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CATV as a Medium for Information Access

INFORMATION

While defining terms with which everyone is familiar may be boring, I will define *information* because I feel that some librarians do not believe in information, but only in the containers in which information comes; sometimes these are books, sometimes something else. Bear this in mind: I believe that librarians should deal with information, not containers. Information is a series of facts—a datum, a picture, something quite static. Nothing happens to information until it is used, communicated, or transmitted. As this communication process takes place, as this picture or this fact is read, heard, or seen, something happens to the person receiving it. If he can relate the information to something he already knows, learning takes place. To complicate the picture, he may react emotionally, as well as intellectually, to the information. If an archconservative person finds out that one of his most deeply held beliefs has been thoroughly debunked, he will probably be angry. If you see a picture of a dead person, or a small baby in its mother's arms, or you hear a beautiful song, you will also react emotionally. Songs and paintings are information, because they convey a message when viewed, sent, or heard.

Information, then, is something static that, when received by someone, evokes an intellectual or emotional response and, when related to previous knowledge, may result in learning.

Cable Communications

Cable television, per se, is not an information medium; it is simply a highway down which information can be sent. So we need to think of video and data as information, and cable as a transmission medium. Yet cable is as exciting as video, perhaps more so.

Cable has some unique characteristics, including an abundance of channels, being essentially a local medium, and being a two-way, participatory medium.

The number of channels available makes communication with small audiences possible for the first time. The originator or the receiver may be a club meeting, a senior citizens' group, or people wishing to learn china painting, macrame or Chinese. Through CATV these people are together electronically, over distance.

It is a *local* medium; hopefully, the community has some amount of control over some channels and can use them for expressing community concerns. "Community" in this sense means not only geographic, but also "interest community" as described above. If the churches want to use a channel they can, and so can other local groups with a mission or a message.

Cable is interactive and participatory—participatory in the sense that these same groups can and will create their own material to send over a channel; they can elicit feedback at first by letter and telephone, later by the cable itself. When a computer is connected, individuals and groups can interact not only with each other but with the computer for all the uses mentioned above.

Thus cable is a very different medium, and one of the most exciting new ways of bringing people together and making them more aware of much information to which they have no access at present.

Sources and Use

It is clear that cable can carry information of great variety, and it can elicit response and learning from a great many people and groups. The next questions are: Information for what purpose, and information in what form?

People obtain information from their own memory; from resources around the house, such as books, magazines, television, radio; from friends and neighbors; and from colleagues and professional associations. And, some few, from libraries.

The purposes for which people obtain information are:

1. survival or daily coping with problems,
2. self-fulfillment or recreation,
3. informal learning with no crediting in mind,
4. formal credit-oriented learning, and

5. keeping up with or changing jobs (specialists, professionals, etc.).

These are the same reasons why people create information.

LIBRARIES

And the Nonuser

What might be the role of libraries vis-à-vis cable television? What can they do with it that they never could before?

If librarians believe that they should reach most or all of their clientele, then cable presents a unique opportunity to do so. Librarians have not, despite their most valient efforts, reached more than one-third of their potential users, mostly because they think "library=books," and many potential users do not need books. Efforts to branch out into other areas, such as films and audio cassettes, have been successful in some places but are usually limited by lack of space to show visual materials, lack of equipment to loan, and lack of knowledge on the public's part that libraries have these things. Thus, with an investment of much money, libraries have reached relatively few people.

Cable permits libraries to reach many people who would never think of going to the library, and—more importantly—who are just not print oriented. These people obtain most information from visual media and are quite satisfied with this. Librarians can reach these people provided that—and I want to emphasize this—they accept cable as a way to reach people to bring them information and *not only* to lure them into the library.

To clarify this statement, the library's motive in cablecasting should be to disseminate information to people—just that. Commercial messages should not say: "This was brought to you through the courtesy of your library, which asks you to come and get a good book," but instead: "This is another way for you to obtain services from your library, which believes that you should get information any way you want to." Librarians must believe, in using cable, that information in any form is good, even electronic information, and that the people have a right to that kind of information just as much as to books and journals. Once we can accept this, we will have taken a giant step toward providing information in its truest sense, and it will help us to define what kinds of services lend themselves to cable.

On the Cable

Let us now examine some services which will provide access to information, and which might legitimately be provided by the library. We can categorize these services by the kind of information need which they help to fulfill.

