

**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE HUMANITIES**

SAMPLE APPLICATION NARRATIVE



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Preservation and Access Grants  
Institution: Michigan State University

## **Preserving *American Black Journal* Project Description and Significance**

Michigan State University's MATRIX: Center for Humane Arts, Letters and Social Sciences Online and MSU Libraries Special Collections, in partnership with Detroit Public Television and The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, propose a two-year project to preserve and make available to scholars, researchers and the general public the historic videotape and supporting production materials of DPTV's long-standing series *American Black Journal* (ABJ). As the longest running program on television dedicated to the African American experience, these currently inaccessible shows comprise a unique and important body of primary resources that will enhance humanities research across a wide range of humanities fields including history, media and culture studies, American Studies, African-American studies, urban studies and planning, and geography.

MSU and DPTV have partnered to save this comprehensive collection and make it available for research, teaching, and public access. Under the proposed project, MSU will accession and preserve all existing *American Black Journal* tapes (1437) and more than 20 boxes (approximately 40 cubic feet) of associated production materials from the 34 years of ABJ programming between 1968 and 2002. The project will reformat the two-thirds of the collection (980 tapes) that is at-risk and in obsolete tapes formats (two-inch Quad and three-quarter inch U-Matic and one-inch tapes). This includes all of the existing original broadcast shows from the first twenty-five years of the series, which have the most value to historical researchers. We will reformat tapes in the collection to Panasonic DVCPRO50 format. DVDs of all reformatted tapes will be created and made available for viewing at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit, the city where the shows originated, and at the Michigan State University Libraries in East Lansing, where the original tapes and the collection of print ephemera also will be archived and cataloged. Descriptive information about all these tapes will be available via the *ABJ Online* website to give scholars and the general public access to this valuable corpus. In addition, a subset of approximately 100 shows, identified by the project's humanities scholars for their scholarly and educational value, will be available as streaming video from the website. Additional access opportunities will be made possible by reformatting to DVCPRO50 files, which DPTV can use in future ABJ shows.

*American Black Journal*, originally titled *Colored People's Time*, went on the air in 1968 as a televised public forum for black citizens during a historic moment of interracial turmoil across the nation. The show has continued on the air since then, documenting Detroit and American issues from African-American perspectives. It is a unique national treasure as one of the most extensive audiovisual records of African-American history and culture in existence, recorded in the city with the third largest black population in the nation. The collection includes interviews, round-table discussions, field-produced features and artistic performances by African-Americans, many of whom are among the nation's most recognized figures. The collection that will be preserved and made accessible by this project includes in-studio interviews and on-location footage examining issues and events ranging from work in the automobile industry, to the Detroit and nationwide urban civil disturbances of 1967, to the development of strong African-American political leaders, to the explosion of Motown music and the emergence of rap, to the rise of mainstream business leaders, to the enduring importance of religion within African-American culture. While broadcasters' attention to African-American life has grown significantly since the late sixties, there is still a dearth of recorded content covering African-American topics, particularly media produced by African Americans. No other collection in this field exceeds the richness and complexity of the materials in the *American Black Journal*. Through preservation and access, this project will protect this unique resource and provide new materials for research, teaching and public outreach to increase knowledge and understanding of African-American culture, history, music, enterprise, politics, and life in Detroit and the nation.

# Preserving American Black Journal

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## Preserving American Black Journal Project Narrative

### Executive Summary

Michigan State University's MATRIX: Center for Humane Arts, Letters and Social Sciences Online and MSU Libraries Special Collections, in partnership with Detroit Public Television and The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, propose a two-year project to preserve and make available to scholars, researchers and the general public the historic videotape and supporting archival materials of DPTV's long-standing series *American Black Journal* (*ABJ*). As the longest running program on television dedicated to the African American experience, these currently inaccessible shows comprise a unique and important body of primary resources that will enhance humanities research across a wide range of fields including history, media and culture studies, American Studies, African-American studies, urban studies and planning, and geography.

