Cost of Inaction Calculator: Quantifying what is Lost when Preservation Action is not Taken

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Abstract: Return on Investment (ROI) is frequently discussed as a metric when decision makers analyze digitization and preservation projects to determine if they are worth the cost, but what about the cost of what is lost in the way of access, intellect and past investments by not acting? What is the Cost of Inaction (COI) with archival collections, especially analog audio and video collections that require digitization for preservation and have an increasingly limited expected lifespan? With that in mind AVPreserve has developed the Cost of Inaction Calculator, a free web-based tool that takes various data points (annual costs, money spent on previous preservation efforts, collection size, cost of digitization, etc.) and provides reports that illustrate the number of audiovisual items - as well as the associated investment already made in them - that would be lost or wasted over the next 15 years in comparison to resource expenditure for digitization and storage. These reports are a tool that help show the monetary and cultural impact of certain preservation decisions and assess what degree of action is achievable in the time we have left to preserve audiovisual materials given the reality that not everything can be digitized. This talk will present the tool, methodology, and a brief case study to show how the tool can be used for analysis. The COI Calculator is available at https://coi.avpreserve.com/.

About the author:

Joshua (M.) Ranger is a Senior Consultant with AVPreserve where he leads Collection Assessment and Inventory projects, specializing in data analysis and communication in support of planning, advocacy, collection management, and resource development. Recent projects have focused on non-traditional and production-based archives, including broadcasting collections, performance documentation, and corporate archives. Joshua's work centers on managing high-efficiency item-level inventories for large collections, creating processing workflows for

audiovisual materials, and developing preservation plans for unprocessed and distributed collections, and he also blogs at avpreserve.com. Joshua initially found/honed his love of information management in the worlds of Natural History, insurance, and the Walt Whitman Electronic Archive. He has earned MAs in Moving Image Archiving & Preservation from NYU and in American Studies from the University of Virginia, and his BA in English from the University of Oregon.