SURVIVAL OR DAILY COPING INFORMATION

This is the day-to-day information need of everyone: how to have an abandoned car towed away, how to find the best insurance for an automobile, how to discover whether there is a tenants' association to aid a battle with the landlord, how to make out a will, how to fill out a tax return—all these types of needs are presently being met inadequately because existing organizations are splintered, the information is rarely pooled and it is difficult to get it to the people who need it. It is the kind of information the library has not traditionally been concerned with. Recently information and referral centers have emerged, both inside and outside the library, along with crisis intervention and drop-in centers. The *Peoples' Yellow Pages* is another attempt to reach people with this information. This is where the library can play a major role as a catalyst and switching center. While I am not suggesting that libraries get into the social service business themselves, I am strongly advocating that they help other agencies do a better job by bringing information about them to the people.

And what better way is there than through television to reach people who will not come to the library, who may not have a telephone, and who do not know where to turn? They watch television most of the time to get information and entertainment. Some doubt that they will watch a directory service, but I believe they will if they discover that problems they have may be solved this way. These are usually immediate, urgent needs, and people try to find solutions. Medical, legal, consumer, and other citizen information is vital; we can help to collect it, keep it updated, index it properly and make it available. Several libraries are maintaining a card file and, of these, a number are planning to put it on cable when they have an operational system. If libraries do nothing else, I feel that this is one of the best uses to which they can put cable.

SELF-FULFILLMENT AND RECREATION

While there has recently been a decline in recreational reading in the library, it is still one of its functions, and perhaps, at least for public libraries, one of its most traditional ones. Libraries have provided works of fiction, books on art, music, gardening, needlepoint, etc.; they have offered assistance to readers in finding the best mystery and the best western; and they have held poetry readings, film showings and concerts.

What has not been done is the bringing of those books and events to the nonusers. Now libraries can capture these events and materials with video and transmit them by cable. Many of us can remember missing something because we were too tired, had to go somewhere else, or had a last-minute crisis which kept us from going. How many times did we think, as we attended an event, how nice it would have been if some people who would enjoy it could have come, or could have known about it. Now there is a way—attend by video. The

library can tape programs, and they can be played back on the cable system, not once but several times to insure that those who missed it the first time may have another chance.

This becomes increasingly important as the size of our respective communities increases; the larger the city, the harder it is to learn what is going on, and the more difficult it is to get around, especially at night when many people are afraid to go out.

Moreover, we can bring to people via video-cable not only ballet, art shows, musical groups, ping pong tournaments and Elks Club picnics, but also interviews and discussions. These interviews could be with people who know a great deal of local history, for example. Some libraries have had oral history projects for some time; adding the visual element can enhance local history stories, can show a person in his home with family heirlooms, photographs of past events, and other memorabilia. Libraries can thus create visual history, surely one of their functions.

Videotaping groups can result in some very moving things; Larry Molumby from the Public Library of the District of Columbia taped a group of women discussing the demise of a local hospital. He did this quite routinely, not knowing what to expect. What emerged was one of the most moving tapes I have ever watched; the women, mostly Black and undereducated, described with great eloquence their feelings toward the sisters of that hospital, and what the sisters had meant to the women.

Marcelee Galapp of the Boulder Public Library (Colorado) tapes city council and other public meetings, and shows them in her library on a cassette unit. People are coming to watch in considerable numbers with almost no promotion on the part of the library.

Also in the recreation/self-fulfillment category, there is the exciting new project mounted by the Public Television Library in Bloomington, Indiana, entitled "Have You Watched a Book Today?" A one-year experimental project was launched, making available to five public libraries the 150 best public broadcasting programs, plus local programs from the educational television stations in towns where the libraries are located. I visited the Jackson Municipal Library (Mississippi) one week after the program was launched and found people literally standing in line to watch the two monitors. About 180 people had watched during the first week. A careful evaluation at the end of the year will help to decide if this is a good way to make the excellent public broadcasting system programs and local educational television programming more widely available.

Librarians will, of course, tape anything going on in the library, such as story hours, puppet shows, forums, film showings and book talks. When an event is taped, it takes little time and trouble, and it can be replayed for those who could not attend.

Finally, and still on the subject of self-fulfillment and entertainment, let us not forget a rich source of material for cablecasting: the product of those people who have discovered video as a new art form, or as a means of self-expression. Video groups have sprung up everywhere; while some of their material is perhaps of interest only to the people who made it, a great deal of it is of wider interest. Libraries need to establish relationships with those groups and find out what is available. They are anxious to have their work stored and disseminated; librarians can help them.