MSU and DPTV have partnered to save this comprehensive collection and make it available for research, teaching, and public access. Under the proposed project, MSU will accession and preserve all existing *American Black Journal* tapes (1437) and more than 20 boxes (circa 40 cubic feet) of associated production materials from the 34 years of *ABJ* programming between 1968 and 2002. The project will reformat the two-thirds of the collection (980 tapes) that is at-risk and on obsolete formats (two-inch Quad, three-quarter inch U-Matic, and one-inch tapes). This includes all of the existing original broadcast shows from the first twenty-five years of the series, which have the most value to historical researchers. We will reformat tapes in the collection to Panasonic DVCPRO50 format. DVDs of all reformatted tapes will be created and available for viewing at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit, the city where the shows originated, and at the Michigan State University Libraries in East Lansing, where the original tapes and the collection of print ephemera also will be archived and cataloged. Collection-level information plus an inventory will be available through MSU Libraries catalog; and item-level descriptive information on all these tapes will be available via the *ABJ Online* website to give scholars and the general public access to this valuable corpus. In addition, a subset of approximately 100 shows, identified by the project's scholars for their scholarly and educational value, will be available as streaming video from the website. Additional access opportunities will be made possible by reformatting to DVCPRO50 files, which DPTV can use in future *ABJ* shows.

*American Black Journal*, originally titled *Colored People's Time*, went on the air in 1968 as a televised public forum for black citizens during a historic moment of interracial turmoil across the nation. The show has continued on the air since then, documenting Detroit and American issues from African-American perspectives. It is a unique national treasure as one of the most extensive audiovisual records of African-American history and culture in existence, recorded in the city with the third largest black population in the nation. The collection includes interviews, round-table discussions, field-produced features and artistic performances by African-Americans, many of whom are among the nation's most recognized figures. While many extant historical collections are limited to the contributions of African-Americans in specific areas such as civil rights or music, *ABJ* programming is has been broad-reaching and has explored a wide spectrum of black experiences. The collection includes in-studio interviews and on-location

footage examining issues and events ranging from work in the automobile industry, to the Detroit and nationwide urban civil disturbances of 1967, to the development of strong African-American political leaders, to the explosion of Motown music and the emergence of rap, to the rise of mainstream business leaders, to the enduring importance of religion within African-American culture. Leading figures in the worlds of sports, economics, academics, international relations, the law and religion have been in ABJ's focus over the nearly 40 years of programming. Due to the obsolete tape formats and limited staff time at the station, all these materials (except what has already been preserved through this partnership, as discussed in Section II) remain largely unarranged, uncataloged and completely inaccessible to researchers.

This proposal requests funding from NEH to accomplish the following preservation, archival, and access tasks:

- 1) **Accession** all original tapes and all boxes of supporting materials into MSU Libraries Special Collections. Catalog and organize chronologically by show title. Create an item-level inventory of paper materials, which will be mapped to Dublin Core metadata to integrate with the moving media metadata. A collection-level MARC record in the MSU Libraries online catalog will include the inventory as an attachment and links to any shows selected for streaming. Original tapes and print documentation will be stored in the climate-controlled vault of the MSU Libraries Special Collections.
- 2) **Reformat and Catalog** the contents of approximately 980 at-risk and currently inaccessible tapes, including all two-inch Quad, one-inch, and three-quarter inch U-Matic tapes. Tapes will be examined, cleaned, and reformatted to duplicate DVCPro50 videotape masters as part of an access-based preservation and long-term migration strategy. Because these at-risk tapes must be played in order to know what they really contain, all tapes will be reformatted during playback, and show contents catalogued in detail. Digital master files will be preserved in the MATRIX digital repository, with description that follows the Public Broadcasting Metadata Dictionary (PBCore) metadata scheme with some extensions for this project's specific needs. Master DVCPro50 copies will be housed at Detroit Public Television for use in future productions.
- 3) **Select**, through scholarly review of show logs and viewing copies, shows to be made available on the *ABJ Online* website. Shows chosen for online access will be fully searchable and accessible along with their metadata through the MATRIX digital repository. Inventory information from the paper materials in Special Collections will be entered in the repository and associated with the relevant streaming video files as well.
- 4) **Provide Access** to the collection via a) the MARC catalog record and item-level inventory in MSU Libraries' online catalog, and OCLC; b) a complete DVD library of reformatted shows available on-site at Charles H. Wright Museum and MSUL Special Collections; c) PBCore metadata for all reformatted tapes plus selected shows streaming from the project website (<http://www.matrix.msu.edu/~abj>); and d) print documentation of the entire collection available on-site in the MSUL Special Collections.
- 5) **Disseminate** information about the ABJ video and print archives newly available to humanities researchers via topical listservs and appropriate annual meetings.

