Identifying Endangered Media Formats

DHPSNY Webinar, 30 June 2021

Julia Novakovic, Archivist
The Strong National Museum of Play

Resources and Reference

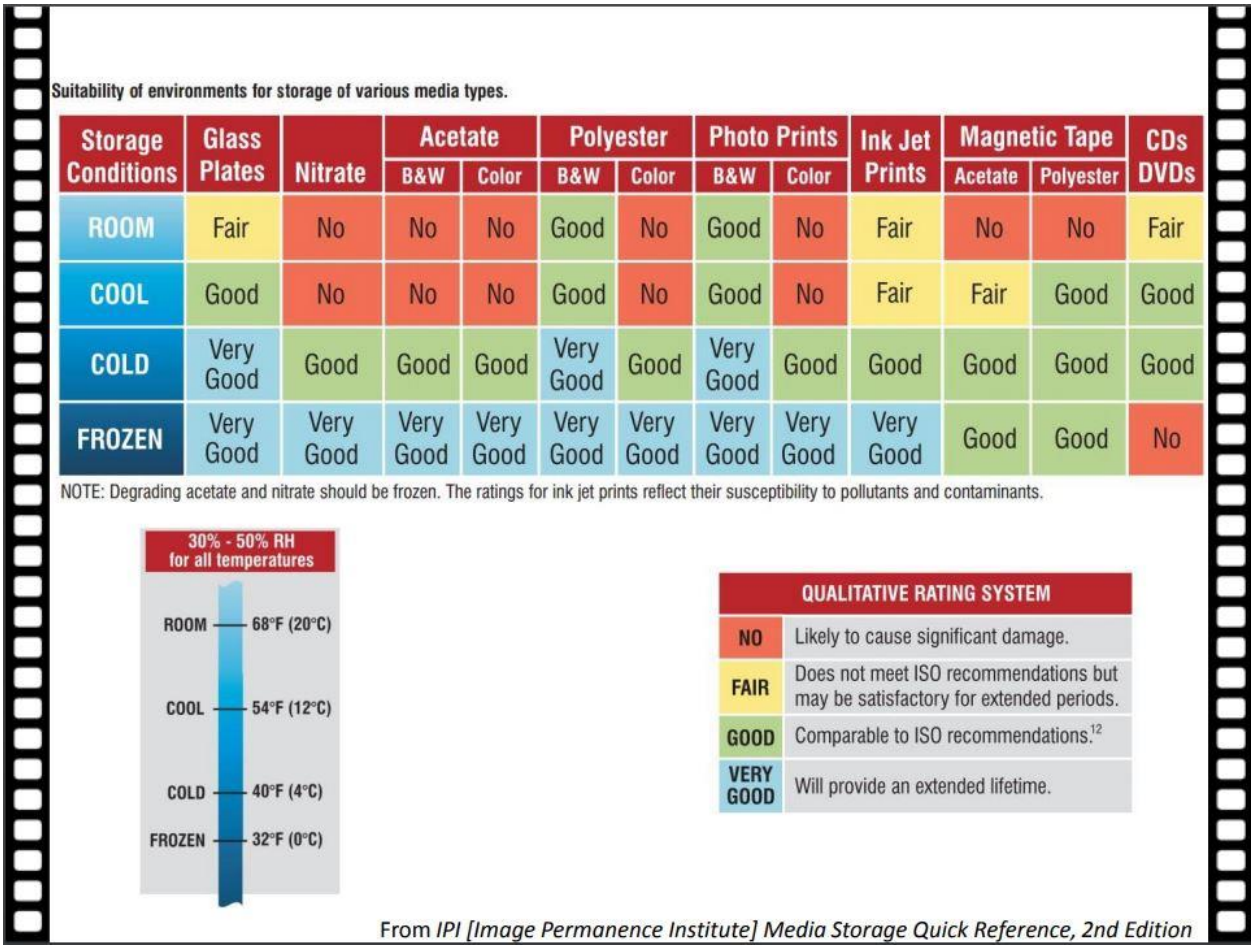
Formats

- *Videotape Identification and Assessment Guide*, Texas Commission on the Arts, 2004: http://www.arts.texas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/video.pdf.
- *Videotape Preservation Handbook*, Jim Wheeler, 2002: https://amianet.org/wp-content/uploads/Resources-Guide-Video-Handbook-Wheeler-2002.pdf.
- *Magnetic Tape Storage and Handling: A Guide for Libraries and Archives*, Commission on Preservation and Access and National Media Laboratory, 1995: https://www.clir.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/02/pub54.pdf.
- *Format Guide to Sound Recordings*, NARA, 2014: https://www.archives.gov/files/preservation/formats/pdf/format-guide-to-sound-recordings.pdf.
- *Audio Guidance: Identifying Audio Formats*, NARA, 2019: https://www.archives.gov/preservation/formats/audio-identify-formats.html.
- *FACET – The Field Audio Collection Evaluation Tool – Format Characteristics and Preservation Problems*, Mike Casey, Indiana University, 2007: http://www.dlib.indiana.edu/projects/sounddirections/facet/facet_formats.pdf.
- *Handling and Storage of Audio and Video Carriers, International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives*, 2014: https://www.iasa-web.org/tc05/handling-storage-audio-video-carriers.
- *Caring for Audio, Video, and Data Recording Media*, Joe Iraci, Government of Canada, 2020: https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/preventive-conservation/guidelines-collections/caring-audio-video-data-recording-media.html.
- *Motion Picture Film Guidance: Identifying Motion Picture Film Formats*, NARA, 2016: https://www.archives.gov/preservation/formats/motion-picture-film-identify-formats.html.
- *The Home Film Preservation Guide*, AMIA: http://www.filmforever.org/.
- *Media by Date of Obsolescence*, Museum of Obsolete Media: https://obsoletemedia.org/obsolescence-decade/.
