

Frequently Asked Questions

How is Media Archive Systems able to archive at such a low cost?

The archiving is done at the client's site and if desired by the client's own people. There is no inventory required, no boxing for shipping, no insurance costs. The systems use the economy of scale, the more to be done the cheaper it becomes. The systems are rented or leased only for the time that they are needed and can be written directly off of taxes. They can be rented as the client's budget allows as seldom or as frequently as needed.

What is MPEG?

Motion Picture Experts Group, of corporations and organizations, devised a system to convert video and audio into computer file format called MPEG. It is a system where redundant and perceptually insignificant information are discarded in differing amounts depending upon the application. Very simply, MPEG captures a reference frame then only records the difference of the following frames from the reference. The final version can be virtually identical to the original.

Since it is a computer file, it can be copied as many times as desired and each copy is *exactly* identical. The files can be edited and manipulated as any video and additionally any computer file. There are different MPEG formats with different applications and are known as 1, 2 and 4 and a couple of others less common. Media Archive Systems, Inc. primarily uses MPEG 1 and 2.

Why is MPEG recommended as a storage solution?

MPEG was designed to be a comprehensive solution. The bit stream contains of the video, audio, time code and closed captioning information. It is a standard non-proprietary system that is not connected to any particular company. No proprietary programs and the extra cost is needed. It is an accepted worldwide standard and has been accepted by the ISO (International Standards Organization) and all other national and international technical organizations. Nevertheless, if the client prefers another format, Media Archive Systems will work with them to get the best results.

How do the files get stored?

The video / audio files can be stored as any data file storage system from hard drives to digital tape. Media Archive Systems generally suggest high-density optical storage such as DVD's to be the storage medium because they are very cost effective storage as well as being very portable. They are now ubiquitous and come standard with any modern computer. Media Archive Systems recommend data DVD's, not movie DVD's that will play on a movie DVD machine.

On average a one-hour tape transferred to an MPEG2 file will fit on one DVD storage disk while up to 10 hours of MPEG1 files can fit on a DVD.

Creating DVD movies takes extra steps, a special kind of MPEG and an indexing menu, which is an additional service under DVD authoring.

How can I play back the files?

There is a player that can view the files built into the Windows, Apple, Linux and Unix operating

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systems. The files can be played back for viewing on any modern computer or server or the MPEG file can be kept the same or converted to another format for transmission either over the air or closed circuit or Internet. The files can be played by any software or hardware MPEG decoder. A good but inexpensive MPEG decoder board can be plugged into the computer that will convert the MPEG stream back to digital SD-SDI (601) and can even be transferred back to a tape machine.

How is security maintained?

The process is done at the client's site and never leaves the client's possession. This is an important consideration because it can be done by the client's employees or selected freelance employees. The files can be Internet enabled but because the content is now a computer file, it can be password protected, watermarked or even encrypted.

How is logging and filing done?

There are a variety of logging programs on the market. MAS works with the client to determine which program suits their needs and then matches those needs with the right program. We have found that each client has different needs so we do not attach a generic program to our archiving services.

The logging files and information may be stored on the same disk as the MPEG files they reference. The database can be small and use a program such as Microsoft Excel or Asset or it can be large and use a system such as Oracle, which can handle a database of any size.