## I. Humanities Significance

The mission of the *Colored People's Time* television show in 1968 was to explore the history and issues of the black community in an effort to encourage greater involvement from Detroit

citizens to resolve community problems and mobilize for positive community participation. As the original proposal for the television series argued in its call for public funding, “Detroit must assume its share of responsibility for meaningful public communication in this neglected area.”<sup>1</sup> Later, when the Internet evolved, the *American Black Journal* sought to increase the availability and accessibility of information relating to African-American experiences for a wide variety of audiences that currently are poorly served with online content.<sup>2</sup>

While broadcasters’ attention to African-American life has grown significantly since the late sixties, there is still a dearth of recorded content covering African-American topics, particularly media produced by African Americans. No other collection in this field exceeds the richness and complexity of the materials in the *American Black Journal*. Through preservation and access, this project will protect this unique resource and provide new materials for research, teaching and public outreach to increase knowledge and understanding of African-American culture, history, music, enterprise, politics, and life in Detroit and the nation.

*The American Black Journal* consistently served as a forum for multiple viewpoints from a wide range of African-American experience. On various programs, ABJ has featured popular mainstream sports heroes, political radicals, and conservative business people – an unusual range not often accommodated under a single banner. Motown Records, for example, created a separate (and relatively unpromoted) label, Black Forum, to present spoken word recordings of political figures and black poets. As Suzanne E. Smith notes, “[This] separation bespoke the apprehension that existed within the company between its commitment to present ‘ideas and voices of the worldwide struggle of Black people’ and its desire to avoid conflict and maintain its commercial appeal with the widest possible audiences.”<sup>3</sup> Detroit Public Television, however, by virtue of its public and journalistic mission, managed to incorporate and represent a wide range of African-American experience and points of view in the ABJ program. The shows reveal the pluralism and diversity of voices and concerns within African-American communities; the changing nature of African-American social, civic, and political history over time; and the culturally diverse contributions of African-American artists, entertainers, promoters, and business people.

The ABJ programs present diverse interests and viewpoints on issues important to the city of Detroit, the state of Michigan, the nation as whole, and the world, with a refreshing and invigorating candor that only a vibrant local culture could foster. Because the city is home to the largest chapter of the NAACP and to a black population exceeded in size only by New York and

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<sup>1</sup> “CPT, A Program Series Produced by and for the Black Community: The Use of Television for Increased Communication within the Black Community.” Report by Wayne State University, Station WTVS, and the Junior League of Detroit to The New Detroit Committee, August 28, 1968, p.4.

<sup>2</sup> Children's Partnership. "Online Content for Low-Income and Underserved Americans." (March 2000). [http://www.childrenspartnership.org/pub/low\\_income/](http://www.childrenspartnership.org/pub/low_income/) and Besser, Howard. "The Next Digital Divides." Teaching to Change LA <<http://www.tcla.gseis.ucla.edu/divide/politics/besser.html>>.

<sup>3</sup> Suzanne E. Smith, “The Political Culture of Detroit” in *Major Problems in African-American History, Volume II* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 331.

Chicago, many leaders go there to secure local support for a national platform, or to “test the waters” prior to delivering any message nationwide. For example, Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech actually was delivered for the first time in Detroit. About half of the shows are devoted to national themes; many of the others tie events in Detroit to those occurring throughout the U.S. For example, Detroit Black Journal went on-location to West Virginia in 1978 to cover a coalmine strike. In the 1980s, the show held extended public forums on South Africa and Apartheid when Bishop Desmond Tutu came into the studio. ABJ’s weekly shows often tapped this national and international traffic to the city of Detroit and to universities and locales nearby. Still other shows focus closely on local issues, with broad national implications for research, such as episodes addressing youth and violence which have been featured in every decade of the show’s existence.

