



MCCE NEWS

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Web Site Holds Media and Internet History

by Vince Long

Do you remember watching those old black and white, 16mm movies in a semi-darkened classroom before the days of the VCR? Comparing that technology to today's DVDs, interactive multimedia, and video projectors is hardly fair, and running one of those old films is likely to create enough giggles in the classroom that your lesson plan will go by the wayside. That is if you can even find one of those films, a projector, and remember how to thread the darned thing.

If you truly yearn for those old films and ones like them, go over to the Internet Archive (<http://www.archive.org/>) and you will be in, well, film heaven. The archive, a non-profit organization based in San Francisco, was founded "to build an 'Internet library,' with the purpose of offering permanent access for researchers, historians, and scholars to historical collections that exist in digital format." To achieve this they have been taking donations of all types of material in film, audio, and text formats.

The Film Archives

The heart of the film category is the Prelinger Archives, a collection of over 48,000 "ephemeral" (advertising, educational, industrial, and amateur) films that were acquired by the Library of Congress

in 2002. Nearly 2,000 of these films are available on the Archive's site for downloading, at no charge, in a variety of video formats. Categories range from anthropology and anti-communism to urban renewal and youth culture. There is also an extensive collection of World War II films produced by the U.S. Office of War Information. Again, the media on this site is free and they encourage "widespread use of moving images in new contexts by people who might not have used them before."



Universal access
to human knowledge

The videos on the site are not limited to the Prelinger Archives but also include more contemporary production. The

PBS series, *The Computer Chronicles*, is available up through its 19th season, a list of 427 programs. This show has featured leaders from the world of technology and covers virtually every topic from computer gaming and security to viruses and voice recognition.

(Continued on Page 3)

In This Issue

Media and Internet History	Page 1
Data Privacy	Page 2
Video File Formats	Page 4
Web Site History	Page 5
Membership Form	Page 6

Privacy Goes Beyond the Locked File Cabinet

by Vince Long

There you are, working away on that big project and all has been going well. The computer is just purring, you've saved often, and there is nothing that will stop you from making your deadline. Then, all of the sudden, you get the dreaded pop-up that indicates that your Windows application has encountered an error and had to shut down. It apologizes



for any inconvenience. However, in bold letters it asks if you would be so kind as to send an error report to Microsoft that might help them improve the application.

The question today is, "Should you send the error report?" The answer is, "It depends."

The problem with sending an error report is that the document you were working on may be sent to Microsoft along with information about the crash. While the pop-up indicates that the report will be treated as confidential and anonymous, you might want to think again before sending the report.

If the document you were working on was the update of your recipe file for all things bananas, it probably does not matter that Microsoft gets a peek at what's cooking in your kitchen. However, if you were typing up a student's IEP, you could be in

violation of the Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) by sharing that data with a third party. The same goes for any other sensitive information that is on your computer and may have been open when the application crashed.

What programs have this "feature?" Internet Explorer 5.0 and later, Office XP, and the XP operating system. It is possible to turn off the error reporting function. There are many web sites that can show you how to do this. Here's one:

U.S. Department of Energy's Computer Incident Advisory Capability

<http://www.ciac.org/ciac/bulletins/m-005.shtml>

WANTED

Newsletter Articles for MCCE News

Software Reviews,
Classroom Technology Tips, Student-
Written Stories, Web Site Reviews

MCCE NEWS

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**Next Submission Deadline:
February 12, 2004**

**This and past issues of MCCE News are available on the World Wide Web at:
<http://senior.billings.k12.mt.us/mcce/>**

Media History

(Continued from Page 1)

Other collections include the SIGGRAPH Electronic Theater, a collection of computer-generated animations, Net Café, a program on the culture of the Internet, and the World at War, films created by the sites users built from content found on the site. The site really has to be visited to see the scope of what is available.

The Audio Archives

The audio archive on the site, like its video counterpart, features a variety of content. Prominent is the Live Audio Archive which collects live recordings of musicians who freely contribute their material to the collection. “Eclectic” is the word to describe what is found in this area which contains, as of this writing, nearly 8,000 recordings.

Other sections include NetLabels, collections of independent audio releases covering an extensive amount of electronic music, Democracy Now, an independent news program, Open Source Audio, user contributed files that defy simple explanation, and the Other Minds Archive, an online broadcast featuring documentaries, interviews, music, and poetry.

The Text Archives

Finally, the Text Archives, holds tens of thousands of individual documents. The 30-year old Project Gutenberg is here with nearly 10,000 public domain books available covering everything from “The Art of War” by Tzu Sun through the entire works of Shakespeare. The Million Book Project has over 10,000 holdings in a variety of languages, with many works of non-fiction included. There is also a Children’s Library, an ARPANET collection, and an Open Source Collection featuring works by users of the site.

