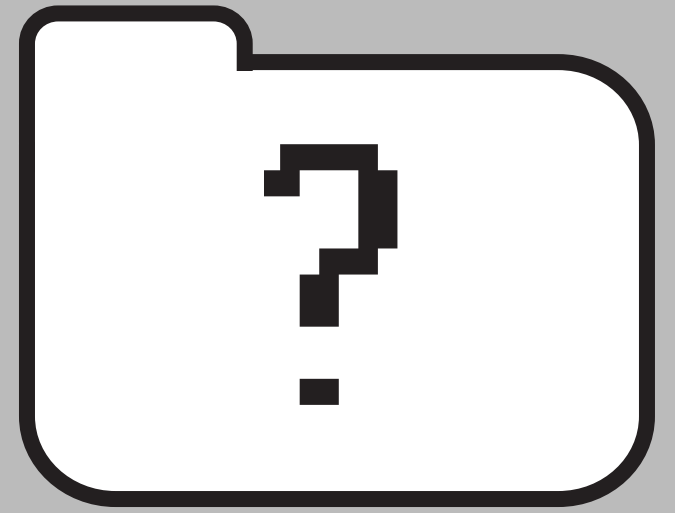
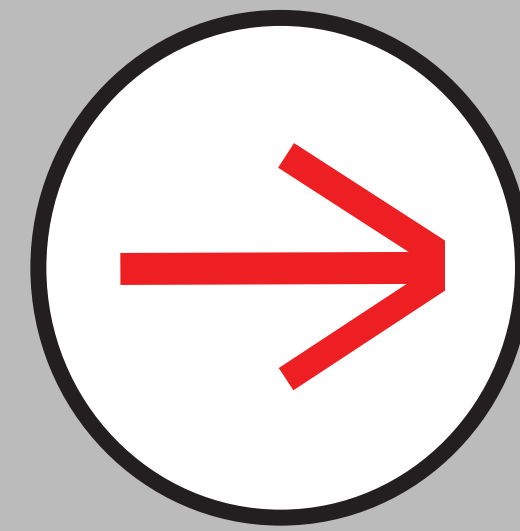