This proposed project will add crucial, unique materials and perspectives to the public sphere of material resources on African-American life. While commercial television provided selective sound bites and cursory coverage of an event or issue it deemed topical, ABJ acted as a microscope for Detroit’s African-American population. ABJ offered (and continues to provide) fully produced, in-depth coverage on issues of concern to Detroit’s African-American audience. The show’s spontaneous, unrehearsed dialogue was often far more candid than what was prepared for public presentation or expressed to commercial media. Interview hosts engaged their guests in dynamic discussion that frequently diverged from the core discussion in surprising and insightful ways. Hosts developed important public relationships with key political figures, such as those between host Ron Scott and Detroit mayor Coleman Young and between host Ed Gordon and the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson. These host/guest dynamics are particularly poignant and interesting when comparing guest interviews during different time periods over the course of the series. As a corpus, the ABJ collection offers a primary-source portrait of American life, rich with multiple viewpoints and change over time.

### **Intellectual Content: Humanities Content**

According to historian John Hope Franklin, African-American historiography has progressed through four generations to a most rigorous and critical scholarship, which includes the widest range of methods, subjects for inquiry, and ideological perspectives.<sup>4</sup> This intensive scholarship has contributed important knowledge and material about the whole of American experience and has attracted public, scholarly and student engagement with core humanities issues. Indeed, the publication and popularity of the first dedicated African-American history textbook, *The African-American Odyssey*, (already in its fourth reprinting) indicates the mainstream position that such study of American life and experience has attained.<sup>5</sup> Because of the wide range of topics and the temporal span of production, the corpus of *American Black Journal* will bring important new content and primary sources for use in research, teaching and public programming for a wide range of humanities inquiry, such as:

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<sup>4</sup> John Hope Franklin, “On the Evolution of Scholarship in Afro-American History,” in *The State of Afro-American History: Past, Present and Future*, edited by Darlene Clark Hine, (Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press, 1986), pp. 13-22.

<sup>5</sup> Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine & Stanley Harold, *The African-American Odyssey Combined Volume* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2004)

***Freedom and Civil Rights*** – ABJ has valuable shows that explore Detroit’s historic role as a site of contestation between anti- and pro-slavery forces, Michigan as a microcosm of larger national and international forces of slavery and freedom, and the connections among 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century dimensions of America’s civil rights movement. Many ABJ shows over time provide research material for these issues. Detroit’s proximity to Windsor, Canada, made it a “last stop” on the Underground Railroad. ABJ shows have documented the churches and neighborhoods in both Detroit and in Windsor that were crucial stops on this route to freedom. Other show episodes have featured interviews with Civil War scholars and local and national civil rights activists. Together they support explorations of freedom and its changing meaning in America over time. DPTV and MATRIX currently are undertaking a project utilizing an initial selection of ABJ shows in conjunction with material from the state archives to develop a rich set of resources to advance secondary student and adult understandings of civic engagement in public and legal processes – what citizens in a democratic society can do when they believe a law is unfair.

***Historiography/Biography*** – The ABJ corpus includes interviews with nearly every significant national African-American figure since the 1970s. For example, ABJ contains unique resources featuring long-time Detroit Mayor Coleman Young. This late, long-powerful mayor appeared on the show many times discussing his efforts to shape Detroit, confront critics, and fight for racial justice. Young’s dynamic manner made for several lively appearances, particularly in his early years as mayor in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Young’s discussions of current issues ranging from airport and city development efforts, to national politics and why he was not supporting Jesse Jackson’s presidential candidacy offer primary resource material for analysis to understand the man who led this city for decades. Such exchanges also reveal the complexities of history, politics, and race relations in urban America that are useful for biographers, historians, and scholars from a variety of fields.