INFORMAL LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

The public library espoused the name "people's university" in the 1930s. More recently, there has been a great increase of this kind of use as people are stimulated by television and other information sources to want to know more about many things—not to work toward any kind of formal credit, but just to learn more about something that interests them. Most people have more leisure than they used to, and they develop more hobbies and interests. These interests may include such varied topics as china painting, environmental tests of air and water, or mushroom hunting.

The library has met some of these needs with materials, and certainly with many programming efforts. I saw people learning to embroider in a branch of the Kern County Library (Bakersfield, California), and in that same library I saw a sixth-grade video club making its own tapes, which were later cablecast. Subjects of the tapes ranged from Dracula to an interview about current events, including Watergate and high prices. They were remarkable tapes, technically well done and interesting in content.

The Denver Public Library plans to videotape a Mexican festival the library mounted in September 1973, including demonstrations of pottery, needlecraft, poetry readings, art shows, musical offerings, folk dancing, and Mexican history. Although Denver does not have cable as yet, these tapes can be shown in the library now; a program bank is being formed for future cablecasting. Denver's non-Spanish-speaking citizens may understand a little more about the joys and sorrows of their Spanish-American neighbors.

The recent introduction into several libraries of a program of informal learning for adults is very exciting. Carefully planned to begin with a thorough retraining of librarians to orient them toward learning styles of adults, and to provide counseling and communications skills, the program will result in a people-oriented library activity designed to treat each information request as a potential learning experience, which it is if librarians accept the definitions of "information" and "learning" as outlined above. Cable can play an extremely important part in this type of learning, in which the world is conceived of as the "campus," the learning environment. Foreign lands, museums, factories, anything too remote for the learner to reach can be brought *to* him. The Denver

Public Library's fancifully titled program of "Catalytic Synchronisms" is a beginning in this type of learning experience. How would it be if the learner was sent to "see" with a portable videotape recorder and camera, to make a tape as he was learning, to describe his learning process, so that this experience could be available to the next person interested in learning something about the subject? Here the learner would be sharing his learning *process*—something extremely important for someone else to watch who may be hesitant about his ability to learn a particular subject. This might become one of the more important applications of video to this program. Of course, the various products can be shown over cable in a program dedicated to informal learning, to stimulate others.

Also in this category is the video reference service which is operational in Natrona County Public Library (Casper, Wyoming) and Mobile Public Library (Alabama), and planned by others. Here is the philosophy of "information of all kinds and in all forms from the library" at its best. When something cannot be described over the telephone and the client cannot come in, it is shown over cable because that is the only way to bring client and information together. The concept is so simple and so inexpensive that any library can try it, provided the staff is convinced that this is "good" information.

FORMAL LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Educational and instructional television are, of course, the pioneers in this field. Courses have been given over educational television for some time, and over commercial stations to a lesser extent. Usually there was only one channel available. The same thing can be done via cable by educational institutions using many channels. At Oregon State University (Corvallis), two cable channels are being programmed exclusively by the university and 8,500 students are watching courses by cable. The educational achievement is the same, but students like it much better, since they can watch at home when it is convenient. One channel is scheduled with televised instruction all day long, the other carries special cablecasts of sports events and other happenings on the campus, and also allows on-demand scheduling for classes missed by students on the other channel. And the cable operator is happy; he has picked up hundreds of customers from the student body. People in town are happy; they can watch classes free and learn whatever is offered. At Washington State University (Pullman), a similar activity is operated by the library's audiovisual department; three cameras are rigged to a simple switcher built into the professor's desk so that he can do his own camera work while delivering his lecture—something he vastly prefers to dealing with technicians, it is said.

Libraries can act as CLEP (College Level Equivalency Program) centers, and several are doing this. When they provide information about courses of study, they could also provide video courses, either in the library or over cable. I am not advocating that libraries get into the education business in a formal

way, but I do think that they can collect videotapes or cassettes containing appropriate lectures from colleges, and disseminate them. Care must be taken here to work closely with the colleges, so that there is no duplication and libraries do not tread on their territory. But many gaps will appear in their offerings; libraries which are CLEP centers will discover these and can make sure that they are filled from commercial or educational sources elsewhere, always with the advice of educators, of course.

Moreover, libraries can, just as in the informal learning situation, encourage the production of tapes by the students themselves, which then become part of the instructional package for a particular topic. School media centers, as well as academic libraries, are in an ideal position to become the central repository and dissemination agent for tapes produced for courses, which can then be made available to others, as well as for video courses from their parent institutions. As yet, I have not seen many libraries which do that.

