Videotape and Optical Media Identification and Preservation
Webinar October 23, 2013
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What Will be Covered
- Physical properties of media
- Preservation issues
- Formats and identification

What Will Not be Covered
- Digitization (that’s the webinar on October 30)
- Cataloging and metadata

Additional Resources
- Bibliography of web-based readings
- Archival video preservation labs vendor list (USA)
- List of current video formats

Videotape in Brief
If it has sprockets, it’s film = not video.
Videotape in Brief

Like audiotape, videotape is magnetic media.

Video can come in reel or cassette form – like audiotape.

It can carry both analog and digital signals – like audiotape.

Primary Concerns

- Multitude of formats (identification can be difficult)
- Format obsolescence
- Short Life Expectancy (LE)
- Environmental, organic, and human factors contributing to signal degradation

How Videotape Started

Thank Bing Crosby.

First funded development of audiotape. In 1950 gave $50,000 to a start-up called Ampex to develop magnetic videotape.

Original market/users: broadcasting

Like other time-based media, formats for the consumer market quickly followed.

NEVER intended as a preservation medium.

Over 60 formats have been introduced since 1956!!!

... and unluckily for you, most are
Before Delving Into Formats

Let’s understand the general preservation concerns based on videotape’s physical properties.

Videotape Properties

- Backcoat: thin carbon-black ribbon (since late 1960s).
- Magnetic coating: holds binder, magnetic particles, lubricant

Problem Areas

Of the 6 components making up videotape, four can contribute to signal degradation:
- Binder
- Lubricant
- Metal Particles
- Substrate

Binder

Holds the magnetic particles. This is the weakest link.

Moisture in the air (high humidity) contributes to hydrolysis (“sticky shed syndrome”). The binder starts breaking apart, and magnetic particles can be “shed” when tape is played.
**Binder**

Shedding tapes can leave debris on video deck heads, damaging subsequent tapes.

Losing magnetic particles from shedding causes drop-outs in the signal.


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**Treating Hydrolysis**

Once the binder starts breaking down, it can’t be permanently stopped.

Baking tapes at 122°F (50°C) for 3 days will stabilize the binder long enough to transfer the content. Transfer within 1-2 weeks. ***SEEK EXPERT ADVICE***

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**Treating Mold**

The mold must be carefully removed from the tapes and the tapes immediately transferred.

Have a professional working with proper equipment perform the cleaning. Breathing mold can endanger your health.

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**Lubricant**

Lubricant helps the tape move through the decks. It will dry out over time; hot and dry environments will accelerate this natural process.

Dry tapes become brittle, and can get stuck in playback decks, damaging the tape.

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**Treating Lubricant Loss**

Tapes can be re-lubricated, but should be done by a professional.

Over-lubrication can cause signal loss.
Magnetic Particles

Magnetic particles store the information. They are held in the binder.

Any magnetic particle loss is irretrievable.

Magnetic particle degradation evidence: diminished hue/color, reduced sound.

Magnetic Particles

Iron oxide. 2” Quad (earliest formats).

Cobalt-doped iron oxide. Started with 1” Type C.

Chromium Oxide (CrO2). Small format cassettes and some VHS.


Magnetic Particles and Oxidation

Moisture + oxide = rust

“Oxide”-based magnetic particles can degrade in high humility environments.

Magnetic Particles

Barium ferrite (BaFe). Used in VHS tapes in mid-1990s and Betacam. BaFe has longer LE than MP, but not as efficient for recording.

Metal particulate (MP). Used from BetaSP to the present. Particles are coated for protection against moisture in the air, but not effective when water-damaged.

Magnetic Particles

Metal evaporated (ME). ME tapes do not have a binder. Magnetic particles are laid down directly to the tape substrate. Found in small-format cassettes (Hi8, Digital8, DVCAM, MiniDV). Thinner magnetic coating, so tapes more fragile. Repeated plays and leaving tapes in “pause” can damage the tape, resulting in particle loss. Archivists follow “5 play rule,” then must transfer.

Avoiding Particle Loss

When it’s gone, it’s gone.

- Keep tapes cool and dry to slow down loss.
- Transfer content from ME tapes as soon as possible.
- Don’t leave tapes in pause.
- Don’t play ME tapes more than 5 times before transferring.
- Transfer content from tapes with evidence of metal particle loss.
**Substrate** (basefilm or carrier)

Made of polyester of varying thickness. Supports the magnetic coating.