***Media Studies/Mass Communications*** – ABJ offers a significant corpus for the study of the history of mass communications, a field that has tended to gloss over local, community-generated media content by and for under-represented groups. Recent studies in communication theory have shown that, in general, the races of both the journalist and the interviewee have a significant impact on the content of the reporting.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, overall representation of African-American people in particular on network television continues to be negatively biased.<sup>7</sup> The evolution in mass communications facilitating local media markets to present minority produced and directed shows has provided a vigorous counterpoint to these problems rampant in mainstream electronic and print media. Spurred on by the advent of portable and relatively inexpensive videotape, other public stations in major black markets across the US were also starting black-produced programs, including *Say, Brother* at WGBH in Boston. *Say, Brother* has been cataloged and preserved with support from the NEH; thus the catalog as well as clips from

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<sup>6</sup> “Race and ethical reasoning: The importance of race to journalistic decision making,” Renita Coleman. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 80:2 (Summer 2003): 295.

<sup>7</sup> See Robert Entman, “Representation and Reality in the Portrayal of Blacks on Network Television News,” *Journalism Quarterly* 71 (Autumn 1994): 509-520; Robert Entman, “Blacks in the News: Television, Modern Racism and Cultural Change,” *Journalism Quarterly* 69 (Summer 1992): 341-61; Robert Entman, “Modern Racism and the Images of Blacks in Local Television News,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 7 (December 1990): 332-45.

many of these shows are now available online. A preserved archive of the *American Black Journal*, coupled with research access and contextualized public access, will complement the *Say, Brother* materials. *Preserving ABJ* will add an important media collection to this body of available multimedia material on African-American life.

### **Intellectual Contents: Topics and Guests**

The program's format, style, and content shifted with the times and with the producers. In addition to conventional interviews with African-American citizens and leaders, ABJ explored current and critical issues through on-location footage, staged performances, and edited program formats. The first host of *Colored People's Time* in 1968 was Tony Brown, who went on to produce *Tony Brown's Journal*, now the second longest running public affairs show on PBS. After Brown left *CPT*, the series was retitled *Detroit Black Journal*, and host George Martin continued to cover critical issues while increasing the musical content of the programming.

Ron Scott, host between 1975 and 1978, was a social justice activist in Detroit who brought a hard-hitting slant to the program. From 1979-1984, under the leadership of producer Juanita Anderson and host Ben Frazier, the program took a more documentary style that featured monthly topical documentaries rather than in-studio interviews and performances. Ed Gordon, host from 1984-1988, returned *Detroit Black Journal* to an interview-style format. From Gordon's tenacious interviewing style emerged a tough yet friendly relationship with his interviewees, most notable in his numerous interviews with Jesse Jackson during that period. Such diversity of opinion, challenge and critique within African-American communities is vital to the intellectual goals of this project. Darrell Wood then led the show for ten years under the title *American Black Journal*. His shows sought to focus on the skills and talents of many of the nation's leading African-American professionals, from business people to film industry talent and executives. Cliff Russell, ABJ's current host, continues the strong tradition of the show, bringing his own distinctive personality to its style. (A list of the ABJ hosts and producers with approximate dates of service to DPTV is located in Appendix A1.) These shifts in programming style and content also reflect the historical changes in the role of media and in the socioeconomic diversity of the African-American community since the late 1960s.

The period of documentary-style production (from 1979-1984) created other unique and important video footage recording Detroit spaces and locales, some of which are no longer in active use or existence. Renowned poet, librarian and pioneering publisher Dudley Randall was interviewed at his home, where he wrote and published Detroit's Broadside Press. Interviews with classic jazz vocalist Betty Carter and avant-garde jazzman Sun Ra also occurred during this documentary-style phase of the program. Carter was interviewed in the cramped quarters of her dressing room at Detroit's Music Hall. Sun Ra, on the other hand, was recorded on location in a small club that was a Detroit jazz hot spot at the time. This footage provides visual and historical evidence of a changing city over time and the roles of African Americans within it.

The ABJ guest list during the interview-style periods reads like a Who's Who of Black America. (See Appendix A2 for sample list of guests.) Many high-profile African-Americans were interviewed while in Detroit to participate in local events. Alex Haley, historian and author of *Roots*, was interviewed prior to a public lecture he gave at Eastern Michigan University. Dr. Benjamin Carson, a neurosurgeon from Johns Hopkins University, appeared on ABJ when

visiting his Detroit home after the tour for his inspirational book, *Gifted Hands*. Cornel West, Harvard professor and philosopher, appeared on ABJ during his book tour for *Race Matters*. His powerful yet down-to-earth discussion illuminated the ways that the entire country was still deeply affected by the issues and politics of race. Also interviewed was Lerone Bennett, a prominent journalist, historian, and author of *Forced Into Glory: Abraham Lincoln's White Dream*, a polarizing critique of the sources of Lincoln's abolitionist policies and commitments.

