

# AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS IN INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with audio-visuals as sources of information. It also emphasises the modern technological development which can be traced back to the middle of the 20th century. Attention is given to various uses of these materials to suit modern educational advancement. Due regard is also given to the planning, processing, storage and retrieval of the materials. Care is given to the assessment of National Library situation vis-a-vis its mode of collection and organisation. Suggestions for improvement and recommendations are also given.

The introduction of audio-visual materials into the storage, retrieval and dissemination of information dates back to some decades. In advanced countries of the world, it has taken them centuries of inventions and improvements before arriving at the present level of achievement in the use of audio and visuals in the delivery of information. In government business, private and commercial enterprises, information is the basic ingredient for decision making and as the situations in which decisions must be made become more complex the need for information correspondingly increases. The need for information systems in recent years has therefore been made critical by the steady growth in size and complexity of organization and data. In the primitive age, messages were sent in various ways regarded in modern times as entirely local. These methods of information dissemination ranges from sending relay messengers who shunt between one village and the other running vital errands for the village heads to the use of talking drums to transmit messages. So also is the use of symbols depicting certain things such as the sending of a white piece of cloth to show something of joy. Also a sad situation was shown by an oil-soaked piece of white cloth or black cloth. The early Egyptians used pictures to transmit varied information on events to one another and it has universal acclaim. Finally the village head with the assistance of the village bell-man sent information to his subjects. These went on for a long time until the advent of modern technology.

The modern technological revolution has brought in its trail considerable change in diverse areas of human relationship and an upward trend in the mode of information storage, retrieval and dissemination. It has brought into focus diverse electronic gadgets used nowadays to transmit messages from one place to the other; from country to country between governments, among individuals far and near and also for educational purposes. There is a wide range of materials in this category which are treated in this paper.



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Today, audio-visual expression is essential to clear, interesting and purposive communication. Capable information scientists must add to their communicative skills the abilities to select ready-made instructional materials or to transfer ideas into specific visual forms that help them to transmit information more effectively. When such audio-visual materials as photographs, slides, filmstrips, overhead transparencies and motion pictures are carefully prepared and properly used, they can;

- increase understanding of a topic,
- add interest to a subject,
- lengthen the retention time of information,
- teach a skill effectively,
- contribute to a desire attitude,
- stimulate people to action,
- offer experiences not easily obtained in other ways.

Because they have these important capacities, audio-visual materials can help to solve communication problems while increasing instructional efficiency and the learning of the audience.

In the wide areas of information dissemination some materials are worthy of consideration. They include: manuscripts, books, periodicals, miniaturised printing; pictorial-maps, illustrations and photographs, microforms - microfilm, microfiche, ultrafiche, microcards; sound-gramophone records, audio tapes and cassettes, radio, Audio-Visuals; Sound films, Slides, Video



Tape, Cassette and disc, Television. These materials bring one form of information or the other to the listener or viewer. Apart from books which require reading, the other ones have a way of appeal that cements faster such messages that are sent to the listener or viewer in his memory. It is indeed pertinent to say that these materials have their individual situations where they can readily fit in. Some like manuscripts, microforms and their subdivisions are good in library situations. Gramophone records, Television and Radio have mass appeal and are most widely used. The latter does not relate to library situations alone but more to situations beyond the confines of the library.

In order to bring the subject closer it is important to regroup these materials and deal with them one by one so that it can be clearly seen how each works to the advantage of the consumer of information.

**Slides** — are a form of projected audio-visuals easy to prepare hence they frequently serve as the starting effort in a local production programme. The pictures are generally taken on reversal colour film, which is sent to a film processing laboratory where the mounted slides are made up.

**Filmstrips or slide films** — Slide films or 35 millimeter filmstrips are closely related to 2" by 2" slides, but instead of being mounted as separate pictures the film after processing remains uncut as a continuous strip. Filmstrip has the advantages of compactness, ease of handling for projection and low cost for duplication when additional copies are needed.

