On the Record, All the Time: Setting an Agenda for Audiovisual Evidence Management
Selected sources and materials for a preliminary proposal for the IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program.

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These selected sources are organized according to the stakeholders involved in this proposal for a National Forum Grant. Law Enforcement, Information Professionals, Vendors, Civil Liberties Organizations and Policy Makers are the central constituencies toward which the proposal is oriented. This document compiles whitepapers, policy documents, and scholarly literature from across these constituencies, and is representative of what could be circulated as foundational reading for participants in advance of our larger meeting. The particular concerns and questions of each constituency—and particularly, the identification of concerns shared across multiple groups—will provide the initial ground for our National Forum discussions and programming and the agenda-setting process.

Law Enforcement
Reports, case studies and guidelines specific to body-worn camera technologies have proliferated with the increased attention to and implementation of body-worn camera initiatives in several police departments throughout the United States. Evidence management guidelines have likewise begun to reflect the increased prevalence of digital evidence alongside the familiar material and testimonial forms, and the unique storage and security needs of digital files. Professional organizations and academic-police department partnerships (including the Police Executive Research Forum) have assessed the effects and best practices of existing video recording programs, and made recommendations for future implementations. Central concerns include the optimization and efficacy of community-based policing practices, infrastructure and storage costs and cost-effectiveness, compliance and liability, community relationships and public perception, and accessibility and data security.


Information Professionals
Three major professional communities are paying particularly close attention to changes in time-based media formats and evidentiary standards: Records management professionals, audio-visual archivists and data scientists. Core concerns of these and other information professionals include digital preservation, the longevity, preservation and appraisal of new evidentiary forms and formats, systems and parameters for electronic recordkeeping, and new possibilities for data resources processed computationally.


Vendors
With the growing interest in and implementation of police body-worn camera programs, manufacturers of those cameras have entered the media spotlight. The leading companies, Taser and Vievu, have seen massive growth and have developed interlocking services and products to maintain market share. Marketing materials from the vendor side often emphasize value in the form of protection for police officers and the neutrality and transparency of video evidence. Articles and reports about the growth of the industry abound, and are more likely to question the costs and impact (both social and financial) of these new technologies.

TASER, “The #1 On-Officer Video Platform” (retrieved September 15, 2015).

Vievu, “The LEe3 body worn camera used by over 4000 police agencies worldwide” (retrieved September 15, 2015).

Civil Liberties Groups
Civil Liberties groups have occupied a unique role in terms of police body-worn camera implementation and the rhetoric surrounding these programs. Some groups have been eager to call for widespread implementation as a way to achieve greater transparency in police/citizen interactions. However, many groups have also been concerned for some time with privacy and personal security issues related to new forms of (video) surveillance, as well as with the large quantities of data public agencies now need to manage, store and make accessible—or restrict. The literature here is broad, but below are some of the key constituencies that have made their calls for policy known and have significantly shaped public discussion.


Policy Makers
The evolving policies related to body-worn cameras in law enforcement reflect many of the overlapping challenges of managing, accessing and preserving video evidence. Compliance with evidentiary standards at all levels of government and across institutions requires coordination and clear policy development with respect to data retention and evidence gathering. The new technological affordances of digital video and personal recording devices demand new approaches to policing as a practice, as well as to open government initiatives and privacy policies.