Many music and film industry professionals also appeared on the show. Berry Gordy, founder of Motown Records, reflected on the creation of Motown and on his background and family life, including his childhood in thriving black neighborhoods of Detroit. Entertainer Eartha Kitt performed and was interviewed on one of the earliest program tapes that still exists in the collection. Appearing during the height of her career while on tour in Detroit, Kitt ruminated on Detroit's place as a center of black music in America. James Brown, the "Godfather of Soul," appeared on the show several times. In an extensive interview conducted on location at Detroit rhythm and blues station WCHB, Brown discussed his philosophy as an early musician and businessman. When mainstream stations were not playing R&B music, Brown began to invest in radio stations in his home state of Georgia so that he could have more control of the music that was being played, and thus create venues for his own records. Guest actors have included Danny Glover; Dick Gregory, comedian and social activist; Arthur Mitchell, founder of the Dance Theatre of Harlem; and the late Ossie Davis, whose summer high school acting workshop was a yearly inspiration to Detroit's black youth. Davis discussed his life history, particularly his early years as a black actor in an exclusively black theater circuit.

Interviews on ABJ also included leaders from both the civil rights and black protest movements in the U.S. and abroad. Julian Bond, chairman of NAACP, discussed black history and the intellectual and political roots of the NAACP. Louis Farrakhan, religious leader of the Nation of Islam, made an intense appearance in the mid-1980s. Civil rights leader and politician the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson also appeared on the program several times. Other guests include the Rev. Joseph E. Lowery, founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Lani Guinier, nationally known civil rights attorney; Bobby Seale, former Black Panther and politician; Myrlie Evers-Williams, widow of slain civil rights leader Medgar Evers; Carl T. Rowan, journalist; Dr. Yusef ben-Jochannon, historian and author; Bishop Desmond Tutu, religious leader of South Africa; and Yolanda King, daughter of Martin Luther King, Jr.

ABJ guests also included leading entrepreneurs and personalities such as: Earl Graves, publisher of Black Enterprise and Essence magazines; Wally Amos, founder of Famous Amos Cookies; Les Brown, motivational speaker; Jackie Joyner-Kersey, Olympic track champion; NBA star Isaiah Thomas; Dave Bing, businessman and former Detroit Pistons basketball star; and broadcaster Greg Gumbel. Jazz vocalist and Detroit native Anita Baker reflected on the role of music throughout her family life. Rhythm and Blues group "The Spinners" performed on a stage custom built in the DPTV studio. Host Ron Scott interviewed them and learned their dance steps. Jazz vocalist Nancy Wilson brought out a softer side of the usually business-minded host Darrell Wood. Wynton Marsalis, interviewed in the mid-1990s, offered reflection on his hero Louis Armstrong and on the vicissitudes of fame, critics and popular American music.

So far, fifty-four of these tapes have been preserved and made available, through the efforts of this partnership. (See Appendix A3 for a list of shows already reformatted.) However, hundreds of these important tapes remain inaccessible and at-risk.

### **Physical Content**

The ABJ collection (dating from 1968 -2002) consists of 1437 tapes on formats that are obsolete for station use, plus approximately 40 cubic feet of supporting materials. The tape collection includes four production formats – two-inch Quadruplex tapes, one-inch (both B and C-type), three-quarter inch U-Matic, and BetacamSP. All these tapes were initially stored in cool conditions in a basement storage room on wooden shelving. (Current shows are being produced in DVCPRO50 format, as they have been since 2002.)

Table 1 lists the collection’s tapes by format, year, the number of tapes already reformatted, and the number of tapes proposed for cleaning, reformatting and access under this grant proposal. (A complete list of the number of tapes by year and by format appears in Appendix A4.)

