

How Digitize Archives Helps Safeguard Audiovisual History

By Lorin Alvarez, Digitize Archives, ARS Video Inc.

Since 1987, **ARS Video Inc.** has helped organizations preserve their collections by converting fragile analog media into durable digital formats. Its specialized division, **Digitize Archives**, focuses exclusively on archival audiovisual digitization—serving libraries, universities, museums, historical societies, and government institutions across the United States.

Over nearly four decades, ARS Video has earned a reputation as a trusted leader in video, film, audio, photo, negative, slides and documents digitization. Clients include **TIME Productions, NASA, the U.S. Air Force, the National Park Service, Summit Metro Parks**, and numerous universities and heritage organizations. The company's long-standing relationships and repeat partnerships reflect its commitment to quality, precision, and preservation integrity.

Helping Institutions Protect Fragile Media

Audiovisual materials are among the most at-risk elements of archival collections. **VHS tapes** and other magnetic media are now approaching 40 years old and are highly susceptible to deterioration. Likewise, **film reels**—including 8mm, 16mm, and 35mm—can show signs of damage such as mold, scratches, or “vinegar syndrome,” a chemical breakdown that compromises image quality.

Digitize Archives works closely with clients to assess their collections and identify priorities. Many institutions start with a **small pilot project**, digitizing their most vulnerable items first, and then expand as funding becomes available. The company provides **detailed cost estimates** that assist

with both **grant applications** and internal budgeting.

As members of the **Society of American Archivists (SAA)** and the Ohio Local History Alliance (OLHA), the team stays informed about preservation best practices and grant opportunities.

They regularly share relevant funding resources through their website at digitizearchives.com/grant-resources.

Precision, Care, and Archival Standards

Digitize Archives employs a team of experienced technicians who handle every material with meticulous care. Using specialized scanning and conversion systems, they ensure that each project meets archival standards and long-term digital preservation requirements.

Digitization specifications include:

- **Video and Camcorder Tapes:** Captured as H.264, 30–60FPS, 1080p MOV or MP4 files
- **Analog Audio:** Digitized as WAV (48–96kHz, 24-bit) with MP3 access copies
- **16mm and 35mm Film:** Uncompressed 2K AVI or MOV, plus color-corrected 1080p MP4 access files
- **8mm Film:** 1080p over scanned AVI and MP4 access versions
- **Slides and Negatives:** Scanned as 2400–6400 DPI TIF and/or JPG files



- **Photos:** Scanned as 1200–2400 DPI TIF and/or JPG

Beyond digitization, Digitize Archives also offers **recovery and restoration services**, including mold remediation, cleaning, splicing, and conditioning—crucial steps in preparing delicate materials for safe transfer.

Preserving Today for Tomorrow

Digitize Archives understands that each collection tells a unique story. Whether an organization's goal is **long-term preservation, public access, or exhibition use**, the company provides guidance at every step—from initial planning through final digital delivery.

By combining advanced technology, archival expertise, and personalized service, Digitize Archives helps ensure that irreplaceable audiovisual materials remain accessible for generations to come. As owner Gary Stennet puts it “By digitizing audiovisual collections, we are preserving cultural history and the voices of past generations.”

For more information, visit digitizearchives.com or contact info@digitizearchives.com.