

San Francisco March 28, 1996

Seventy members and guests met at Silicon Graphics in Mountain View, Calif., to hear Jim Lindner, Vidipax, and Jim Wheeler, Tape Archival & Restoration Services, discuss the state of the art in magnetic tape preservation and restoration. Millions of magnetic tapes recorded on over 100 video and audio formats represent an important part of our culture, but they also present some problems: tape is organic and all of it will eventually fall apart; preserving original tapes is not an exact science; originals are not always the best archival storage medium; and when we eventually transfer these old tapes, who will own and maintain the many different machines needed to play back all of the old formats? Now we face a new challenge: digital compression of field masters and distribution copies and compression in the nonlinear post-production process. Compared to analog, digital masters may not hold up well over time. Metal evaporated and metal particle tapes may present problems beyond the making of digital-to-digital archival copies from one type of compressed digits to another. Unfortunately, only time will tell.

As for the present state of the art, not all members agree that the Porta-Pac is worth saving; however, many liberals do. The challenge was simply to build a working machine of this format from a dozen dusty relics, get a stable enough playback to digitally time-base-correct the video and transfer the collection to gamma-ferric oxide (regular) BetaCam. The greatest dif-

ficulty was getting good sets of video heads. These tapes were not always stored under ideal conditions, so head wear and clogging during playback were problems.

Other challenges the speakers have faced include recordings made on out-of-spec machines, on prototype machines, and on rare machines like the MV-10000. As a result, the expense of restoring rare but valuable cultural material may inhibit the process and lead to the loss of a significant part of man's history. — Charles Hintz (Secretary/Treasurer), KTVU/Fox

Toronto April 9, 1996

The April meeting was held at Ryerson's Rogers Communications Centre and was attended by more than 50 members. KeyCode and its uses, the first presentation, delivered by Tony Meeraker, Magnetic North, who referred to KeyCode as one of the staples of his company's business. He started by generically defining the machine-readable code located on professional motion picture film as barcode; KeyCode is a Kodak trade name and is only one form of barcode one could find on a film stock. He cited other forms of code such as Mr. Code, Fuji Corp.'s barcode, Post Code and Sky Code, and AatonCode. Meeraker went on to explain that barcode is generally found on the edge of the film; the actual barcodes themselves are spaced a half-foot apart on the film stock, while the traditional edge numbers are spaced a foot apart. While barcode is generally placed on the film at time of

manufacture, AatonCode is actually SMPTE time code recorded on the opposite edge of the film where the traditional barcode is placed. AatonCode is recorded at the time the film is being shot.

The advent of barcode in the editing process of film has dramatically changed the process of film editing over the past half-dozen years. Meeraker identified six methods commonly used in the editing of film in the professional post-production environment. These six methods, and the steps involved in them, depend upon how the film originates and in which medium it will be delivered.

Jeff Dewolde, International Image Services, discussed the state-of-the-art systems involved in standards conversion. He started by noting that three-quarters of the material produced for television will be converted for display on TV systems of a different standard, and that most conversions require the transformation between PAL and NTSC systems. Dewolde also outlined advances in standards conversion. Indicating that general-purpose converters have been replaced by specific or dedicated converters, he outlined how these converters differ. Their use is dependent upon the origination of material to be converted. Dewolde then described three types of dedicated converters: linear interpolating conversion technology, motion-compensated conversion technology, and 3:2 pull-down conversion technology. — Brad Fortner (Promotions Adviser), Rogers Communications Centre, Ryerson Polytechnic University; and Peter Laidlaw (Past Chair), Imagineering, Ltd.

Calendar

August

Siggraph '96, New Orleans Convention Center, New Orleans, La. Info: Exhibition Management, Hall-Erickson, Inc., 150 Burlington Ave., Clarendon Hills, IL 60514. *August 4-9, 1996.*

IESNA Annual Conference, Renaissance Cleveland Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio. Info: The Illuminating Engineering Society of North America, 120 Wall St., 17th Fl., New York, NY 10005-4001. *August 5-7, 1996.*

Eurographics '96, Futuroscope Poitiers, Poitiers, France. Info: Conference Secretariat, Eurographics '96, INRIA Rocquencourt/Relations Extérieures, B.P. 105-78153, Le Chesnay Cedex, France. *August 26-30, 1996.*

September

IBC96, RAI Exhibition and Congress Centre, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Info: Sarah Campbell, IBC Office, Savoy Place, London, WC2R OBL. *September 12-16, 1996.*

Photokina '96, Cologne Fairgrounds, Cologne, Germany. Info: KölnMesse, Messe-und Ausstellungen, Ges.m.b.h. Köln, Messeplatz 1, D-50679 Köln, Germany. *September 18-23, 1996.*

November

The 4th IS&T Color Imaging Conference, The Radisson Resort, Scottsdale, Ariz. Info: IS&T, 7003 Kilworth Ln., Springfield, VA 22151. *November 19-22, 1996.*

June 1997

Montreux International Television Symposium and Technical Exhibition, Rue du Théâtre, Montreux, Switzerland. Info: P.O. Box 1451, Rue du Théâtre 5, 1820 Montreux, Switzerland. *June 12-17, 1997.*

SMPTE Activities

NEW ORLEANS, LA. — SMPTE at Siggraph '96, *August 4-9, 1996.*

COLOGNE, GERMANY — SMPTE European Imaging Conference on Imaging Media, Cologne Fairgrounds, *September 19-21, 1996.*

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. — 138th SMPTE Technical Conference and World Media Expo, Los Angeles Convention Center, *October 8-12, 1996.*

NEW YORK, N.Y. — 31st SMPTE Advanced Motion Imaging Conference, Crowne Plaza, *February 6-8, 1997.*

For more information on these and other SMPTE activities contact SMPTE Headquarters:

(914) 761-1100 Fax: (914) 761-3115