**Table 1: Tapes of ABJ Shows, 1968-2002: Plans for Preservation by Tape Format**

<i>Column 1</i>	<i>Column 2</i>	<i>Column 3</i>	<i>Column 4</i>	<i>Column 5</i>
<b>Tape format</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Already reformatted</b>	<b>Proposed for reformatting</b>
2” Quad	1968 – 1980	32	16 (NTVFP)	<b>16</b>
1”	1971 – 1999	365	0	<b>365</b>
3 / 4” U-Matic	1978 – 1999	634	38 (NEH Public Program)	<b>596</b>
BetacamSP	1993 – 2002	406	0	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		1437	54	<b>977</b>

*American Black Journal* used the tape formats and tape management practices common to weekly television production at the time. While footage of significant people was often saved for reuse (or even personal staff use), field material generally and some master tapes not deemed important were probably often recycled to reduce tape costs for the station. The existing ABJ tapes and materials currently are stored in two places by DPTV: 1) in the DPTV production building in the original underground storage space, and 2) on the 3rd floor of the production building in a climate- and temperature- controlled, monitored room with an adjustable metal shelving system. Tapes in the more recent and higher image quality formats (1”, BetaSP) are in excellent condition, and these are stored under dry, safe conditions in the climate-controlled room. The comparatively low image quality formats (3/4” and 2” tapes) are in fair condition and were normally stored under relatively dry, safe conditions below ground. The videotapes usually are labeled, either on the case exterior or on the reel inside or both. However these labels are not necessarily complete descriptions of the actual content. During the reformatting process, the tapes *must* be viewed and fully cataloged.

The MSU/DPTV partnership has already reformatted 54 tapes. (See Column 4 of Table 1 and section II.) The majority of the 3/4” tapes were chosen for content and for their good condition on visual inspection. Fortunately, we did not find any significant restoration issues during playback

and reformatting, (there is some slight wavering sound and image stability at the beginning of several tapes). We anticipate that the rest of the tapes will be similarly stable. Nonetheless, we have included a plan for restoration with a budget line, due to the likelihood that some tapes may need restoration.

On examination in-house, a small portion of the tapes revealed some corrosion, a typical problem with these types of tapes, requiring, at minimum, that the tapes be cleaned before transfer. These include some white and yellowish powder on some two-inch and one-inch tape rolls; some crumbling foam from the insulation and sealing on three-quarter inch tape cassettes; and some physical wrinkles, creases and buckles on the outer quarter of a few one- and two-inch reels.

The recent (post-1993) BetaSP tapes remain in good condition. These materials will be cataloged and cleaned. Because of their relative stability compared to other tapes in the collection, they will not be scheduled for reformatting under this funding request.

What the public sees when they view episodes of the ABJ is only part of the picture, so to speak. Indeed, the archive of paper documentation contains letters, information logs, notes, stories and telephone notes from producers, pictures, press information, research papers, documents, and reports that will provide researchers with a unique window on the planning, events and discussions leading up to the on air production of each show. There are about 40 cubic feet of program documentation materials in approximately 20 boxes currently stored in DPTV facilities. MSU's Special Collections staff has reviewed the materials onsite at DPTV headquarters and has brought three boxes of materials to MSU and detailed the contents of one folder. The remaining boxes will be moved to Special Collections in August 2007, when the station will move its production studios into a new facility. This large amount of ephemera is unique and will be of importance for scholarly research once it is cataloged and made accessible through MSU Libraries Special Collections. These materials enhance the video collection by providing insight into the historical context in which shows were produced as well as the aims of the show's producers and guests. For example, news clippings and minutes from Detroit Public School Board meetings found in producers' files add crucial background information to a 1980s episode on school violence. Therefore, it is critical to preserve this material and provide researchers detailed access to its contents along with the video.