Like the video and audio collections, all content is free to use.

The Technical Side of Using the Video Collections

I have downloaded a fair number of the films and have found the site extremely easy to use. It goes without saying that a high-speed Internet connection is required because of the file sizes involved. Some of the films are available for downloading in several formats such as MPEG1, MPEG2, MPEG4, and DivX. Some are also in what they call an “editable MPEG4” format which is a high quality file ready to import into a video editing application. Many of these films can be “streamed,” that is, watched online without waiting for the entire file to download first. Streaming files are in QuickTime or RealMedia formats.



File size is a function of the length of the film and its image quality. A 1945 film called “It’s Everybody’s War” has a running time of 15 minutes and is available in 5 formats, each with it’s unique file size:

MPEG2	(367.0 MB)
DivX	(53.4 MB)
MPEG4	(39.5 MB)
MPEG1	(160.6 MB)

(Continued on Page 4)

Media History

(Continued from Page 3)

The DivX version took about 6 minutes to download on my home connection, where I use a cable modem. Your mileage will vary. The video size is 320 x 240 and looks good running full screen on a 19 inch monitor. Sound quality is very good. As a bonus, the film is narrated by Henry Fonda.

Each video format requires its own “codec” to play properly. This is really a topic for a separate article but a codec is a piece of software that “decodes” the video file so that it will play using your existing video player such as Windows Media Player or the QuickTime player. By default you will probably find that your player will not play all video formats so

downloading the appropriate codec will be required. Your player might try to do this for you, otherwise you will be on your own. The FAQ on the Archives site explains some of this but for a more detailed explanation and links to sites with codecs I recommend visiting <http://www.dvdrhelp.com/> and clicking on their “Play” or “Tools” links.

User Feedback

One of the more helpful features of the site is that users can provide feedback about every item in the collection. This is sometimes helpful, especially before downloading a movie that may take an hour or so. The site also has a Forums area where visitors can discuss subjects grouped by the site’s

(Continued on Page 5)

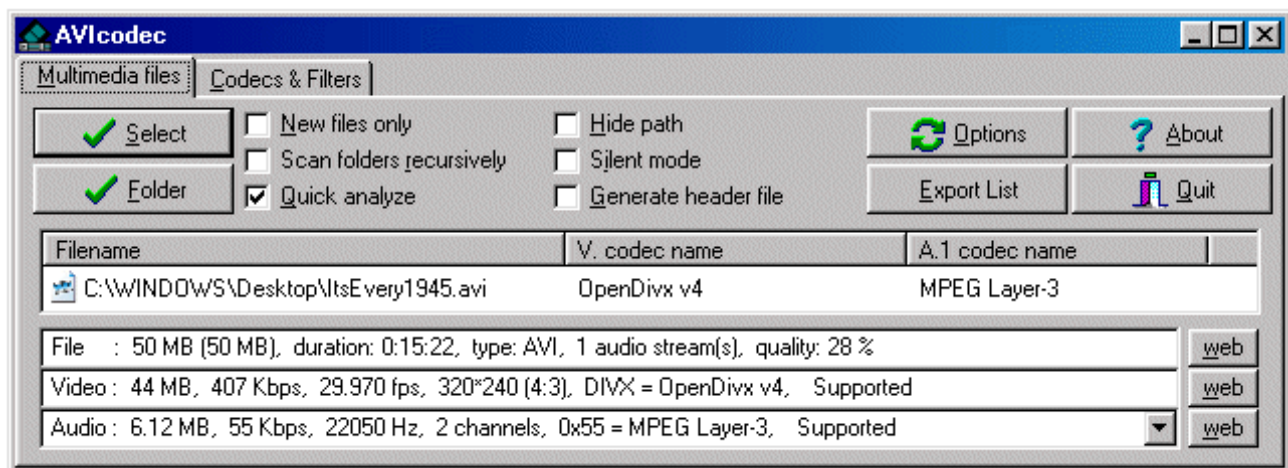
Determining a Video File’s Format

You’ve gone crazy with your downloading of video files and have no idea what format some of them are in. You’d go get the correct codec if you only knew which one you need. The file extension doesn’t help much since “.avi” can mean it’s a Windows video file or a DivX file.

Not to fear, AVIcodec is here. This program will open any video file and give you the technical information about it. The program is free and available at <http://avicodec.duby.info/> or from <http://www.sourceforge.net>

Once installed you just drag a video file into it and the analyzer shows the length of the film, its video format, screen size, and frame rate as well as data about its audio stream. Another handy feature is that it can also show you what video codecs are currently installed on your system, their names, and where they are located.

