
Guidelines for audiovisual services in academic libraries

Prepared by the ACRL Audiovisual Committee

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These *Guidelines* were developed by the Audiovisual Committee of the Association of College and Research Libraries. They have been extensively revised and supersede the *Guidelines* developed and published by the same committee in 1968 (reprinted 1969).

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Foreword

When the last *Guidelines for Audio-Visual Services in Academic Libraries* were published in 1968 the laser was an exotic research instrument with little commercial potential and the personal com-

puter was still five years away from its birth in a garage. The fact that technological change is accelerating, that its direction is hard to predict, and its rate is easy to underestimate are only the more obvious conclusions we can draw from examining the changes that have taken place since 1968.

Technology has transformed so much of the library world. Twenty years ago only audiovisual librarians had to worry about different formats; now all libraries are confronted with the proliferation of media for recording and distributing information. The choice today is even more dramatic now than it was then: master the new technology or surrender the power to determine your own destiny. Audiovisual librarians, because of their experience applying new technology to traditional roles, are among those best able to appreciate and respond to these challenges and opportunities.

The reason for embracing new technology, of course, is to extend our capabilities. The Foreword to the first edition credited audiovisuals with the capability to "offer greater efficiency of presentation, add realism, stimulate interest, clarify communication, and speed comprehension." We can now add to this list the ability to permit repetition and drill, to allow students to observe and critique themselves, to perform otherwise difficult or dangerous exercises through models and simulations

and to use large quantities of information.

There also has been a notable change in the role audiovisual resources play on college and university campuses. The 1968 *Guidelines* addressed themselves exclusively to the contributions of audiovisuals to the instructional program. This is a very important but limited role that satisfies only the teaching mission of colleges and universities, ignoring audiovisuals' potential support of research. The tone of that document was adversarial, appropriate to a time when it was still necessary to argue the role of audiovisual materials in higher education.

We are already serving a second generation of media-bred students on college and university campuses. We are well on our way to having a media-conscious faculty. Audiovisual media are familiar, established and expected means of transmitting, receiving and using information.

The role of audiovisual services as instructional tools will continue to grow as the technology provides greater capability, ease of use, access, and integration with other powerful learning technologies. The demands upon campus resources will grow as more media-savvy men and women join faculties.

Support of instruction should not overshadow the growing ability of audiovisual technologies to contribute to academic research. Videotapes and computer diskettes supplement and replace laboratory notebooks. New technologies permit researchers and those that study their work to see, hear and understand new worlds. A dazzling array of electronic recording media are quickly superseding writing as a diary of social and historical events. To serve researchers in all fields, college and university libraries must have strong audiovisual collections and programs.

With technology, new ethical, legal and social issues have arisen. The need for librarians to give special attention to the implications of the new copyright law, especially the rulings on copying broadcasts, has had a profound effect on library services. The promise and sometime disappointment of cable television and the changes in government policy regarding licensing and franchising will also affect library services.

Librarians and their professional organizations have also changed the way they set goals and measure progress. Use of enumerative measures are giving way to an emphasis on the planning process, which partly explains the use of guidelines rather than standards in the present document. We also encountered a more specific reason in the inability of standards to satisfy the divergent interests, needs and resources represented by the spectrum of academic libraries and by the variety of organizational models of audiovisual services. On the other hand, guidelines may address the broader issues common to all institutions and offer a methodology for building an audiovisual program that fits the institution.

These revised *Guidelines for Audiovisual Services in Academic Libraries* attempt to provide a framework for development. They are not intended as a manual for practitioners. Instead, the goal is to support the development and administration of an increasingly important component of college and university service.

Planning

1. Formulate flexible, long range goals, measurable short range objectives for achieving the goals incrementally, and alternative strategies both for achieving the objectives and for adjusting to the introduction of new technologies.

2. Establish written policies to be incorporated with other library policies.

3. Employ record keeping methods which permit quick retrieval and easy analysis, preferably through electronic data processing, to record and accumulate statistics and generate management reports.

4. Conduct regular use and user studies and continue to investigate currently available media alternatives for meeting the needs of the academic community.

5. Consult and communicate with advisors and decision-makers involved in the research and planning process at all levels in the institution.

6. Recognize and reward individuals who generate and share ideas and initiatives to enhance the program.

7. Encourage receptivity to new technologies via staff education and retraining, such as continuing education and in-service workshops, and through release time and support for meeting professional expenses.

Budget

1. Secure continuing financial support for an audiovisual resources program before the program is implemented. Fund audiovisual services at a level proportionate to the program's role in the instruction and research program of the institution.

2. Provide adequate funding for acquisition, processing, and preservation of materials.

3. Provide adequate funding to ensure an appropriate environment, adequate supplies, new and replacement equipment and maintenance of equipment.

4. Provide adequate funding to meet staffing needs for services, programs and collection organization.

Personnel

Employ qualified professional, technical and support personnel to plan, implement, and evaluate audiovisual programs and services in academic libraries. This requires:

1. People with the capacity and skills to identify needs and respond creatively.

2. Sufficient numbers to attain defined goals and objectives.

3. Classification, status, and salary scales for audiovisual staff that are equivalent to those provided for other library/media employees.

