

NPR – Digitizing Past Recordings in a Central Database

OVERVIEW

As a well-respected broadcasting company, we have the great fortune of having decades' worth of world class reporting available at our fingertips. However, as we continue toward a more digitized workforce, it would do well for us to ensure our legacy is preserved and our wealth of resources is available for use by others by digitizing our entire catalogue, and making it more accessible, intuitive, and adaptive to be used in future research projects.

This is why we are hoping to undertake the task of digitizing our entire library of broadcasts in a central location that will allow us to create backup copies of our current recordings that are only available in physical format. This will allow us to:

- Use technologies to scan our recordings for keywords and tag files with labels, making it markedly easier for our staff to look to past recordings for quotes and information
- Make our backlog available to people around the world, which will make a significant contribution to free information, a crucial centerpiece to fair and thorough journalism across the globe

PROBLEM

We have a massive amount of information and historical recordings of public broadcasts stored in hard copies of various format, but no real solution to easily accessing the information within the recordings, and a cumbersome catalogue system. Currently, storing the catalogue in a way that is accessible to our researchers and reporters, as well as safe for the media in which the information is stored, is costly and inefficient. Tapes, CD's, and other storage hardware can be damaged by being handled, or even by the storage environment if not closely monitored. Our current research and reporting facility lends almost 20% of its space to this catalogue, costing the reporting center roughly \$30,000 each quarter.

SOLUTION

Our plan will unfold in three steps:

- Create a digital copy of our current library
 - We will store our new collection of digital recordings in a database, which will be housed with our current internal servers
- Store current recordings in their original format in an offsite facility

- Offsite storage will cost a fraction of what we currently spend to store inside our facility
- Organize our information for use by our reporting staff
 - Phase one of this plan will have the information available in a search engine used within our staff's intranet
 - Once this has been implemented, we would like to have our database available to the general public, much like that of a library's digital archives

By having a digitized catalogue, we will reduce the space required within the reporting center dedicated to our histories, and our reporters can access the information directly from their desks, or remotely from the field.

The project is planned to take one year to complete, and will be carried out by a team of four that will digitize content, safely store hardware, and begin the process of organizing the content in a database. We will be adopting a software usable on our intranet that will allow our staff to search the database by keyword or date.

CONCLUSION

Digitizing our history is going to be costly and time consuming work, but in the end the benefits will be boundless. The project will result in more usable workspace within our reporting center, and will greatly expand our access to past broadcasts. We stand to save a significant amount of money completing this project, and we will be doing a service to the global journalistic community.