Bit Faker Productions: Organizing Chaos and Entering the Digital Unknown

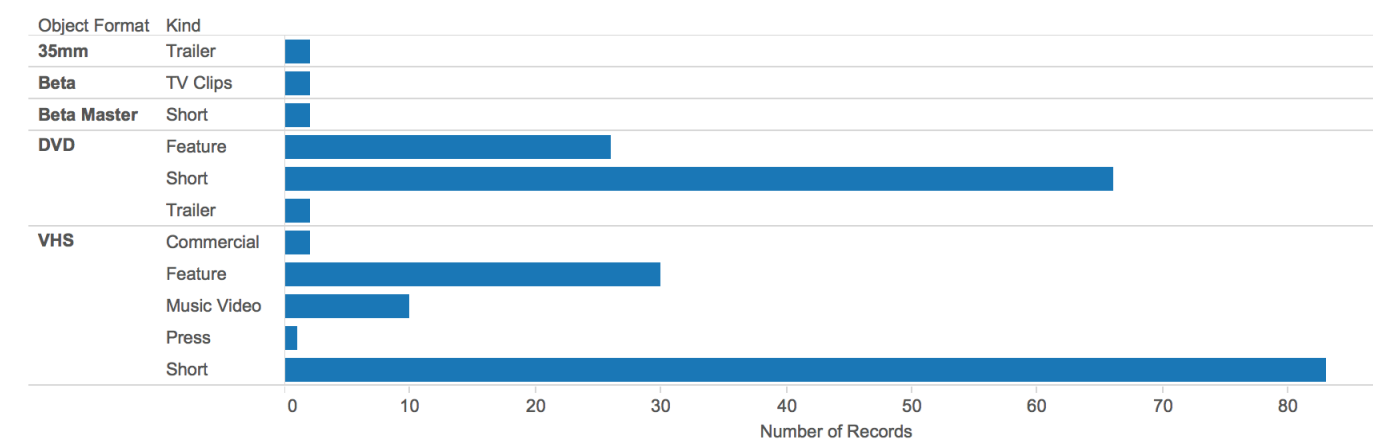
VHS



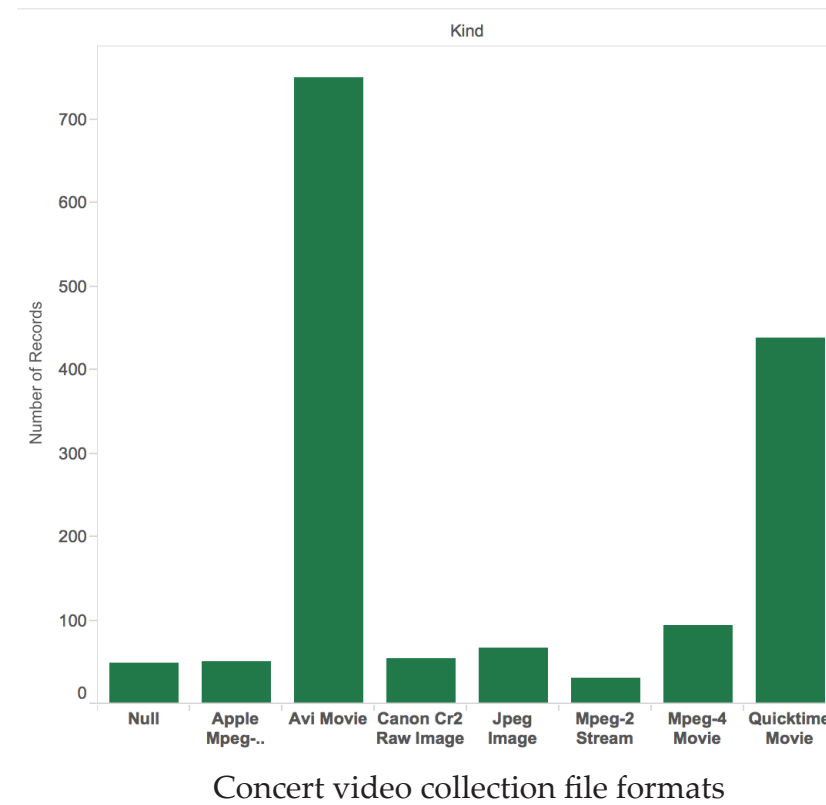
Taylor Morales & Tiffany Naiman

THE COLLECTION: BIT FAKER

Bit Faker Productions is media production and distribution consultancy company dedicated to the creation of compelling narratives and visual content for the entertainment industry. Tiffany Naiman, owner of Bit Faker Productions, has a 25 year history working as festival program director and a screening committee member for a dozen film festivals, including AFI, Method Fest, The Dubrovnik International Film Festival, The Silver Lake Film Festival, Cinema Epicurea – Sonoma, and The Philadelphia Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. Over the years the company has accumulated over five hundred screener and master copies of rare independent films spanning the booming era of independent cinema of the 1990s and early 2000s. The collection is mainly housed on VHS, DVD, and Betacam. Bit Faker also holds a collection of original concert footage spanning the years 2003 – 2016, with over 680 events represented including footage of little know musicians in coffee houses and bars to artist performing at some of the largest music festivals in the world such as Coachella, Hard LA, Glastonbury, and SxSW.



Festival screener collection formats



Concert video collection file formats

THE PLAN: DIGITAL PRESERVATION STRATEGY

STORAGE

We recommend Bit Faker move all media from the garage where the screener collection is currently stored to a cooler and drier environment. The company might also consider depositing or donating the few master copies of films they own to a trusted moving image archive with temperature and humidity controls.

APPRAISAL

Bit Faker does not have the funds, time, or staff to provide high quality preservation for the whole collection. Therefore, the company must assess its collection and decide which videos are most important for preservation.

SCREENER COLLECTION: While Bit Faker would ideally like to digitize every video in its festival screener collection, this is not feasible or necessary. We recommend the company create an inventory of the collection, using online resources such as Amazon, Ebay, and archival databases to assess the rarity and value of the videos in the collection. Rare materials should be prioritized over films that are easily available elsewhere.

CONCERT COLLECTION: We recommend the company look through the concert video collection and delete unwanted videos.

DESCRIPTION

Bitfaker does not currently have a data asset management system to keep track of their files. Rather than investing in expensive software, we suggest the company simply adopt standardized naming conventions for each collection and rename files to reflect their content and consequentially make them more accessible. We suggest each file from the screener collection include: band name, concert location, date, collection name and file type (access or master.) We suggest file names for the concert video collection include the date, venue, band name, song, and file type.

DIGITIZATION

The company currently owns a prosumer Panasonic EZ47V VHS to DVD recorder. We suggest the company use this device to digitize the less important tapes in the festival screener collection. Digitization of the most important videos should be outsourced to vendors. We recommend the creation of both uncompressed master files and compressed access files. All digital items should be stored on two geographically separated harddrives and migrated to new harddrives every three to four years.

NEED FOR INTERVENTION:

Like many collections, the Bit Faker festival screener collection is victim to benign neglect. Over the years, the company has accumulated hundreds of unique and rare films, but due to lack of staff and funding, caring for the collection has not been a priority for the company. The films sit in five large plastic bins in a garage that has neither climate nor humidity control. The hundreds of magnetic tapes and optical media in the collection are in grave danger of deteriorating beyond playability if they are not digitized soon.

The digital concert footage collection is stored in Naiman's home office on two three-terabyte hard-drives. The footage is from multiple cameras and has varied file formats. 80% of the collection has no naming schema and the remaining 20% has inconsistent file names. Bit Faker Productions has been approached numerous times by documentary projects, online news and entertainment companies, and festivals regarding purchasing specific footage in the collection. However, the collection's lack of organization has made it impossible to deliver requested footage in a timely manner, resulting in lost revenue.

We wish to provide Bit Faker with the tools and knowledge to preserve their collection and increase access. We created a simple preservation strategy that the company can implement with minimal cost and time.