Facilities

1. Integrate library audiovisual facilities design with the media program of the entire institution.

a. Consider campus-wide production, listening and viewing space needs of individual users and groups of users.

b. Coordinate facilities planning with people responsible for non-library media services on campus to avoid unnecessary duplication of expensive facilities while providing for optimal access to services and materials.

2. Design facilities to provide adequate space, security, wiring, and environmental conditions for all presently used technologies and services.

3. Consider the specific responsibilities of the library media center that will dictate the need for specialized rooms and areas, such as production, studio, graphics facilities, and related staff accommodations.

a. The design of public areas should emphasize user ease of access to materials and equipment, ready availability of support staff, adequate lighting, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and noise control, and appropriate placement in the building.

b. Individual listening and viewing stations and group facilities should have special regard for the comfort of the user and provide optimal conditions for the technology employed.

c. Design production areas for optimum working conditions, providing adequate space and environment to support quality work.

d. Include appropriate shelving and storage facilities for the protection of materials and equipment.

e. Facilities for equipment maintenance and repair are an essential part of library audiovisual facilities design and planning.

4. Anticipate the possibility of changes in specific responsibilities and available technology; flexibility in design is highly desirable.

5. Develop a sign system in audiovisual service areas.

Equipment and supplies

1. Provide equipment and supplies required for the types of audiovisual materials collected and supported and for the services offered.

a. Full-service facilities may supply equipment for formats not held in the collection and for services not provided in-house.

b. Non-circulating collections should be supported with sufficient suitable playback equipment for each format held.

c. Facilities with a production role should have

equipment required for quality work.

d. All services must have storage facilities, maintenance equipment and supplies appropriate to the materials in the collection.

2. Select durable, institutional quality equipment and supplies.

Collection development

1. Assign responsibility for selection of audiovisual resources to the designated librarian(s).

2. Write a clear collection development policy statement which specifies formats appropriate to

- a. the institution's goals and resources;
- b. the intended users;
- c. the academic programs supported; and
- d. the design of the facilities.

3. Apply the following criteria in selecting material:

- a. nature of the curriculum;
- b. intended use;
- c. faculty and graduate research needs;
- d. quality of the item, in both content and form;
- e. life expectancy.

4. When appropriate, preview audiovisual materials or consult reviewing sources before purchase.

5. Evaluate the existing collection frequently in order to determine subject areas that need to be strengthened or deemphasized. Collection development (both acquisition and weeding) should occur in the context of institutional objectives.

Acquisition

1. Acquire audiovisual materials through the same channels—approval plans, direct orders, gifts and exchanges—as other library materials.

2. Pursue alternative sources such as independent producers, broadcast agencies, and other institutions and collections as well. Observe current copyright guidelines and policies in all acquisition activities.

3. Give special consideration to materials which can only be obtained or best obtained through temporary acquisition, license or loan.

Cataloging

1. Make audiovisual materials accessible through the same retrieval mechanisms available for other library materials.

2. Catalog audiovisual materials in accordance with current national standards and practices.

3. Provide full subject access in addition to descriptive cataloging.

4. Classify audiovisual materials like other types of materials but assign location or accession designations as determined by organizational and functional considerations.

Collection maintenance

1. Develop circulation policies and procedures

appropriate to the care and handling requirements of the medium.

2. Instruct staff and patrons in the proper handling of materials and operation of equipment.

3. Train staff to perform routine preventive maintenance for materials and equipment.

4. Provide environmental conditions and use storage containers and shelving appropriate for the type of medium.

5. Secure materials and equipment against loss and damage.

6. Develop a program for regular evaluation of the condition of materials and equipment.

Service

Audiovisual services in academic libraries may cover a wide range of activities. Aside from those areas discussed in previous sections (Cataloging, Acquisition, Collection Development, Collection Maintenance), a library's program may also include any or all of the following services:

Production of audiovisual programs and materials;

Evaluation, selection, repair and/or maintenance of equipment;

Loan or in-house access to equipment;

Classroom services;

Circulation and distribution of materials;

Booking and other temporary acquisition of materials;

Facilities scheduling and management;

Technical and bibliographic instruction supporting use of materials;

Reference and consultation.

Selection of services should reflect consideration of an institution's goals and resources applied to a planning process. However, certain fundamental elements should be present in all academic audiovisual programs.

1. Design services to provide ready access to audiovisual facilities, equipment and collection by the best available means.

2. Use professional staff with experience in their respective fields to design and guide services.

3. Provide professional consultative and reference service to support efficient use of the facilities, collection and services.

4. Conduct instructional sessions on use of audiovisual resources.

5. Publicize the availability of the collection and services.

6. Develop a user's guide to the audiovisual center's policies, procedures and rules for using audiovisual facilities, materials and equipment.

7. Provide clear and concise equipment instructions. ■■

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