**Transparencies for overhead projection** — Transparencies are relatively new in the field of locally prepared audio-visual materials. The projector is used from near the front of the room, with the instructor standing beside it, facing the group. The projection screen is behind him and room light is at a moderate level. Transparencies are placed on the large stage of the projector and the instructor may point to features and make marks on the film. His work appears immediately on the screen. Progressively disclosing areas of a transparency are special features that make the use of this visual medium effective in many subject areas. Overhead projectors are especially useful for instructing large groups on all educational levels.

**Motion pictures** — These can be 8-millimeter or 16-millimeter. They are the most complex and costly of the audio-visual materials to be considered. They require costly equipment, skilled personnel, much time for production, and much money for materials and services. But for some purposes, nothing surpasses the motion picture in effectiveness as a medium of communication. The motion picture should be considered whenever motion is inherent in a subject or then you wish to show relationships of one idea to another, to build a continuity of thought, or to create a problem situation or a skill which is to be explained and applied. The 8-millimeter films can be used very satisfactorily for individual study with small groups, or with regular classes.

**Combined visual materials** — Combinations of visual materials are effective when used together for

specific purposes - either concurrently or in succession. Just as the narration on a sound motion picture supplements the pictures, a filmstrip containing local applications may be studied right after a motion picture has shown principles and generalised applications.

**Television materials** — Visual materials for instructional television include graphic material (charts, summary list, display-based materials and titles) photographs, slides and motion pictures. The method of use will determine whether information should be presented, for example as a slide for projection or as a large chart for use before the television camera.

In a general view of the situation, an idea, a problem situation, or a need is the starting point for audio-visual material. An idea may indicate an area of interest, but the more useful ideas are those conceived in terms of a need relating to a specific group - an audience need for certain information, or for a skill or the need to re-establish a desired attitude. The Statement of purpose will, in turn, give direction for further development of the idea.

The character of your intended audience - (those who will be seeing and learning from your materials) cannot be separated from your statement of purposes. One influences the other. Such audience characteristics as age and educational level, present knowledge of the subject and attitude towards it, all have bearing upon purposes. The audience is your determinant when you consider the complexity of ideas to be presented, the rate at which the topic is developed, the vocabulary level for captions and narration, the number of examples to use, and similar problems that influence your handling of the topic. The kinds of materials needed are the picture series which may consist of drawing or photographs, in black-and-white or in colour. Usually they are enlargements from camera negatives. They may include explanatory captions and they may be accompanied with directions for their use. They lend themselves to display and also to detailed self-instructional follow-up study. They are among the simplest audio-visual materials to prepare; but they are limited for projection by reason of the bulkiness and relative inefficiency of opaque projections. Because picture series are normally used by individuals rather than by groups under direction they need to be self-sufficient and self-explanatory. Brief, concise captions impart this quality.

## THE LIBRARY SITUATION

In all libraries there are various ways of giving information to the patrons. These ways range from the use of books, journals, periodicals, miniaturised printing to the use of reference service techniques - so also, is the use of instructional/directional posters and pointers which direct the patron to where to get what. The labels on the shelves showing subject areas and the posters saying "there should be silence in the library", "books consulted should be left on the table" etc. are part of the information tools used to talk to the patrons.



## THE USE OF MICROFORMS:

These consists of the use of microfilms, microfiche, micro-cards, ultrafiche, etc. It is the contention of policy makers on library institutions that to conserve space, news items in newspapers, journals and reading texts generally can be condensed in Microforms and stored in the Library for those who need information from them. This has not only saved space, it has gone a long way to preserve permanently with less effect of wear and tear such vital information that could have been lost in keeping the volumes of papers and books which through constant use could have resulted in severe wear and tear and consequently in loss of part or whole of the material, thereby depriving the public of its use. Along with these easy microforms is the microreader an electronic gadget designed to facilitate easy reading of the contents of the microforms. It magnifies the letters thus making it readable. Examples of the availability of these materials and records of their constant use abound in the National Library and other Libraries all over the Country.

The use of film based transparencies such as overhead projectors, miniature and cine films are all effective tools of information dissemination. These materials are used effectively during library orientation programmes on the use of libraries, seminars and symposia. They not only make things easy for the handlers of such programmes, they also engender understanding of facts disseminated. The use of notice boards and posters is another way by which information reaches the people. It is a way of sending mass information to the people especially in the enlightened cadre.