Chemically stable, but can stretch. Stretching can be caused by: poor tape pack and high humidity/temperature.

If stretches, control track can be damaged and tape won’t run through the deck.

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**Control Track**

Not a physical property, but impacts the readability of an analog signal.

Pulse to drive the tape through the VTR according to the speed recorded on the control track. Recorded at the edge of the tape. (Similar to film’s “sprockets”)

If damaged, there can be drop-outs, freezes, and “glitches” as the tape and VTR lose sync.

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**Avoid Substrate Deformation**

- Store tapes in a cool and dry environment
- Make sure the tape has an even “pack” (no popped strands)

**Videotape Conservation**

Videotape Life Expectancy (LE): between 5 to 50 years, depending on format, tape stock, and storage environment.

“LE” does not mean total signal loss, but the point where the signal is obviously deteriorating and the content should be transferred.

What can be done to extend LE?

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**Micro Steps**

- Set tape cassette to SAVE (e.g., not RECORD). For U-matics, this means removing the red button in the back.

**Micro Steps**

- Store standing up (like books). If stored flat, gravity will loosen tightness of tape pack.
- Tapes should have an even, flat wind with no popped strands.
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Micro Steps

- Wind to head or end; never leave the tape exposed.

Micro Steps

- Re-house tapes to inert plastic containers. Prioritize re-housing tapes in cardboard containers; cardboard/paper accelerates hydrolysis and mold.
- Remove any paper inserts from inside cases to diminish hydrolysis.

Macro Environment (Storage)

- Do not store tapes in non-archival or stock boxes.
- Use metal shelves – definitely not wood.
- Cool and dry environments will slow down deterioration.
- Magnetic media need not be stored in as cold an environment as film.

ANSI IT9.23-1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE</th>
<th>TEMP</th>
<th>RH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>short-term storage (content used daily)</td>
<td>68°F</td>
<td>20-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium-term storage (content used up to 10 years before moved or discarded)</td>
<td>59°F</td>
<td>20-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long-term storage</td>
<td>50°F</td>
<td>20-50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Storage General Tips

- Videotape should never be stored above 65% RH. At that rate, fungal growth will occur.
- Videotape should not be stored below 45°F. Storage below this can result in binder break-down.

Storage General Tips

- A higher temperature must be balanced by lower humidity.
- Fluctuations of +/- 5% RH or 7°F within a 24-hour period can cause more damage than consistently high temperature or humidity.
Prioritization

The oldest tapes should not necessarily be preserved first.

Besides age, also consider:
- Condition
- Inherent format stability
- Storage environment over a tape’s life
- Active use

How Would You Prioritize?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Recorded 1969 (44 y/o)</th>
<th>Recorded 1975 (38 y/o)</th>
<th>Recorded 1998 (15 y/o)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>Stored at 65°F, 35% RH since 1969</td>
<td>Stored at 55°F, 50% RH past 10 years; at 80°F F 60% RH previous 28 years</td>
<td>Stored at 78°F, 45% RH for past 5 years; unknown before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active use</td>
<td>Used a few times in first 5 years, then put in deep storage</td>
<td>Heavily used first 15 years</td>
<td>Heavily used first year; occasional use thereafter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inherent format</td>
<td>Obsolete format, but a few vendors available</td>
<td>Obsolete format, but old equipment and some vendors available</td>
<td>Active format, equipment available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>Obsolete format</td>
<td>Obsolete format</td>
<td>Active format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obsolescence</td>
<td>What does “obsolete” mean?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endangered</td>
<td>A format can be “endangered” rather than obsolete if there is an adequate supply of operating playback decks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wake-up Call

Review the handout “Video stock and decks manufactured as of October 2013”
Digitization as Preservation

You MUST digitize videotapes for preservation.

Do NOT transfer video to video – the content will be moved from one obsolete format to a future obsolete format ("future" as in less than 10 years).

Before Transferring

- Know the format
- Identify the tape’s maximum running time to help estimate transfer costs and digital storage.
- Identify the tape’s broadcast standard: NTSC, PAL, SECAM

Format Identification

Learn to identify both the physical format and its required playback equipment.

Videoreel Formats

- 2” Quad (1956-1985)
- ½” Portapak (1967-1978)
- 1” Type C (1976-1990s)
Ampex VRX-1000 (2” Quad) (1956)

Released 1956. Installed at ABC, CBS, NBC. Recorded black and white (color added few years later)

1957: Ampex won Technical Emmy for VTR


Cost: $45,000 ($363,587 today)
Tape: 1 hr @ $300 ($2,424 today)

# of plays before damage to tape: 30

2” Ampex VTR

2” Ampex Tape Threading

In from the left...

