

46th IAA HISTORY OF ASTRONAUTICS SYMPOSIUM (E4)
Scientific and Technical Histories (2)

Author: Mr. Mark Becnel
University of Alabama in Huntsville, United States

TECHNIQUES TO DIGITALLY PRESERVE THE HISTORICAL FILM OF A SPACE AGENCY

Abstract

Space Agencies around the world document many projects using video. In the founding years of humans in space, film cameras were popularly used to record tests, setups, activities in space, and broadcast media for the television. The film was often replicated to store multiple copies of the film and share the information with multiple parties. This film is the original artifacts of the space agencies, and documents the progression of the program. The film archives of space history require attention. The reels of 8mm, 16mm, and 55mm film from half a century ago are showing signs of wear. In an effort to preserve the delicate and aging film at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, students and archivists are developing unique, low cost, and deployable solutions to digitally secure the video archives. UAHuntsville has approximately 1300 hours of film from the iconic moments of United States aerospace history. By forming a rapid and low cost solution, libraries such as the UAHuntsville Library are able to commit to recording such a vast collection. The digital media format is ideal for the film to be shared with people today and secured for future generations. Moreover, by developing a low cost and rapid solution, other archives may consider investing in the required technologies and resources. I will discuss the technologies considered at the UAHuntsville. I will show the process to convert the film to digital media. To demonstrate the historical importance of the film preservation, I will present a sample of the digitized film.