The use of Gramophone records, audio tapes and Cassettes, video tapes television slides etc. is also practicable in Library situation since we have record library as a section in some libraries in the country. An example is the Central Library in Broad Street, Lagos. There we have a record library which forms an integral part of the collections of this public library. So also is the F.R.C.N. Library.

**The Handicapped and the disabled:** Audio materials are most useful in this instance. Since the development of Braille system, blind people have found joy in the use of his system to get the much needed information. Situations abound where dictations are made on tapes and are later relayed to a blind person who later turns same into Braille for easy reading. Many blind students have through this medium achieved goals hitherto considered unattainable.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

These also rank among avenues for eliciting information. Pictures taken at ceremonies such as wedding or installation of a chief will tell stories and will give a vivid presentation of what happened at that ceremony to a person who was not present. An effective use of this medium in library situation or in private homes gives a lot of informations on past and current events.

## THE PUBLIC AT LARGE

When we talk of the library situations in discussing the use of audio-visual materials, it should be borne in mind that the percentage of library users is very small compared with the huge population of the masses. It is a known fact in history that governments all over the world, institutions, public and private enterprises and individuals who have one thing or the other to tell the public have employed various means of getting their plans, messages and what they have for public consumption through to the masses. The masses on their part have in recent times formed the habit of looking towards certain ends to get information on the day to day happenings in their country and in the world at large.

There is therefore no doubt that the public at large have relied on some of these audio visuals in getting the much needed information on almost everything that concerns them and their welfare. The materials that have been useful in this regard are newspapers, radio, television, posters and public address systems such as microphones, loud speakers and amplifiers. It is not a surprise anywhere in Nigeria to see Ministry of Information Vans going round towns and villages giving information to people on environmental sanitation, showing films on matters that effect the society at large and informing the people generally on what the government is doing. All these materials used are one way or the other give the people the satisfaction of current awareness.

In modern times the awareness of the public on the use of the electronic gadgets have increased three fold. Scarcely could one see a home without Radio and many people can now boast of television sets although this is not as pervasive as wireless sets. The amount of information that passes through radio and television sets is inestimable. People take as gospel truth what is relayed in the radio or viewed on the television. This reliance was so much that when in the old Western Region of Nigeria people discovered to their chagrin that what came out of the Rediffusion boxes which many had in their homes at that time as news item about happenings in that region, were misrepresentation of facts they discarded in their thousands these rediffusion boxes and tagged them 'boxes of lies'.

The system of 'hear and see' has endeared the television to the hearts of many people who are also to possess it. The set does not only disseminate information to the people, it also gives them pictures relating to the news item relayed. You will also see through this how important these gadgets are that it becomes vital for people using these things to use them in such a way that it will serve that much needed purpose of giving true and authentic information to the people.

## THE USE OF POSTERS

Posters come within the range of visuals. In giving information to the people, words and pictures are employed. For instance posters are used during



registration for new intakes to the elementary school, during elections, in the period of population census and to educate the people on the various ills of the society. The inscriptions on these posters give valuable information to the people not only to those who can read but to illiterates as well.

## RADIO, TELEVISION AND NEWSPAPER MEDIA IN NIGERIA

Radio and television have jointly done a lot to bring news and commentaries which has led to current awareness on the part of Nigerians. Many people listen to radios and view televisions in the hope of getting acquainted with current events in their country and other parts of the world. Even those who are illiterates have gained immensely from local news and commentaries in the Nigerian languages. A lot of useful and very educative programmes both in local and foreign languages are put on the air in our radio and television studios to increase the level of education. It has also improved the quantity of information being dished out.

Newspapers have not fared less. We have many of them and each within its own objectives and policies have helped one way or the other to bridge the gap between the known and the unknown.

## THE NATIONAL LIBRARY EXPERIENCE

The National Library as one of its set down objectives is supposed to collect musical scores and it is part of its legal depository rights to collect all gramophone records waxed by Nigerians either here or abroad since the artistes are Nigerians.

