



Simplified Item Inventory INSTRUCTIONS

Introduction & Resources

This page offers guidelines and explanations on how to use the Master Item Inventory provided by the Community Archiving Workshop. You have been provided [a Google spreadsheet version of the inventory template](#) -- feel free to make a copy and modify the fields as you see fit for your own collections. In addition, [Audiovisual Formats: A guide to identification](#) will aid you in visually identifying the many different audiovisual formats you might encounter.

Using this inventory template, you will document metadata, or description about the item, that can mostly be gathered from looking at the objects themselves. Keep in mind that you may not be able to fill out every detail for every object - feel free to use "Unknown" as a value.

Assess condition and use caution before playing items in your collection to gather more details. Loanable kits for inspecting and playing audio and video formats are available from Community Archiving Workshop.

An item-level inventory can help you make plans and priorities for digitization of your collections to locate, preserve, and increase access to the content. This inventory can be used to estimate the cost of digitization, rehousing, and storage, and can be vital to tracking the progress of work whether you are reformatting your material in-house or with an outside vendor. Identifying and locating your most valuable collections will help you consolidate by location so it's easier to find and evacuate them in the event of an emergency.

If you would like overall guidance on how to get started using this document to inventory the collections at your organization, please contact communityarchivingworkshop@gmail.com to set up a short consultation.

Included below:

- Getting Started on Your Inventory Project
- Inventory Sheet Data Entry Guide
- [Master Item Inventory Template](#)

Getting Started On Your Inventory Project

- **Preparing your sheet/form & items**

The first step is to decide what you will be inventorying and to get your inventory sheet or form ready. We suggest saving the provided template as your master document, and creating a copy and renaming it to match your specific library, museum, or archive and collection. If multiple people will be working on the inventory, you can create a copy of the Google form to Google drive and share the link with everyone who needs it to enter data. Remember to save your version of the sheet/form with your name in the title of the file, and send a link to the holding organization so they will have a copy of your inventory.

If your items do not already have unique IDs and you plan to add identifiers during this process, you should gather some paper labels or a marking pen to write the identifiers on your object before beginning the inventory. Finally, a ruler can be useful when identifying formats.

- **Understanding how the inventory sheet works**

In the inventory template, we have entered data for a sample item, a VHS tape, in the second row. It may be useful to look over this sample data before you start your own inventory. Remember that each row in the sheet represents a single physical item, and it will be common to not be able to fill out every field for every item - in these cases leave the field blank. The inventory is the first step in a longer process and your goal for now is to get a baseline amount of information to start making preservation plans and priorities.

- **Understanding how to identify different audiovisual formats**

The provided guide to understanding audiovisual formats contains a wealth of information and images which will assist you as you are inventorying. If you come across an item whose format you do not recognize, check it against the images included in the guide.

Inventory Sheet Data Entry Guide

An explanation for the meaning of each field and how to enter data can be found below.

Holding Organization Name of the organization whose collection is being inventoried.

Storage Location Enter the physical storage location of the item (Building/Room/Shelf). Noting the permanent location, whether a shelf number or the name of a room, can help you link the item on this inventory back to the item itself. If unknown, leave blank.

Unique ID # Unique identifier assigned to and written on the item that will help match the item back to this inventory sheet. This could be a barcode, or could be a temporary number or letter-number combination. Use the unique identifier system that the organization already uses. This is also an opportunity to develop a new numbering system if you need to. For example: year/period/four digit number (2018.0456). If you assign unique IDs, be sure to label clearly.

Other ID #s Items may have old IDs from previous collection inventories. Be sure to note those, even if you have assigned a Unique ID. If unknown, leave blank.

Box # Use if applicable. This is a number that would have been assigned to the box that holds the item prior to the inventory being taken. If unknown, leave blank.

Collection Name Identify which collection this item belongs to, if any. If unknown, leave blank.

Title on Item Capture clearly indicated title on label or item, or if specified by collection stewards.

