Before You Shoot

Ask yourself: Will my movie be available in 20 years?

Movies go "missing" all the time for many reasons. Filmmakers often don't know where to begin to locate materials or identify rights holders. With that in mind, we recommend you negotiate to obtain this information before you shoot.

You Need:

- Notification of Names and Contact Information of entities holding rights to the film, including the ownership of copyright & length of rights control**
- Notification of any transfer of rights from the original owner **
- A list from the post production supervisor (or equivalent) detailing all physical materials delivered and to whom **
- To request a minimum of three Preservation LTOs (Linear Tape Open) containing our **Optimal File List** created and housed with a Film/Video Archive

** One way to achieve this is for the filmmaker's contract to provide that they be copied on **all final Distribution Agreements and Delivery Schedule**s and included individually in the **Notices Section** of these agreements.

PRO TIP: it is also imperative to license third party materials (clips, photos, music, etc.) "in perpetuity, in all media now known or hereafter devised throughout the universe." This may be more expensive but not doing so could prevent your film from being shown.

Disclaimer:

This does not represent legal advice. Consult your attorney on the best way to incorporate any or all of these provisions in your next contract.

Optimal File List

(Sequential Picture Frames can be DPX, TIF, or EXR)

1. 2K or 4K ungraded Sequential Picture Frames. If scanned from a film original source, the frames should not be restored/cleaned up.

2. 2K or 4K Sequential Picture Frames and/or MOV of restored and/or graded, with final framing

3. 2K or 4K Sequential Picture Frames and/or MOV of restored and/or graded, full aperture

4. 2K, 4K or HD mezzanine MOV/MP4 files with specs

5. 2K or 4K DCP – unencrypted only

6. 2K or 4K DCDM (optional)

7. Final sound mix

8. All audio/ mix stems

9. M&E mix

10. All Textless Backgrounds

11. Documents:
    - A READ ME document detailing any relevant Tech Specs for picture and sound
    - Dialogue and Action Continuity script
    - Full Chain of Title (COT) documents
    - Music Cue Sheet
    - Cue Sheets for all third-party licensed elements (photos, video clips)
    - Abstract of all Distribution Deals listing the term, territory and any copyright provisions or assignments
    - Production Notes and/or Press Kits

12. Scans of Approved Key Stills, Poster

13. Project files for reference (AVID, Resolve or Final Cut files)

14. **Documentary Films:** full video interviews of all subjects

Backups

Containing The Optimal File List

At least two hard drives - (shelf life of 3-5 years). These need to be booted up on a regular basis, stored in a climate-controlled environment and migrated to new drives after three years

At least three LTOs - These need to be migrated over time but have a shelf life of 20- 30 years.

Where possible include files delineating the Chain of Title (ownership) of the film so that physical media and rights information are kept together.

Storage

Store each LTO in a different geographic location. This should include at least two different Film/ Video Archives.

If storing one for yourself be sure it is in a climate controlled stable environment.

... So Yes, your film can be available in 20 years - If you take action NOW while you are making it.

About Archives

Preservation = Format + Location

1. There is no “one-size-fits-all” approach or definitive list of files. Different archives prefer different formats - Hard Drive, LTO tape, or digital delivery via the internet.

2. There are differences in delivery files between a digitized analog film (that which started out on film stock) and a born digital movie.

3. Some archives prefer legal documents added to the Hard Drive/ LTO and others prefer paper.

4. Not every archive can store all of the items on the **Optimal File List** on their servers.

5. The Library of Congress asks (if possible) that the file delivery format is IMF, a SMPTE standard found here: https://www.smpte.org/standards/st2067

6. Many archives require unencrypted DCPs or other open-source files. Discuss this with your Distributor and/or Financier. You should also discuss the inclusion of Chain of Title documents with your attorney.

7. Many archives allow limits on access to your materials. For example, you may limit access to only yourself or your distributor over the first 15 years on deposit.

Research archives at:
https://amianet.org

Learn more at:

missingmovies.org

Join the Community

What Every Filmmaker Should Know About PRESERVATION

MISSING MOVIES