... Across the head ...

... Out to the right

2” reel case
2" Videoreel Sizes and Running Time

- Reel sizes can be 5 inches to 14 inches in diameter.
- Tape maximum running time: 5 minutes to 90 minutes.


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2" Videoreel: Format-Specific Problems

Foam flange deterioration and glue seepage.

Also: Some 2" containers have shedding foam that sticks to the tape.

(for photo examples, see: [http://www.quadtapexfer.com/Examfoam.php](http://www.quadtapexfer.com/Examfoam.php))

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2" Videoreel Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container:</th>
<th>Reel-based</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active date range:</td>
<td>1956-1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status:</td>
<td>Obsolete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock manufactured?:</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decks manufactured?:</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used decks/parts available?:</td>
<td>Extremely rare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Types of foam

Foam deterioration

Shedding foam can stick to tape.
½” Open Reel (1967)


Use: video artists, public access television, schools, military, and ENG (Electronic News Gathering).


EIAJ color deck (1/2” open reel) (no longer manufactured)

Memorex ½ tape case

Sony ½ tape case

½” open video reel

½ video reel ¼ audio reel

½” Open Reel Tape Running Time

- Tape recording time: 30 minutes
- Image can be black and white or color
### ½” Open Reel Summary

- **Container:** Reel-based
- **Active date range:** 1967-1977
- **Status:** Obsolete
- **Stock manufactured?** No
- **Decks manufactured?** No
- **Used decks/parts available?** Extremely rare

### 1” Open Reel (Type C) (1976)

- Developed as more portable studio/broadcasting format
- Use: in-studio and field (ENG) recordings; common preservation format at archives during late 1980s-1990s

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1” tape decks
(no longer manufactured)

1” video case

1” tape reel

1” reel  2” reel

1” tape width

1”  2”
1" Open Reel Summary

- Container: Reel-based
- Active date range: 1976-1990s
- Status: Obsolete
- Stock manufactured? No
- Decks manufactured? No
- Used decks/parts available? Yes


- Replaced 16mm for ENG
- Small cassette (20 minutes) and large cassette (30 and 60 minutes)
- Unique problem: Some stock batches in the first 10 years (1971-1981) have noticeable dropouts and signal deterioration


- Visual identification:
  - U-Matic cassette plastic color: gray, black, beige
  - U-Matic-SP cassette color: dark brown
  - Red "record" button (dot) on underside.

Videocassette Formats: Common Older

- Betamax (1975-1986)
- VHS (1976-current)

U-matic deck
- (no longer manufactured)
- Some decks are top-loading

U-matic-SP deck
- Plays U-matic tapes as well.
- (no longer manufactured)

U-matic 20 minute small cassette
- Tape maximum running time stamped on edge

Photos: Linda Tadic
**Betamax (1975)**

- First consumer cassette-based format. Developed by Sony.
- Use: home movies, schools, local government, event documentation.
- Lost the "format war" to VHS.
- However, "Betamax" became the foundation for Sony’s "Betacam" suite of formats.

---

**¾" U-matic Summary**

| Container: | cassette |
| Tape width: | ¾" |
| Active date range: | 1971-2008 |
| Status: | Obsolete/Endangered |
| Stock manufactured? | No |
| Decks manufactured? | No (last: 2008) |
| Used decks/parts available? | Yes, but becoming difficult |

---

**Regular U-matic tapes don’t have a hole above the red button.**

**U-matic-SP tapes have a hole above the red REC button.**

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**U-matic 60 minute cassette**

Back showing red record button – REMOVE THIS.

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**U-matic-SP (small cassette)**

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**Betamax (1975)**

- First consumer cassette-based format. Developed by Sony.
- Use: home movies, schools, local government, event documentation.
- Lost the "format war" to VHS.
- However, "Betamax" became the foundation for Sony’s "Betacam" suite of formats.