Creator(s) Person(s) or organization(s) responsible for creating the item. Format consistently and separate multiple entries with a semicolon: Last name, First name, role; Last name, First name, role. Example main credits: Producer, Director, Interviewer; Writer. If unknown, leave blank.

Contributor(s) General catchall for other credits. Format consistently and separate multiple entries with a semicolon: Last name, First name, role; Last name, First name, role. Example additional roles: Camera; Cast; Editor; Interviewee; Music; Musician; Sound; Speaker. If unknown, leave blank.

Date on Item Transcribe any information on the label or item that identifies the date of the recording. Format consistently: YYYY-MM-DD or YYYY-MM or YYYY. If unknown, leave blank.

Content
Description If information regarding content is available, list it here. Capture information regarding content. Include all relevant info as it is recorded on item label(s) - visible at first glance. If unknown, leave blank.

Rights Known copyright date(s), copyright holder(s), access restrictions and other relevant information. Record any information regarding copyright noted on the item. If unknown, leave blank.

Annotations All relevant info as it is recorded on housing and item label(s). Record all text verbatim. Indicate where annotations are found (container or recording itself; face or spine). Include alternate titles, list of titles for compilations, or additional credits. Use semicolons between lines of content. If there are checked boxes for technical specs, record all boxes checked. If some annotations are illegible, indicate in brackets. If no annotations are listed on the container or case, leave blank.

Condition Notes Enter any information you can determine about the condition from looking at the object. For example: dusty, case cracked, case missing, evidence of mold, loose wind, slide cracked, sticky, smelly, footage is fuzzy, audio is unclear, etc. Use consistent vocabulary.

Media Type General nature of the content. Use controlled vocabulary.

Format Additional detail about the medium if known. See the format identification guide if you need help. If unknown, leave blank.

Extent Number of parts - tapes, reels or pages per item.

Approximate Duration (AV only) or Approximate Dimensions (Print only) For audiovisual recordings, approximate total run time. If unknown, capture maximum tape length (written on the box or tape). Be consistent with format, e.g. hh:mm:ss.

For print materials, record dimensions, if possible. Measurements of width and height in inches, e.g. 8 1/2 x 11 in. Use whole numbers or fractions (no decimal values).

If unknown, leave blank.

Color/B&W For moving image media. Is it in color or black and white? Listed on label or identified during inspection. Use controlled vocabulary. If unknown, leave blank.

Audio Information For moving image media. Look for information on label or identify during inspection. Use controlled vocabulary. If unknown, leave blank.

Carrier Identify the carrier of the item (film on REEL, film on CORE, video or audio CASSETTE). Use controlled vocabulary.

Housing Identify the housing that the item is stored in, if any (film CAN, video CASE, Audio CASE, etc.). Use controlled vocabulary.

Film: Element Type Is the film a positive print, reversal, or a negative? Use controlled vocabulary. If unknown, leave blank.

Film: Estimated Footage Length (ft.) Approximate film length with a film ruler, look for notch marks on the film reel, or check labels for information. If unknown, leave blank.

Film: Edge Code Series of shapes that are visible on Kodak stock only, which designate the year the film was produced (but not necessarily exposed and processed).

Consult the NFPF Film Preservation Guide:

https://www.filmpreservation.org/userfiles/image/PDFs/fpg_10.pdf

If unknown, leave blank.

Reel Diameter Measure the physical diameter of all reels (film and audio) in inches. This information can help you approximate duration.

Base Material Type Identified during inventory or listed on label. Is the film or videotape polyester, acetate, or a combination? Use controlled vocabulary. If unknown, leave blank.

Access Restrictions Are there any known restrictions on who can view this item based on the content for legal or ethical reasons? If unknown, leave blank.

Notes This is a field to include any additional information you think could be useful that did not fit into any of the other fields. If nothing to add, leave blank.

Preservation
Priority

Consider the physical condition of the item and value of its content. For example, is the item damaged or an obsolete format? Is it unique or rare? Is it historically significant? Is it important to your organization or community?

Date Inventoried

Date the item was inventoried. Format as: YYYY-MM-DD, e.g. 2018-10-09.

Inventoried By

Name of the person who completed the record.