glemte arme: I skyggen av hjemmefronten*.

I was surprised to find the book written by Bjørn Fontander on the list of sources and not the four television programmes produced by Swedish Television in 1979.

17. Conservative academics?

Is my assumption correct that the writers of history books are too conservative in their selection of sources? I hope I am wrong. I found information with reference to audiovisual archives in only five books. Radio programmes, video programmes, or old movies were not highlighted among the sources.

The test might provide a warning that we have not yet reached the level where we can claim a revolutionary change regarding the use of digitized materials among academics and writers of history.

18. Access to audiovisual archives after thirteen years—any changes?

The site is Mexico City. I am taking part in an international conference presenting a paper on audiovisual archives—past and future. The year is 2003. I made a statement about the future: no tapes, no films, and no sound recordings. The invisible collections have been revealed by the digitization of the archives. No tapes and no films and no sounds.

To a certain extent the statement is a good one, but only to a certain extent. If we today approach some of the most important national libraries and archives, film institutes, and national television and radio corporations worldwide, the official policy is to digitize collections so that researchers can be given an opportunity to access these materials making use of the flexibility of digital files and networks.

The negative attitude the academics experienced thirteen years ago is gone and is now only history.

Due to the digitization of collections, the official policy towards academics is now a positive one. A change from 2000 to 2013 has taken place for the benefit of researchers.

The reading room is now the researchers' office where they can view the materials they seek. This is possible today at many institutions. I have tested some of the most important institutions searching for archival footage and programmes. The work is easy. You can get easy access to many interesting programmes. The main problem now is not the already digitized material but the materials left undigitized in the archives.

The issue is the content of the archives. What do we mean when we say the archive is an audiovisual archive? The next question: has a national legal deposit law been introduced? Are transmitted radio and television programmes stored in the archive? Music and books and written documents, too?

Researchers who want to view old programmes made on film and not copied to a new format, have to view the film on a film-viewing table. What about old two-inch tapes? This is a different kind of problem. The machines made for the production and the use of two-inch tapes are almost extinct. These tapes have to be transferred to a digital file or a new tape format. This means that the researcher has to pay the archive a visit to get the work done. The researcher has to have a budget for the work. Universities must set up budgets for viewing legacy materials.

19. Response to a selected questionnaire about access to audiovisual archives for academics: Television Nacional de Chile (TVN)

The city is Santiago, Chile. The head of the Documentation Center of Television Nacional de Chile granted me permission to publish her response to my survey. Her name is Amira Arratia Fernandez. She is the official FIAT/IFTA representative for Latin America. She was educated in librarianship at the University of Chile in Santiago. Since 1973 she has worked at TVN. She joined FIAT/IFTA in 1979. Amira Arratia Fernandez is on the right in this photo taken during a press conference in Mexico City in 2001 (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Amira Arratia Fernandez (right). Photo taken during a press conference in Mexico City in 2001. Also pictured, from left to right, Perla Olivia Rodriguez Resendiz from Radio Educacion, Tedd Urnes (formerly Johansen) from Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK), and Lidia Camacho from Radio Educacion.

The Documentation Center of TVN has a huge audiovisual archive that dates back to 1969 and includes 16mm film, two-inch and one-inch video, ¾ inch U-matic, Beta SP, DigiBeta, optical discs, and now born-digital video. Access to audiovisual materials for TVN's users is free and available on all formats, new and old. Independent producers, students, researchers, historians, and the general public have access to the archive. Depending on the use that the researcher

intends to make with the materials, there may be a cost. According to TVN compliance with the Legal Deposit Law, they send a hard drive once a month to the National Library with all programming broadcast by TVN. Any Chilean who requires access to TVN material can consult the contents in the reading room at the National Library. They cannot take copies of the materials; they can only view them onsite. Actually TVN is working on a special project, to be finished in 2014, to put programs and news materials on the Internet in order to allow free access to external users. It is important to highlight the work that TVN has done with audiovisual materials towards the historical recovery of Chile in the period when the country was under the military dictatorship. The contribution of TVN's archives has been invaluable. When TVN ceased to belong to the state and became public television in 1992, a series of reports were conducted. The written reports described how human rights were violated in Chile during the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. TVN collected moving images, some which had been hidden for years, and armed reconstruction programs with real documentation of Chile's history. These programs had a tremendous impact on the general public. TVN as a public broadcaster felt the right to contribute to this effort with audiovisual material and to make it available to the public now that it is no longer necessary to hide programs from a military dictatorship that sought to erase historical footage, to burn it, to erase the history of Chile.

This is the report from Amira Arratia Fernandez, Television Nacional de Chile.

20. Recommendations—national libraries and archives

On the national level, if one does not already exist, it is important that the government introduces a legal deposit law for all broadcast materials. The responsibility for the future care of national audiovisual patrimony must be supported by a country's national library or archive. Preserving programmes without creating digital surrogates of the programmes is a policy that this author does not recommend.

21. Recommendations—universities, students, and academics

Professors at universities must take an active role in making it possible for students to get access to audiovisual archives. A budget is a must for those students who want to view old materials not yet digitalized but kept as originals in the archives.

Researchers are too conservative in the selection of sources for studies. The written work is still the most commonly used source. In the future, I want to see on the list of sources for a published book an equal presentation of selected books, radio and television programmes, and movies.

No tapes, no films, no sound recordings? What to do with the original materials and the original machines for the materials? The responsibility is on the shoulders of the national libraries and archives—do not put all trust in the radio and television companies.