---

**¾" U-matic Summary**

| Container: | cassette |
| Tape width: | ¾" |
| Active date range: | 1971-2008 |
| Status: | Obsolete/Endangered |
| Stock manufactured? | No |
| Decks manufactured? | No (last: 2008) |
| Used decks/parts available? | Yes, but becoming difficult |
Betamax Summary

- **Container:** cassette
- **Tape width:** ½"
- **Active date range:** 1975-1986
- **Status:** Obsolete
- **Stock manufactured?** No
- **Decks manufactured?** No (last: 2002)
- **Used decks/parts available?** Medium rare

VHS (1976)

- Consumer cassette-based format. Developed by JVC
- Use: home movies, schools, local government, event documentation
- Tape stock still manufactured today (limited). VCRs only part of combo DVD-VHS units.
- Several other formats similar in size to VHS – beware!
VHS Summary

Container: cassette
Tape width: ½"
Active date range: 1975-2008
Status: Current
Stock manufactured? Yes
Decks manufactured? No (last dedicated deck: 2008); combo units available
Used decks/parts available? Yes

VHS Summary

Videocassette Formats: the Betacam Formats

Analog/SD (Standard Definition)
- Betacam (1982-1990)
- BetaSP (1986-2009)

Betacam (1982)
- Not to be confused with Betamax, even though uses Betamax shell and is also ½" width.
- First in a professional-grade “suite” of “Beta” formats (used in broadcasting)
- Metal particles: Barium ferrite (BaFe)

Betacam Summary

Container: cassette
Tape width: ½"
Active date range: 1982-1990
Status: Obsolete
Stock manufactured? No
Decks manufactured? No; although tapes can be played in Sony’s J30 SDI combo unit
Used decks/parts available? Medium rare

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BetaSP (1986)

- SP = “Superior Performance”
- Metal particles: Metal Particulate (MP)
- Professional format (broadcasting)

BetaSP decks (no longer manufactured)

UVW-1800 recorder

BIVW-70 editing VTR

BetaSP tape

front

REC/SAVE tab

back

BetaSP Tape Maximum Running Time:
on cassette lid

BetaSP Summary

Container: cassette
Tape width: ½”
Active date range: 1986-2009
Status: Endangered (limited use)
Stock manufactured? Yes
Decks manufactured? No; although tapes can be played in Sony’s 330 SDI combo unit
Used decks/parts available? Yes

Videocassette Formats:
the Betacam Formats

Digital/SD (Standard Definition)

- Digital Betacam (DigiBeta) (1993-2012)
- Betacam SX (1996-2011)
- MPEG IMX (2001-2011)
Digital Betacam (1993)

- SD
- 3:1 DCT-compressed digital component signal
- 10-bit YUV 4:2:2 – bitrate: 90 Mbp/s
- Professional format; common physical preservation format at archives

DigiBeta deck [no longer manufactured]
Some decks also play Betacam and BetaSP tapes.

DigiBeta tape back
RECORD/SAVE tab

DigiBeta tapes come in 2 sizes: Small (6, 12, 22, 32, 40 minutes) and Large (34, 64, 94, 124 minutes)

DigiBeta tape case (blue)

Tape maximum running time

Digital Betacam Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container:</th>
<th>cassette</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tape width:</td>
<td>½”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active date range:</td>
<td>1993-2012?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status:</td>
<td>Current (but decreasing deck support)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock manufactured?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decks manufactured?</td>
<td>Not clear; tapes can be played in Sony’s J30 SDI and HDWD1800 combo units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used decks/parts available?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BetacamSX (1996)

- SD
- 15:1 DCT-compressed digital component signal
- MPEG2 4:2:2 – bitrate: 18 Mbp/s
- Professional format; used in broadcast news

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Yesterday's Treasures--Today
BetaSX deck [no longer manufactured]
Can also play BetaSP tapes.

Has analog and digital heads.

BetaSX cases and tapes are yellow.

Tapes come in 2 sizes: Small (6, 12, 22, 32, 62 minutes) and Large (64, 94, 124, 184 minutes)

MPEG IMX (Betacam) (2001)

- SD
- Intraframe (I-frame): individual frames compressed rather than traditional MPEG2’s group of pictures (GOP)
- “IMX” is a codec, not just a “tape” format. SMPTE calls it D-10.
- Professional format; used in broadcast news.

IMX cases and tapes are teal/green.