It is important to note however that the National Library in its bid to fulfil this obligation has hitherto acquired a large number of microforms. These include foreign newspapers already put on microfilm or microfiche, and a large number of Congressional papers from the United States of America. Moreover, it acquired a microfilm making machine which unfortunately due to non-availability of personnel could not be used since its purchase. The Library has a large collection of maps deposited to it by the Federal Surveys department. These maps cover the whole spectrum of economic, political and social life of Nigeria. The maps show the delimitation of Nigeria during the colonial era and the various boundary adjustments made during that period. The recent additions to map collection dealt with not only the present geographical structure of Nigeria, but also the recent political situations in the country. These facts abound in the former twelve state structure and the present nineteen state structure.

Apart from the large collection of maps, there are photographs. These photographs represent actions of government functionaries in ministries, extra-ministerial departments and parastatals both in the colonial era, and after independence. Portraits of distinguished rulers of the country at every stage of her political advancement are also included. Some of these photographs come to the library through the courtesy of the Federal Ministry of Information.

Included in the collection are the photographs various activities of the National Library e.g. State parties, official engagements and library building. These photographs serve as very vital link between the past and the present and they are good sources of information. For now, the National Library has facilities for the use of the microfilms it acquired. The reading public now come to the library to elicit information from the microfilms through the use of the micro-readers available in the library. If our parliamentarians know that we have a large collection of United States Congressional Records on microfilm perhaps they should have been pouring into the library to avail themselves of the benefit derivable from the use of the materials.

It is worthy to note that the National Library is presently indexing the newspapers published in the country. It has started with the *Daily Times* and *Sunday Times*. But for shortage of staff to handle this important job, it could have been indexing the Nigerian Dailies. Photographs and maps are not yet touched. All these are to be indexed to make them easy for the library patrons. Efforts should be geared towards getting enough staff to handle this work.

## PROCESSING OF AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS FOR EASY RETRIEVAL

For easy retrieval of audio-visual materials for information dissemination, commonsense cataloguing on the materials should be done as follows:-

**Microforms** — (Microfilms, microcards, microprint and microfiche) should be kept in boxes or shelves and marked with the name of the library, and the film marked at the beginning with the titles of the publication, the dates covered, and the name of the library. Records for microfilms of serials, magazine and newspapers are entered on the respective shelflist cards along with records for bound volumes.

**Maps** — Maps come in many forms: small and flat folders (such as travel and road maps), large, flat maps, and wall maps. With all, the area covered is the important approach. They are arranged, therefore, by area, whether they are separately housed or included in pamphlet on vertical files (in a separate file for maps or in the general file). Some libraries classify maps by areas as subject, using a preliminary symbol or letter as M940 (for Europe).

The larger and more important maps should be catalogued, with the cards interfiled with others in the main catalogue. The cards can have coloured edges, a plastic cover with colour, or a stamp "Map" above the call number.

The information given on the card includes

- (i) (Location symbol (e.g. M940, word "Map", case and drawer number, or accession number - the accession number being a separate series from that for books).
- (ii) The area (in capital letters as for any subject)
- (iii) Publisher or issuing body.
- (iv) Date.
- (v) Series, if part of one.



(vi) Size (in centimetre).

(vii) Scale

A second card, identical with the catalogue card (*see appendix A*) is typed and filed in a separate section of the shelf list. The map is stamped, marked with appropriate location symbol and housed in a map case or cabinet drawer.

If not catalogued, the map is lettered like a pamphlet, with the area name as the subject, and is added to the vertical file folder. Some small maps should be mounted on art paper or board; some large ones should be laminated or backed with cloth if they are to be much handled or folded. The practice of rolling and standing them upright in an open case is not recommended.

**Music** — All music present special problems. Even the bound song books or other scores are difficult to catalogue and require special rules.