AVIcodec is available for Windows-based computers and was tested on a computer running Windows 98.



Media History

(Continued from Page 4)

content areas as well as help each other out with some of the technical issues in using the site.

Uses in the Classroom

To bring this around to educational uses, many curriculum areas can benefit from the use of the content on this site. Social studies classes that are integrating technology into the curriculum have a treasure trove of content here. For example, students could produce multimedia productions on various aspects of World War II using the videos found on the site. Students studying music have access to a broad collection of styles including many international selections. English students have access to thousands of books without a need to visit the library. The uses are endless and will grow as the site itself grows.

Deaconess Billings Clinic Research Division Science Expo Deadline Approaches

The 16th-annual Science Expo will be held in Billings on March 19 and 20 at Montana State University-Billings. It is open to all students grades 1-12.

Awards are presented in a number of areas including Future Scientist, Craftsmanship, and Industry Awards as well as placement awards within the Expo. Prizes include cash, scholarships, and merchandise.

Application deadlines are:

Grades 1-8 - February 20, 2004
Grades 9-12 - January 30, 2004

For more information:

<http://www.billingsclinic.com/Research/ScienceExpo.htm>

or contact:

Gayle Whittenberg at gwhittenberg@billingsclinic.org

Head Back into Web History

Okay, so the web isn't so old that it really has much of a history, being about 10 years old, but a history it has and it is being preserved by the Wayback Machine (<http://www.archive.org/web/web.php>) at the Internet Archive (<http://www.archive.org/>).

The computer system that drives this unique collection has, since 1996, gathered up over 30 billion web sites and placed them into its archive for



all of posterity. To head back in time, just type in a web address and you will be shown a table of dates on which the site was archived. Click on a date and you'll see a copy of that site from that date. Useful? Perhaps. Cool? Of course.

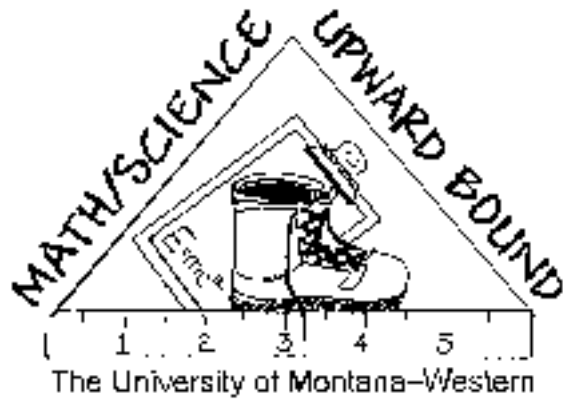
I was able to go back and look at old versions of my personal web site that were stored on a server that no longer exists. I also went back and looked at Yahoo and followed its evolution from a simple directory of links to a full-fledged Web portal.

The site also has some sites in the archive grouped into special collections. These include Web Pioneers, sites such as Yahoo, Amazon, Web Crawler, and NASA. Other collections include the Elections of 2000 and 2002, September 11, and the United Kingdom Central Government Archive.

The definition of "history," at least in web-speak, has a much shortened timeline.

Math/Science Upward Bound:

Students Wanted!



The ONLY Math/Science Upward Bound Program in Montana is looking for 40 bright young minds for a free six-week program of hands-on field study and academic exposure. Selected applicants will live on the campus of the UM—Western this summer, learn and work alongside math and science professionals, receive a stipend, and have all lodging and meals free with this federally funded TRiO program. The students also hike, camp, visit other cities and campuses for cultural exploration and have FUN in a rigorous and supportive environment.

To qualify: Students must meet eligibility guidelines based upon income and/or parents' education level.

To apply: Students must be a graduating 9th, 10th or 11th graders and live in one of 115 Montana communities we serve.

For applications: Call 1(866) 799-9140 and ask for MSUB.

Or visit our website <http://www.umwestern.edu/msub/> in January of 2004.

Don't let your students miss this chance for a true adventure in life and learning.

Montana Council for Computers and Technology in Education Membership Form

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ E-mail _____

New Member _____ Renewal _____

Area of Interest: College _____ High School _____ K-8 _____

Please be an active member by indicating your area(s) of interest:

_____ willing to be an officer _____ willing to submit articles for the newsletter

_____ willing to be on the Board of Directors _____ willing to work on MCCE committees

_____ willing to be on a committee for a convention

Dues: _____ \$12.00 per year _____ \$30.00 for 3 years

Mail the completed membership form and dues to:

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