Tapes come in 2 sizes: Small (12, 22, 32, 60 minutes) and Large (64, 94, 124, 184 minutes)
MPEG IMX (Betacam) Summary

- Container: cassette
- Tape width: ½"
- Active date range: 2001-2011
- Status: Current (but decreasing deck support)
- Stock manufactured? Yes
- Decks manufactured? No; tapes can be played in Sony’s J30 SDI and HDWD1800 combo units
- Used decks/parts available? Yes

Videocassette Formats: the Betacam Formats

Digital/HD (High Definition)
- HDCAM (1997-current)
- HDCAM SR (2003-current)

HDCAM (1997)
- HD
- 8-bit DCT compressed 3:1:1 - bitrate: 144 Mbp/s
- 1080i
- Professional format; used by studios, broadcasting, and some archives

HDCAM tapes have an orange lid.

Tapes come in 2 sizes: Small (6, 12, 22, 32, 40 minutes) and Large (34, 64, 94, 124 minutes)
The tape has two maximum running times, reflecting two setting options in the camera (24PsF or 60i).

HDCAM SR (2003)
- HD (SR = “Superior Resolution”)
- 10-bit DCT compressed 4:2:2 (or 4:4:4 RGB) - bitrate: 440 Mbp/s
- 1920 x 1080 (2k resolution)
- Professional format; some TV shows and sports events recorded on it
- 2011 Japanese tsunami interrupted stock production

HDCAM SR tapes have a cyan lid

Tapes come in 2 sizes:
Small (6, 33, 40 minutes) and Large (64, 94, 124 minutes)

Like HDCAM, tapes have two maximum running times.

HDCAM & SR Summary
- Container: cassette
- Tape width: ½”
- Active date range: HDCAM: 1997- ; SR: 2003-
- Status: Current
- Stock manufactured?: Yes
- Decks manufactured?: Yes
- Used decks/parts available?: Yes

Videocassette Formats: the Small Formats
- 8mm
  - Developed for camcorder market.
  - Cassettes size of audiocassette
  - REC/SAVE tabs on spine side
  - Superseded by MiniDV
### 8mm formats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Video8 (analog)</th>
<th>Hi8 (analog)</th>
<th>Digital8 (digital)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year introduced</strong></td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metal particles</strong></td>
<td>MP</td>
<td>MP and ME</td>
<td>MP and ME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Still manufactured?</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Uses Hi8 stock</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hi8 deck (no longer manufactured)

**Hi8 tape (MP)**

- Maximum running time (120 minutes)
- Digital8 cameras use Hi8 tape. Records DV signal at less running time.

A 120M Hi8 tape = 60M DV
Recorded at LP mode = 90M DV

**Hi8 tape back**

REC/SAVE tab

Hi8 Metal Particulate (MP)

Hi8 Metal Evaporated (ME)

Photo: Linda Tadic

**8mm Video Summary**

- **Container:** cassette
- **Tape width:** 8mm (5/16")
- **Active date range:** 1984-2000s
- **Status:** Endangered
- **Stock manufactured?** Only Hi8 (limited)
- **Decks manufactured?** No
- **Used decks/parts available?** Yes but not plentiful
### Videocassette Formats: DV Formats

- **MiniDV** (1995) and **HDV** (2003)
- **DVCAM** (1995)
- **DVCPRO** (1995)
- **DVCPRO 50** (1995)
- **DVCPRO HD** (2000)

  Tape width: ¼”
  
  All are SD except HDV and DVCPRO HD.


- MiniDV captures a DV (e.g., DV25) stream
- MiniDV tapes can be used to record on DVCAM and HDV settings, but there are also HDV and DVCAM-specific media
- HDV captures MPEG 2 at 4:2:0, 720p or 1080i
- Used for ENG, oral histories, home movies
- All MiniDV tapes are ME.

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**MiniDV Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container:</th>
<th>cassette</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tape width:</td>
<td>¼”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active date range:</td>
<td>1995-current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status:</td>
<td>Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock manufactured?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decks manufactured?</td>
<td>Sony combo units: DSR series; HDV/DVCAM VTR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used decks/parts available?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DVCAM (1995)

- Sony developed
- DVCAM captures a DV (e.g., DV25) stream
- Similar to MiniDV, but captures at a higher speed.
- Used for ENG, oral histories
- All DVCAM tapes are ME.

DVCAM deck [this model no longer manufactured]

Note it can play MiniDV tapes

DVCAM tape

Maximum running time: 184 minutes.
Note the ME!