SPECIALIST OR CAREER EDUCATION TO IMPROVE WORK PERFORMANCE OR PURSUE RESEARCH

Many people today are pursuing their second or third career, others are trying to keep up with new developments in their fields, and still others are pursuing research of various kinds. Much of the above applies to these people, too. Material in video form, covering highly specialized areas, has been found to enhance the learning of new concepts and the understanding of difficult ones, or concepts not easily learned by reading or listening. Examples might be drawn from such diverse fields as technician training, where repairs are taught and it is necessary to see close-ups of parts to be repaired and to learn how to handle delicate tools, or medical training where a patient may be viewed by video, or an operation can be watched by many, rather than the few who can crowd around the operating table.

For the visual arts, such as filmmaking, painting, sculpture, as well as for ballet, speech therapy, engineering, drawing and blueprint reading, video can vastly enhance learning. The library will want to collect materials for career education and for specialist uses; librarians should know what is available, and where it may be obtained. Visual materials suitable for career and specialist education are available from a number of commercial sources as well as from many colleges and universities. I learned last summer that the California State College system, for example, has put together a software catalog, divided geographically, and thus has a ready-made reservoir for cablecasting as well as for in-house use.

The specialist and the researcher are the ones who will need the data communications capability which cable provides. Here the least has been done, and yet the promise is great. Applications such as PLATO IV provide an ideal means to interconnect users directly to a highly responsive and multifaceted computer-based information service. I am aware of only one project presently underway,

located in upper New York, where a group of public library systems are studying the possibility of interconnecting cable systems for information transfer, including data and facsimile of hard copies. Digitized microfiche is another promising development; there is a device at the Battelle Memorial Institute (Columbus, Ohio) which consists of a cathode ray tube terminal and a carousel-like storage medium containing microfiche, which could be retrieved automatically and shown on a television screen. The only problem is that the device, made by Digital Information Systems in Minneapolis, costs \$20,000! Computer-stored full text, until now too expensive to convert and store, is becoming available now; e.g., Aspen Systems has converted a large body of law into machine-readable form, which is then searched using a natural language.

Printed material is often typeset from magnetic tapes which can be stored and retrieved using very high volume storage devices. These memories are becoming less expensive every year, and we are moving rapidly toward the day when machine-stored information is economically feasible for ownership by library networks and the larger libraries themselves. Access languages are becoming more responsive to users, and protocols for communication between network nodes are being developed. Thus we have the building blocks we need: machine-stored information at a reasonable price, ways to access this information, and methods for interconnecting ourselves. No one has put it all together yet, but the day surely is not far off when this will happen.

Cable on a given campus or in a given city can provide multiple access points for such information retrieval systems, and can interconnect libraries of different types within a given franchise area, as well as data processing service bureaus or institutional computer centers. Moreover, it can tie business and industrial firms into the library's network where they may access certain parts of its machine-based information store directly. Imagine the day when each major city will have something like the information utility Sackman and Boehm describe,¹ in which will reside all types of public information, from books and journals to consumer information and census data, from self-instructional packages for learning to directory services such as "who knows what," as well as the library catalog. Each user who can afford this will pay a few dollars each month for an alphanumeric terminal tied to his television set, which will function as a CRT and display information on command. None of this is blue sky: the technology exists today (a terminal of the type needed is to be had for \$1,195), as do the data bases and the programs to make them work, but no one (to my knowledge) has put it all together.

Another possibility for CATV is two-way video. Teleconferencing is possible now: a conference call is placed and several people can talk to one another without being at the same place. Add the visual element and there is a situation in which one may stay at home to attend a conference, instead of spending a great deal of time and money to attend it. Personnel can be trained in new

skills; and specialists can be in touch with one another to learn what each is working on—surely a form of information exchange which should be facilitated by librarians, and one they have not easily been able to do before.

Problems

I have painted a rosy picture of our future with cable; let me now describe some problems which stand in the way of achieving all I have discussed.

TO PROGRAM OR NOT TO PROGRAM?