Unbound music including sheet music is most easily handled by arranging it according to composer, uncatalogued, in flat drawers. Brief cards are prepared under composer's name followed by the name of the composition. On each card there should appear a record of the number of copies and the parts, etc. These cards may be kept in a separate file (in a public library) or in the catalogue (in a school library) and stamped "Music", if desirable. If the library has little music collection, records of holdings can be kept in the catalogue. If however, the Library is the custodian for an institution's choral, organ, orchestral and other performing music, separate records are better. The material is handled so much that its life is short and constant changing of catalogue cards would be necessary.

Musical works if bound or reinforced, must be carefully prepared so as to lie open and flat. Bound music should be catalogued and treated the same way as other books. The cataloguing entry is under composer (under the title for collection, folk music, etc) and, includes notes to account for parts etc (*see appendix B*).

**Film** — Generally small libraries do not have their own films but rely on films circuits, library centres, larger libraries, or some such source. Some libraries, however, may have their own, and the centres must organise theirs so it is worth while to consider them briefly.

The simplest arrangement of films is by accession number, the first received being perhaps, F1, the second F2 etc. Both the film and the name can be marked with this number, and with the title and the name of the library (special pens are available now to do this marking). They are housed in specially made shelving with separate compartments permitting each can to stand on its side in its slot. The slots are also numbered.

The films may be fully catalogued according to Library of Congress published rules and, wherever available, with L.C. cards. Information includes title, producer, date, size (16mm or 35mm) colour or black and white notation, number of reels or footage, running time, statement regarding sound track or accompanying recording, brief notation, accompanying teaching aid etc (*see appendix C*). The

cards carry the accession number and are filed in the main catalogue or particularly for a public library, the catalogue information may be inserted on form cards filed in a visible file separate from the main catalogue.

**Filmstrips and slides** — Filmstrips are rolls of 35mm films, each roll consisting of several frames or pictures. They are very important in school work, possibly less so in public libraries.

Their treatment is similar to that outlined above for films: an accession number (e.g. F51, F52, or F1, F2 etc) is assigned and is used on shelf marking, can, and cards, or a subject classification may be assigned such as F5629.2 for automobiles.

Catalogue cards may be prepared for each filmstrip and filed in the catalogue. Such cards which show a distinctive coloured border or are stamped "Filmstrip", should include location symbol, title of the filmstrip (the main entry) and additional information which is easily available are helpful: manufacturer, date, series and records of accompanying scripts, recording or other aids. The number of frames and whether they are in colour or black and white is included. A note is also made regarding accompanying sound track, script, or text. Added entries are made for subjects and significant entries; tracings are indicated on the title card. A shelf-list card is filed in a separate section of the shelf-list and will, of course indicate whether more than one copy is held (*see Appendix D*).

Slides are treated the same way as the films and filmstrips, except that the symbol or designation may be different (e.g. "5") the slides are catalogued as sets, and the main entry used is the subject rather than the title which is often non-revealing or non distinctive. Schools at least, may want slides classified by broad classification. Captions may appear on the frames or on an accompanying list; such information is noted on the cards. Each slide must be marked with its location symbol and with the name of the library. (*See Appendix E*)

**Recordings** — Recordings include phonodiscs (music and non-music records), tapes and wire. Phonodiscs are made in different speeds ( $16\frac{2}{3}$ ,  $33\frac{1}{3}$ , 45, and 78 rpm i.e. revolutions per minute) they are also available for either gramophone record players. The early 78's were thick and easily broken or damaged; for that reason, and because of the fact that they are used in libraries except for historical or "listening" collections new 78's are occasionally bought to secure certain recordings of sound effects, children's materials or materials not otherwise available. The 45's are for the most part, recording of popular music and hence not acquired for library use, except again, for some children's records. The  $33\frac{1}{3}$  (the "long-playing" records or LP's) constitute the bulk of library collections. The very slow  $16\frac{2}{3}$  for very long playing (as for the bed ridden or the blind), are becoming of more interest to public libraries.

Recordings are the most complex to process of any material; and possibly public and school libraries differ most in ways of handling them.

For a small collection in a public library, accession number is the simplest. The number provides



identification for circulation purposes and it is argued that since few recordings are available at a given time and those few can be kept in a display case. The patron can go through all of those few kept in display case, and can go through all of those displayed to make his choice from the catalogue, he can choose and reserve a specific work.