DVCAM Record ON

DVCAM Record OFF

DVCAM Summary

- Container: cassette
- Tape width: 1/4"
- Active date range: 1995-current
- Status: Current
- Stock manufactured? Yes
- Decks manufactured? Sony combo units: DSR series; HDV/DVCAM VTR.
  Panasonic combo unit: AJ series
- Used decks/parts available? Yes


- Panasonic developed
- DVCPRO: DV @ 25 Mbp/s, 4:1:1
- DVCPRO50: DV @ 50 Mbp/s, 4:2:2
- DVCPRO HD (100): DV up to 100 Mbp/s, 4:2:2

Used for broadcast news ENG, independent production, oral histories

- All DVCPRO media are interchangeable (e.g., can record DVCPRO50 on a DVCPRO tape).
- Tapes give running time for the format listed on the tape.
- All DVCPRO tapes are NP.

DVCPRO tape lids are **yellow**. DVCPRO50 is also recorded on this media. Tapes come in 2 sizes: Medium and Large.

Maximum running time varies depending on format shot.

This 66L DVCPRO tape = 66M at DVCPRO, 33M at DVCPRO50, 33M at DVCPRO HD-LP, and 16M at DVCPRO HD.

DVCPRO HD tape lids are **red**. DVCPRO HD is usually captured on DVCPRO HD media, but could also use DVCPRO.

Cassettes come in 3 sizes: Medium, Large, Extra Large. Maximum running time varies depending on format shot.

This 126M XL tape = 252M at DVCPRO, 126M at DVCPRO50, 126M at DVCPRO HD-LP, 63M at DVCPRO HD.

**DVCPRO Summary**

- **Container:** cassette
- **Tape width:** 1/4”
- **Active date range:** 1993-current
- **Status:** Current
- **Stock manufactured?** Yes
- **Decks manufactured?** Yes
- **Used decks/parts available?** Yes
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10/23/13

How Would You Prioritize?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2&quot;</th>
<th>3&quot;</th>
<th>MiniDV as MC stock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recorded 1989 (44 yrs)</td>
<td>Recorded 1993 (20 yrs)</td>
<td>Recorded 1996 (13 yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stored at 40° F / 35% RH since 1994</td>
<td>Stored at 55° F / 25% RH for past 15 years; at 60° F / 40% RH previous 25 years</td>
<td>Stored at 72° F / 45% RH for past 5 years; unknown before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used a few times in first 5 years; then put in storage</td>
<td>Heavily used first 15 years</td>
<td>Heavily used first year; occasional use since</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obsolete format, but a few vendors available</td>
<td>Obsolete format; but still equipment available and some vendors available</td>
<td>Active format; equipment available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less Common Formats

- **MII**
  - Panasonic developed. Successor to M (1982)
  - Competitor to BetaSP
  - Analog, SD
  - Same cassette shell size as VHS
  - Used in broadcasting

MII (1986-1990s)

MII deck (no longer manufactured)

Return to the Poll
MII tape (20 minutes)

The “D” Formats

- D1 (1986)
- D2 (1988)
- D3 (1991)
- D5 (SD) (1995)
- D5 (HD) (2007)
- D9 (Digital S) (1999)

MII Summary

- Container: cassette
- Tape width: 1/2"
- Active date range: 1986-1990s
- Status: Obsolete
- Stock manufactured? No
- Decks manufactured? No
- Used decks/parts available? Rare

D-1 (1986)

- Developed by Sony
- Also called “422 Component Digital”
- First major digital format
- Uncompressed 4:2:2 8-bit component
- Initial VTR list price: $160,000

D-1 deck [no longer manufactured]

Note it is called “4:2:2 Component Digital”
Both NTSC and PAL settings.
D-1 media is the largest videocassette format you’ll likely see.

D-1 Summary

- Container: cassette
- Tape width: 3/4"
- Active date range: 1986-1990s
- Status: Obsolete
- Stock manufactured?: No
- Decks manufactured?: No
- Used decks/parts available?: Rare

D-2 (1988)

- Developed by Ampex
- Uncompressed 4:2:2 8-bit composite
- Cost was halved from D-1

D-2 deck (no longer manufactured)

D-2 tape

REC/LOCK button

Maximum tape running time on lid
**D-2 Summary**

- **Container:** cassette
- **Tape width:** 3/4"
- **Active date range:** 1988-2003
- **Status:** Obsolete
- **Stock manufactured?** No
- **Decks manufactured?** No
- **Used decks/parts available?** Rare

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**D-3 (1991)**

- Developed by NHK/Panasonic
- Competitor to D-2
- Uncompressed 4:2:2 8-bit composite

