



VHS TO DVD--THE MEDIA COLLECTION UPGRADE STORY AT HIMMELFARB LIBRARY

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BACKGROUND

- From the mid-1980s through the mid-2000s, Himmelfarb's collection of films, slides, audio and video tapes, and other similar "audiovisual" materials grew to over 1000 items.
- A previous re-assessment of the collection resulted in the large-scale weeding of films, slides, and audio tapes, but retention of the VHS collection.
- Technology changes and hardware decisions in the department supplying equipment to the Library left Himmelfarb Library with a collection of VHS materials which users were unable to view onsite.
- The removal of the means to view the VHS collection as well as a six-fold decrease in VHS video circulations (for home viewing) over the last five years reinforced the need to replace this collection in a more usable format.

PROCESS

- Although the process took two years to accomplish due to the size of overall funding requirements, the availability of the necessary funding coupled with the need to modernize the remaining VHS collection resulted in the decision to update.
- The Library examined various options for replacement of the collection and determined that the most functional method was direct replacement of the VHS collection with updated, equivalent titles on DVD whenever possible.
- Two staff members reviewed all titles in the collection for currency of content and presentation. Some videos considered up-to-date were available in DVD format for purchase. Those that were not, were sent to a video duplication service for conversion to DVD.
- In situations where the collection required content update, subject lists were organized from the catalog records for the tapes and media catalogs were subsequently searched for updated material on DVD.
- Staff also identified new subject areas not currently represented in the collection, and as funds permitted, purchases were made in these areas.
- At the end of the project, all VHS titles were de-accessioned and most content was replaced with identical or updated material in DVD format.



RESULTS

- The Library has eliminated everything in VHS format from its holdings, and more than tripled its holdings in DVD format.
- New subject areas are now represented in the media collection and plans exist for further development as long as this technology remains usable.
- A number of GW-produced videos considered "classics" have been converted to DVD, and the originals are slated to reside in the University's archives.
- The DVD collection occupies less than half the shelf space taken up by the VHS collection, which will enable a reconfiguration of the Technology Center space with increased study space.

CONCLUSIONS

- Through this project, Himmelfarb Library was able to continue to make the content in a non-print collection usable.
- The Library plans to build in funding each year for the continued subject development of the DVD collection.
- The Library also will better maintain the withdrawal of outdated content and presentation as well as formats no longer usable.
- The Library hopes to see a spike in DVD circulation statistics.