- *Data Media Timeline*, Museum of Obsolete Media: https://obsoletemedia.org/data/.
- "Floppy disk," File Formats, Archiveteam.org: http://fileformats.archiveteam.org/wiki/Floppy_disk.
- "Physical File Formats," File Formats, Archiveteam.org: http://fileformats.archiveteam.org/wiki/Physical_File_Formats.

Researching Life Expectancy of Formats

- Library of Congress Preservation Projects: https://www.loc.gov/preservation/scientists/projects/index.html.
- Image Permanence Institute: https://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/research/index.html.
- Council for Library and Information Resources (CLIR) Reports: https://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/.
- Museum of Obsolete Media – Media Stability Ratings: https://obsoletemedia.org/media-preservation/media-stability-ratings/.
- Museum of Obsolete Media – Obsolescence Ratings: https://obsoletemedia.org/media-preservation/obsolescence-ratings/.
- Sustainable Heritage Network Resources: https://sustainableheritagenetwork.org/digital-heritage.

Ideal Storage Temperatures for Audiovisual Materials



Suitability of environments for storage of various media types.

Storage Conditions	Glass Plates	Nitrate	Acetate		Polyester		Photo Prints		Ink Jet Prints	Magnetic Tape		CDs DVDs
			B&W	Color	B&W	Color	B&W	Color		Acetate	Polyester	
ROOM	Fair	No	No	No	Good	No	Good	No	Fair	No	No	Fair
COOL	Good	No	No	No	Good	No	Good	No	Fair	Fair	Good	Good
COLD	Very Good	Good	Good	Good	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
FROZEN	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Good	Good	No

NOTE: Degrading acetate and nitrate should be frozen. The ratings for ink jet prints reflect their susceptibility to pollutants and contaminants.

QUALITATIVE RATING SYSTEM	
NO	Likely to cause significant damage.
FAIR	Does not meet ISO recommendations but may be satisfactory for extended periods.
GOOD	Comparable to ISO recommendations.[12]
VERY GOOD	Will provide an extended lifetime.

From *IPI [Image Permanence Institute] Media Storage Quick Reference, 2nd Edition*

Questions? Feel free to email Julia at jnovakovic@museumofplay.org.