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**D-3 Summary**

- **Container:** cassette
- **Tape width:** 1/2"
- **Active date range:** 1991-2003
- **Status:** Obsolete
- **Stock manufactured?** No
- **Decks manufactured?** No
- **Used decks/parts available?** Rare

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**D-5 (1994)**

- Developed by NHK/Panasonic
- Uncompressed 4:2:2 10-bit composite
- D-5 media is used for both SD and HD
- **HD:** 1080
- 2007: Add-on box to D-5 VTR; records 2k 4:4:4 JPEG2000 (D-5 VTR no longer manufactured)

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**D-5 HD deck [no longer manufactured]**

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D-5 media

Two sizes: Medium and Large

Maximum running time depends on whether SD or HD is recorded.

VHS

D-5 Medium

D-5 Large

D-5 Summary

Container: cassette
Tape width: 1/2"
Active date range: 1994-2010
Status: Endangered
Stock manufactured? Yes
Decks manufactured? No (last deck: 2010)
Used decks/parts available? Yes


- Developed by JVC. Called Digital-S; SMPTE changed name to D-9 (1999)
- Competitor to DigiBeta
- Same shell as VHS
- Records DV @ 50 Mbps; 4:2:2
- Also HD version (DV @ 100 Mbps)
D-9 (Digital-S) deck [no longer manufactured]

D-9 (Digital-S) tape

D-9 (Digital-S) Summary

- Container: cassette
- Tape width: 1/2"
- Active date range: 1995-2010
- Status: Endangered
- Stock manufactured?: Yes
- Decks manufactured?: No
- Used decks/parts available?: Yes

End of Video
(... literally)

Any quick questions on video format identification?

OPTICAL MEDIA
Optical Media Formats

- Laserdisc (1971-2001)
- Blu-Ray (2002-current)

CD-R

- CD-ROM is the commercial distributed format (purchased CDs): read only
- CD-R: recordable media
- CD-RW: “ReWritable:” recordable and erasable

We’ll focus on the recordable media

CD-R

- Released 1990; became affordable late 1990s
- Used for storing images, audio, and smaller files
- Storage capacity: 650 – 700 MB

DVD-R and DVD+R

- DVD-R: Released 1997
- DVD+R: Released 2002. Recordable (write). Has improved error management; most drives today can play both formats, although DVD video players favor DVD-R
- RW available in both DVD-R and DVD+R

DVD-R and DVD+R

- Used for storing images, audio, video, and smaller files
- Storage capacity: 4.7 GB
- Similar construction to CD-R, but two discs glued together
How It Works

- A laser writes data onto “pits” on the data layer.
- With CD-R and DVD+/-R, the data layer is an organic dye. The dye changes when data is written on it.
- With RW, a phase-changing film is used for the data layer rather than dye.
- Data is written from the inner hub to the outer edge following grooves (like LPs).
- When reading data, the metal reflective layer points the light back to the laser photosensor.

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CD-R Layers

Top (label) side

- Label
- Lacquer
- Metal reflective layer
- Data layer (Organic dye)
- Polycarbonate substrate

Under (shiny) side (laser writes and reads from this side)

DVD+/R Layers (single side)

Top (label) side

- Label
- Polycarbonate substrate
- Metal reflective layer
- Data layer (Organic dye)
- Polycarbonate substrate

Under (shiny) side (laser writes and reads from this side)

RW Disc Differences

- Data layer is a phase-changing metal alloy film rather than dye
- Metal reflective layer is aluminum
- NOT considered appropriate for long-term storage. Less physically stable; aluminum oxidizes.

Problems: Substrate

The reader reads from the under (shiny) side.

- Smudges and dirt can block the laser from reading the data.
- The laser can compensate for minor scratches.
- Moisture is absorbed into the disc through the substrate (can lead to metal layer oxidation)
Problems: Substrate

Related issue in DVD-Rs:
The glue holding the two polycarbonate parts together can fail. The DVD can fall apart, or more likely, moisture creeps in.

Problems: Data Layer

The data layer is made of organic dye, which is susceptible to fading from UV rays (light) and heat.

If the dye fades, the data can’t be read.

Problems: Data Layer

Three types of dye.
1. **Cyanine**: earliest dye.
   Color: on gold metal: green; on silver metal: blue
   Tests: Most sensitive to fading of the three.

Problems: Data Layer

Three types of dye.
2. **Phthalocyanine**.
   Color: on gold metal: gold; on silver metal: silver
   Tests: More durable than cyanine.