A subject arrangement is perhaps best for schools since it conforms with the placement of other materials and since the classification groups the musical records by form (opera, symphony, voice, etc). A symbol may be employed, such as Rec 782. In some public libraries, children's collections are divided by age interest with colour used as the code device. Musical recordings are most often catalogued from the label, by composer, with added entries for subject (i.e. musical form), performer, instrument, arranger, and if distinctive, title.

Non-musical records are catalogued under author. If there is no author or there are many, the title is used. Recordings are shelved in special shelves which permit each to stand upright, preferably each in its own compactment.

Tape recording becomes even more complicated than phonodiscs since experimentation is producing more and more refinements. Already there are single-track tapes, two-track tapes, two-track monaurals (two sounds track blended) and four-track stereos. This means that all such additional information is also included in cataloguing. The assigned number and name of the library are lettered on the seal of the spool and on the container. Tapes are used in teaching, particularly. Wire recordings require similar treatment.

Other physical objects found in libraries which are sources of information dissemination covered by this topic are Globes, models, and museum materials. These are suitable for classroom use. Some do not require any processing, but school libraries like to have them listed, grouped by physical form under subject in their catalogue.

## SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since one cannot effectively catch up with the modern trends in information dissemination without the use of these materials earlier mentioned, it is important to look into the following suggestions with a view to seeking what could be done to bring them into our systems to the benefit of our clientele:

- (i) Libraries should create a section or department for these materials and recruit efficient hands to supervise and utilize them for effective flow of information. Such department if created will help government ministries, extra ministerial departments and parastatals to get stored information for the day to day performance of their duties.
- (ii) It will afford the efficient handling of conferences, seminars and symposium since materials acquired for this department could be used either by the library in its conference room or hired out to government

departments for their use. It could be a source of revenue for the library.

- (iii) Our radio and television stations which are the controller of the pulse of the people in the area of giving on the spot information should improve the quality and quantity of information given to listeners so that better citizens can emerge therefrom.
- (iv) More media centres should be established and more people trained to man them. Effective propaganda of the values derivable from these centres should be made.
- (v) The system of collection of some materials is faulty. The National Library has not exercised its legal deposit rights effectively. This should be properly looked into and works of artists hitherto neglected can be brought together for the benefit of the people.
- (vi) The National Library should prepare and publish a bibliography on the *audio-visual materials* stocked by it and circulate it for the information of the public.
- (vii) The National Library should spear-head a directory of audio-visual materials in the country and the libraries having them. The Abadina Media Resource Centre University of Ibadan should be co-opted.

## APPENDIX A

Map	ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.
m37	Albuquerque and vicinity, New Mexico - Bernalillo Co. United States Geological Survey, 1957
	6 x 5
	Coloured map
	Scale 1: 24,000
	U.S. Geological survey

Catalogue card for map (main entry under area arrangement by map accession number)

## APPENDIX B

Brahms, Johanues

The organ works of Johanues Brahms, rev. by Gerald Alphenaar, English tr. by Harold Heibary Marks, 1948  
Alphenaar Gerard ed.

Catalogue card for music

## APPENDIX C

Film	Fira, wind, and flood (motion picture)
F23	Vitaphone corp. 1955
	19 min. sd, b & w, 35m (warner variations)
	credits: Produced and written by Robert Youngson, n
	narrator, Weist, film ed Dwight Albert Helmes
	Disasters
	Vitaphone Corporation.

## APPENDIX D

Filmstrip  
F5232

The Lewis and Clark Expedition  
Enrichment materials,

1955  
44 frames  
colour  
35mm  
Teacher's guide in V.F.

LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION  
THE WEST - DISCOVERY AND  
EXPLORATION

Enrichment Materials

Catalogue card for filmstrip (arrangement by  
Filmstrip accession number).

## APPENDIX E

Slide  
5914.6 SPAIN

Six Spanish cities. Roloc. 1964  
38 col. slides  
2 x 2  
Typed script in V.F.

Catalogue card for slides grouped by subject

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