PRESERVING DIGITAL PUBLIC TELEVISION
<u>**Notes from Producers Focus Group**</u>
Held on Thursday, July 21, 2005
Time: 9:00-10:30 am

<u>Participants:</u>
Barbara Abrash, Associate Director, Center for Media, Culture and History, & Center for
     Religion and Media, NYU
Barbara Alpert, Independent producer, President, Chilmark Programs
Lois Bianchi, NYWIFT Women's Film Preservation Fund
Ellen Doherty, Thirteen, Producer, Cyberchase
Felice Firestone, Thirteen, Exec. Producer, Public Affairs (Moyers)
Carey Graeber, Board President, NYWFT
Andy Halper, Thirteen, Sr. Producer, News & Public Affairs
Michael Kantor, Thirteen, Exec. Producer of the Broadway series
Judy Kinberg, Thirteen, Head, Great Performances/Dance in America
Barbara Meyer, Board VP/Programming, NYWIFT
Vlad Nikolic, Core Faculty, Media Studies Program, New School University
Robert Penn, Independent filmmaker/video maker, Founder, Robert Penn Productions
Babak Rassi • Instructor, Media and Communication Arts, Editing, CCNY (CUNY)
Kenneth Schlesinger, Director of Media Services, LaGuardia Community College, & President,
     Independent Media Arts Preservation, IMAP
George C. Stoney, Faculty, Film & Television, Tisch School of the Arts, NYU
John Walker, Thirteen, Associate Director, Great Performances Music Programming

<u>Hosts</u>:
Nan Rubin, NDIIPP Project Coordinator (NR)
Daisy Pommer, Archivist, Thirteen/WNET (DP)
Winter Shanck, Assistant Librarian, Thirteen/WNET (WS)
Tanisha Jones, NYU Graduate of MIAP (TJ)
Pamela Smith, NYU Graduate of MIAP (PS)

<u>Major Comments</u>

- Deliverables for productions should include selection and basic cataloging of elements done
  from the beginning of the production process. [Most participants agreed on this idea, but
  realization of this was questionable.]
- The following selection criteria were suggested for deciding what to include in a PTV
  archive (these are not mutually exclusive):
  1. Cost
  2. Subject/Genre
  3. Space and Volume
  4. Committee

Selection Criteria: Cost

- The baseline of selection of materials is cost. The more money you have, the more you can save (BA).
- The economic feasibility should be questioned along with what programs should be saved (VN).

Selection Criteria: Genre/Subject

- Selection should be based on the genre/subject of what is created. All documentary materials are worth saving (RP, JK). Performance pieces should be saved based on it being the best representation of that specific performance (JK).
- Guidelines should be genre specific because with some genres, time is key and choices are all ready being made (AH).

Selection Criteria: Space and Volume

- The value of certain materials different based on the users. The choices of selection should be based on shear volume. The value is relative to potential material usage (BA).
- Selection of what to save is simple if you can save everything. If you can only save a portion, the guidelines on what to save become more stringent (AH).

Selection Criteria: By Committee

- Selection based on what the best of the best should be based on a committee selection, like the Emmys. There should be a parameter to start with (CG).

The Rights Issue

- The right issue should not be a problem if the material is only used for viewing (FF).
- Section 108 in the copyright rules allows a certain use by libraries and public organizations. The copyright issue is currently being debated in the Copyright Office (NR).

Other Comments

- Producers should raise money to preserve the materials along with the money to create the program. The producer would know what is worth saving during the post-production process (MK). The identification and characterization of ultimately useful materials during the production process requires a relaxation from the archives and a lax in the rules of cataloging (AH). The producer should work in tandem with the archivist so that the selection process is not too burdensome. This process should be built into the production process because the producers of the materials are the best selectors of what should be saved (KS).
- A cataloging standard should be developed that is usable by the general public. Information should be logged to make them useful not only to the editor, by also for use by later users (FF). The selected materials are not useful if you can't find it. It might not be too burdensome to loggers if a standard could be established that address the following concerns: the worth of the materials being saved, the rights issue, the level of access according to the producer (MK & FF). The question of loggers/producers/editors cataloging materials is based on how much cataloging can be done at the production stage (BR). The pie in the sky

dream is for AVID or Apple to place key fields into their systems that will allow a basic kind of logging by the editors (DP).

- There has to be a cut off point in what to keep; we can't save everything. Things will be lost. Ask the individual producing the material if there they think there material is suitable to be archive (BM).
- The very nature of the program being put together from materials saved by others denotes that everything is work saving (MK). In an ideal world, everything would be saved. The problem is how possible is cataloging, indexing, and access (VN).
- For the independent producer, the archive is a different place. The context of use needs to be addressed when selecting what to save for future access (GS). The business model of whether this is for public access or commercial use might hinder people who want to donate materials (ED). Reuse and access is a big conundrum because you have no control over how the material is used. The user would have to be put in contact with the originator of the material (AH). The potential for the independent producer to make money is a huge incentive to pre-log materials at the front end (MK). [This comment was specific to the indie producer, but can also be applied to the general producing public.]
- A rating system should be established where people assign a potential monetary value to the underlying elements (MK).
- Once some rules are established, there should be a period of beta testing to see what other concerns may come up in the future (BAbrash).
- Access to the materials in the repository should be tiered and based on maintaining the rights and protection of the artists and the integrity of the context of the created materials (BAbrash).

Final Comments

- There should be a division between the materials for use and those for research (FF).
- The preservation of born digital materials should not come at the cost of preserving analog materials (JW & GS). Digitization is not always the best process (KS).
- No matter what guidelines are implemented, quality control will be needed.
- The rights of the artist versus the tyranny of the archivist have to be resolved on an individual basis (JK). Also, in the event that too much is saved, there is the danger that it will take away from the materials with true historic value (JK).
- Welcome independent producers and networks. Have them pay a fee to put materials in the archive to maximize the dream of money coming in and going out (replenishing). Then you will have created something of value that would become something else (MK).
- Genres and establishing standards is important for the public (BAlpert).
- All productions are not of equal value. There need to be a culling out of materials (CG).
- Hopefully something very concrete will come out of this in the form of guidelines (LB).
- A great deal of information can be gleamed from test runs (GS).
- Establish an endowment with movers and shakers (KS).
- Establish case studies (KS).
- All footage should be available just to be seen (KS).
- Then there should be a tiered system for usage (KS).
- The needs of the artist need to come first (KS).

NOTE: The issue of technology requirement came up, but is not included in this report because it was not relevant to the focal point of this group.