Problems: Data Layer

Three types of dye.
3. **Azo**. Most DVD-R discs use azo dye.
   Color: on gold metal: dark green; on silver metal: dark blue.
   Tests: Could be most resistant to UV rays.

Problems: Metal Reflective Layer

- Gold: non-corrosive; LE 100+ years
- Silver and silver alloy: corrosive; sulfur dioxide pollutants can impact the reflective surface and make the data difficult to read. Sulfur dioxide can attach itself to moisture in the air. LE: few decades

"Disc rot" and mold occur on media with an aluminum metal layer (ROM, RW)
Heritage Preservation: Caring for
Yesterday's Treasures--Today

Caring for Audiovisual Material: Webinar

DVD-R
(Azo dye on silver alloy)

DVD+R(RW)
(Azo dye on aluminum)

CD-R
(Phthalocyanine dye on silver alloy)

CD-R
(Phthalocyanine dye on gold)

“Under” (Write) Side

Problems: Label Side

Top (label) side

Label
Lacquer
Metal reflective layer
Data layer (Organic dye)
Polycarbonate substrate

Scratches on the label side can harm the metal reflective layer (CDs & double-sided DVDs)
Labels adhered to media can accelerate deterioration

“Under” side (laser writes and reads from this side)

Blu-Ray (BD-R)

- BD-RE: Released 2002; BD-R: Released 2005
- RW is called “RE” for Recordable Erasable (BD-RE)
- Used for storing images, audio, HD video, and larger files
- Storage capacity: 25 GB for single layer
- Dual layer (DL) capacity: 50/100/128 GB

Blu-Ray Differences from DVD and CD

- The laser is blue-violet (higher frequency) rather than the red used in DVDs — hence the name "Blu-Ray." (The CD laser is infrared)
- The dye is inorganic, and is not affected by UV light, EXCEPT:
  - BD-RE LTH uses organic dye (less expensive to produce)

BD-RE and XDCAM

- XDCAM is a Blu-Ray-based format used in broadcasting.
- Used to shoot ENG and deliver content.
- Higher read/write speeds than consumer BD-RE

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Problem Areas Impacting Data Readability

- Organic dye (fades in light and heat)
- Metal reflective layer (can corrode from high humidity and pollutants)
- Media obsolescence
- Poor handling (fingerprints, scratches)
- Writing on the media (ink and scratches)
- Erasing files on RW/RE discs

Optical Media Conservation

Life Expectancy (LE): between 2 to 100 years, depending on metal layer, dye, quality of writing/recording, and storage environment.

What can be done to extend LE?

Micro Steps

- Re-house media in inert polypropylene jewel cases.
- Remove any paper inserts from inside the case.
- Store upright like books.

Micro Steps

- Do not write directly on the media recording area (top or bottom sides).
- Do not affix labels to the top label side.
- Only write identifying characters on the inner plastic hub, using a water-soluble pen.

Micro Steps

- Don’t touch the under (recording) side.
- Remove fingerprint smudges with a chamois cloth and isopropyl alcohol.
- Clean in a straight motion, going from the hub out. Don’t clean following the grooves; you could inadvertently create groove-like scratches that the laser will follow.

Micro Steps

- If recording to media, don’t fill up the disc. Leave “blank” space at the edges in case of edge damage (media writes from the hub to the edge).
- Do not use RW media
- For longer life expectancy, use gold media with phthalocyanine dye.
Macro Environment (Storage)

*Keep out of the light!!!* UV rays will cause the dye (data layer) to fade.

Store in archival boxes. Do not store discs in non-archival or stock boxes.

Use metal shelves – definitely not wood.

Temperature/RH recommendations vary.

Temperature: 41-68° F

RH: 30-50% RH

Obsolescence

Optical media formats will likely become obsolete long before the media dies.

Get the Content Off!

As with any AV media, focus on preserving the **content**, not the physical object.

Copy files from optical media to HDDs or servers.

Thank You

Photo credits:

Unless otherwise credited, video tape formats and decks were photographed at Alteran Technologies and BroadcastBare.com. Thanks Lou, Norm, and Lance!

Photographer: Mark Steinberger

Other photos:

Scene Savers (1/2" open reel Memorex tape and Sony-deck)

Quad Tape Transfer (2" reel problems)

Linda Tadic (optical media, 1/2" Sony tape, Hi8 media)