While some librarians do not think they should get into programming in a formal way, this does not seem to be a question for many. In fact, most of them are perhaps too much into programming. What is meant by programming, and what is the alternative? Most librarians know that $\frac{1}{2}$ inch videotape portable equipment is easy to operate and quite mobile, requiring one or two people, a camera, a video rover or deck, and no other special equipment. In creating material for the library's information bank, there are three alternatives:

1. The library can send people out with portable equipment to tape a cultural event, a festival, etc. It requires being there to tape it, and it may require some editing afterwards to tighten it up before presenting it to an audience consisting of either individuals or small groups in the library, or over cable. This is all; relatively little time is spent, and even less preparation.
2. Programming is a scripted, staged production, with extra cameras, lights, several people involved in preparation, production and editing, and quite a bit of additional equipment beyond that described, such as switching gear, a mixing console, etc. Here there is greater cost for equipment (a portable outfit can be purchased for less than \$2,000, while a minimal studio costs at least \$10,000). While someone else's studio (such as the cable operator's or the school's) may be used, people from the initiator's staff will still be involved in preparation, scripting, getting the material ready, working with participants, rehearsals, etc. The cost of this is quite high.
3. The third alternative is, of course, buying or borrowing software from sources outside the library, or having other people make program material for the library such as the Port Washington Public Library (New York) has done.

How should libraries choose between, or combine, these methods? It depends, of course, on their budgets and, more importantly, on what they want to do with video-cable and what they see its role to be.

A librarian can build a bank of tapes for cablecasting or use in her or his library just by taping, or causing others to tape, events in the community and in

the library. Whatever is going on deemed of interest to people other than those who came is taped, ranging from library story hours, panels, forums and cultural events, to speakers before the Rotary Club, mental health workers describing their services, talks by public officials, ballet, community meetings of all types, etc. If your library is a video access center and you train community people in the use of the equipment and check it out to them, they then become producers of materials for the library, which are stored and checked out for cablecasting, as well as transferred to cassette for permanent storage and re-play within the building.

If community people participate in the creation of materials, librarians will find that they get tapes centered around issues, man-in-the-street tapes, interviews, etc., something like holding a mirror up to the community. There will also be tapes from people who see video as a new art form, and some beautiful things will be produced. These tapes should be stored, listed and made available just like any other library material. This is a relatively inexpensive way to obtain material and it is the librarian's role to identify events worth taping and see that someone does so.

The other extreme for libraries is the idea that everything created by the library must be of professional, high quality. There is insistence on personnel trained in television production techniques, scripting and careful planning. And the equipment is often quite sophisticated. The fear is that people will not watch a simple tape, that it has to be "produced" and in color in order to compete with commercial television. Both of these positions are justified under certain conditions. But it also appears that if the information provided by the programs is such that it cannot be obtained any other way, and is of the kind needed by the group for whom it is prepared, then a slick production is not necessary. The people who are concerned with the subject will watch. And we are *not* interested in a mass audience anyway, believing as we do that cable is a highly personal, small audience, local medium.

If, on the other hand, the material is of the kind that is trying to sell something, such as in the Tulsa City-County Library System and the Boulder Public Library, where the libraries have been awarded the governmental channel, are building and equipping a studio, and will be selling municipal information to the people, then the presentation has to be fairly interesting and slick to attract viewers who will definitely need to be won over. We will have to create a different mind set among the people, and accustom them to watching something about the sewer or welfare department rather than "All in the Family"—we are competing here, for presumably the presentation will not have a clearly defined target group but may be geared more to the entire city population. Again, it will depend on the message and how it is presented.

In between is what may be called semiproductions, such as taping a ballet performance. This requires a bit more planning and set-up and a little more equipment than an interview.

Finally, there is another problem we need to come to grips with. What about all those tapes made by many groups everywhere? Who will store them, catalog them, list them centrally, and loan them? The answer should be obvious: just as we do this with books and journals, so we should do this with tapes. There is presently a great need to know what is available in the way of software, who has it, and under what conditions it can be loaned; we need to establish a method to do this.

THE TECHNOLOGY—WHAT IS FEASIBLE NOW?

While most librarians are intrigued by video-cable, there is little information available on what the technology really allows right now. Starting at the most basic level, the tape itself, there are:

1. *Time Base Correctors*: There are sometimes problems in cablecasting $\frac{1}{2}$ inch videotapes because of their sometimes poor quality. Unfortunately, flaws do not become evident until tapes are cablecast; they may be perfectly all right when played back on the videotape recorder. There is now a marvelous group of devices called signal rebuilders, the best of which is the Time Base Corrector. It actually rebuilds the picture, makes it stronger, sharper, and eliminates wavy lines and roll-up pictures. Libraries should insist that their cable operator buy one of these, not just for themselves but for anyone else making $\frac{1}{2}$ inch tapes.
2. *Lack of Standardization*: We all know about the incompatibility of different sizes of videotapes. While $\frac{1}{2}$ inch equipment is now, thanks to the Japanese, on the EIAJ (Electronics Industry Association—Japan) standard, this is not true for other tapes, and the equipment to play them on is often not compatible. And $\frac{1}{2}$, 1, and 2 inch tapes do not talk to each other, nor do $\frac{3}{4}$ inch cassettes, which are being marketed aggressively and are therefore becoming the standard cassette format. I am concerned about this; librarians must at the very least buy $\frac{1}{2}$ inch equipment and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch play-back units if they want their in-house video service to be self-service. Open-reel threading is just not very practical for patron use.
3. *Two-way Capability*: Many librarians dream of the day when information and the full text of documents can be sent over the wire, but that day is not very close, I am afraid. While the FCC requires two-way capabilities in the 100 major markets now, this is only for new systems, and it is only capability. That means the cable has to have the ability to transmit two-way, but not the hardware to do it with. Also, that two-way is merely a subscriber response system, in which the viewer simply indicates "yes" or "no," and no other communication is possible. Telephone does better than that now, and that is what some libraries are using, for example, Mobile and Natrona County Public Libraries where telephone communication is

- maintained with the patron while his question is answered. Installing terminals for more than this is too expensive at the moment and not yet feasible for libraries.
4. *Frame Grabber*: The ability to transmit an individual frame of information, e.g., the page of a book, and hold it for an individual until he reads it requires a frame grabber, another device not yet available at a price people can afford. And microfiche still cannot easily and cheaply be transmitted directly from a computer-indexed store. Facsimile is possible, but fraught with all the old problems: unit cost per page is too high, resolution poor, and there is no machine which will copy from bound volumes.
 5. *Digital Transmission*: While cable books are full of promises, I do not know of anyone, except perhaps Donald Bitzer, who has seriously considered tying a machine-readable data base into a cable system. There are plans but none are yet operational. While the promise is greater than the performance at the moment, let us not be discouraged; all these things are possible—if not now, a little later—and we have to be alert and experiment with them when they become possible.

WHO PAYS?

The problem of financing cable activities in libraries is a severe one. There is a variety of approaches to finding money: in some cases libraries have looked seriously at what they were doing, have studied their role vis-à-vis the community and have decided that money would be put into video equipment and staff for video-cable activities because it seemed a promising way to reach nonusers. They have reordered their priorities to make the use of cable technology a high-order item. Others have been successful in receiving revenue-sharing funds—money from city and county agencies—to provide a service to these agencies by becoming the cablecasting center for them; and a few have been able to obtain grants. It appears that commitment on the part of the library to video-cable will result in some money being set aside. As in everything else, we have to be careful not to go in all directions at once but to carefully delineate what is wanted, and then sell our package to the appropriate funding agencies.

THE COPYRIGHT PROBLEM

The copyright problem deserves to be mentioned once again. There are no clear guidelines concerning taping off the air, copying tapes, or using printed materials for cablecasting. Some people have been very careful about writing for permission, only to find that publishers and software producers are as confused as they are. Others are merrily taping anything in sight until the issue is clarified. It appears that the movement is toward purchasing with license to copy. Several school districts have concluded successful agreements with software producers

where they paid a one-time fee and were then free to copy or cablecast. That is what might be expected and should be prepared for. Taping off the air may fall under the rule schools have, where a one-time playback within a week after air time is permissible. Meanwhile, the copyright bill is bogged down in Congress, with little hope that anything will be clarified, or that it will pass.

I believe libraries have a legitimate role to play in the use of cable. Libraries have as their main function that of information storage and retrieval; presumably they know how to acquire, organize and disseminate information better than others; and information in video form is as legitimate for them as printed information. Libraries serve individuals and small groups, rather than mass audiences; so does cable if it is used correctly. Libraries have an obligation to preserve the record of man's knowledge, thus they must deal with the visual record as well as other kinds. And finally, libraries have a unique role in their various communities; they are relatively neutral, and can thus act as a clearing-house, a switching center, a catalyst for visual information as well as that which they have always handled. Cable can be a means toward helping citizens achieve a sense of participation in national and local affairs; it can be a medium for increased information access, self-fulfillment, and enrichment. It is a library's obligation to do what is necessary to help bring about better access to this medium, as well as to make sure that its clients are served, via cable, with all types of information.

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REFERENCE

1. Sackman, Harold, and Boehm, Barry W. *Planning Community Information Utilities*. Montvale, N.J., AFIPS Press, 1972.