### **Preserving and Providing Access to the ABJ Collection**

Under the proposed project, MSU will accession and preserve all existing *American Black Journal* tapes (1437) and more than 20 boxes (circa 40 cubic feet) of associated production materials from the 34 years of ABJ programming between 1968 and 2002. The project will reformat the two-thirds of the collection (980 tapes) that is at-risk and on obsolete formats (two-inch Quad, three-quarter inch U-Matic, and one-inch tapes). This includes all of the existing original broadcast shows from the first twenty-five years of the series, which have the most value to historical researchers. We will reformat tapes in the collection to Panasonic DVCPRO50 format. DVDs of all reformatted tapes will be created and available for viewing at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit, the city where the shows originated, and at the Michigan State University Libraries in East Lansing, where the original tapes and the collection of print ephemera also will be archived and cataloged. Descriptive information on all these tapes will be available via the *ABJ Online* website to give scholars and the general public

access to this valuable corpus. In addition, a subset of approximately 100 shows, identified by the project's scholars for their scholarly and educational value, will be made available as streaming video from the website. Additional access opportunities will be made possible by reformatting to DVCPPro50 files, which DPTV can use in future ABJ shows.

## **II. History, Scope and Duration of the Project**

DPTV has developed a \$1.4 million plan to catalog, preserve, and provide broad public access to the entire corpus of *American Black Journal*. Its long-term goals are to save the content and associated materials, make them accessible for research in a professionally maintained archive, and develop varied and contextualized Web access to selected content for the general public, scholars, teachers, and students via *ABJ Online*. The activity proposed here for NEH funding focuses on an essential and major component of the overall plan – preserving and archiving the most at-risk video content and related materials.

In September 2000, DPTV and MSU met to discuss the use of digital technology to preserve the ABJ tapes and use them as a basis for a significant, accessible multimedia archive of African-American history. The partnership between DPTV and Michigan State University takes advantage of MSU's capacity and expertise in archival preservation, disaster prevention, humanities technology research, and digital library preservation and production. MATRIX's digital lab and digital repository and MSU Library's Special Collections expertise and archival vault are crucial resources that will serve this partnership. Project directors developed a cooperative agreement between DPTV and MSU outlining roles and responsibilities for the partnership. Project principals conducted a review of similar projects for content, formats, and standards and continue to keep abreast of developments from their respective fields of expertise.

The initial challenge of the partnership was to clarify the content and state of the archive. As described above, DPTV handled ABJ tapes and production materials in a manner similar to most production-oriented broadcast stations – there was no dedicated archivist on staff. Materials were stored, insofar as space, staff, and funds permitted. Tapes not recycled and papers without immediate usefulness in on-air production were put into boxes and stored in the basement on wooden shelving. In the late 1980s, a climate-controlled storage space with metal shelving was developed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the studio building, and new additions went into storage there. Thus the first task of DPTV and MSU partnership was to assess the collection.

Collection analysis for this project so far includes a rapid hand inventory of all ABJ tapes in storage at DPTV headquarters. This count produced a tally (see Table 1) of ABJ tapes by year and tape format. Additional research of office files was undertaken primarily to determine rights and release information. Information was obtained through delving into program files for relevant data and put into a simple Access database. Program information gleaned from the folders includes: Series Title (ABJ, DBJ or CPT), Tape ID, Recording Date, Length, Format, Host, Producer, Year Produced, Topic, Release, and Notes (includes guest names). A separate guest table includes Tape ID, Guest Name, Vocation, Guest Bio and Signed Release box (checked if signed waiver and release form is available). By the end of 2003, DPTV had collected all information from the office files into the database. (See sample in Appendix A5.)

The boxes of supporting materials have been reviewed by in-house specialists, and several

folders were selected to accompany the public programs projects currently underway. MSU's project archivist and MATRIX project managers visited DPTV storage and assessed the ephemera boxes held there. Dr. Peter Berg selected three boxes of supporting materials and brought them to MSU Libraries Special Collections.

DPTV held a focus group of Detroit citizens, teachers and librarians to discuss American Black Journal programming and potential uses for the archive. Information from the citizen focus group was collated and analyzed to guide future programming and the use of past shows.

DPTV and MSU share responsibilities, fundraising and activities in this project. DPTV secured a services grant (2003-2006) from the National Television and Video Preservation Fund to restore and transfer half of the 2" format open reel videotapes. This grant supported cleaning and reformatting of sixteen of the earliest programs from obsolete two-inch Quad tape to Digital Betacam by The Post Group, followed by in-house transfer to DVCPPro50.

Special projects support from NEH's Public Programs division (2002-2004) allowed the project to consult with key scholars and implement a pilot website for a small sample of shows that were readily transferable. This public programming work engaged five leading scholars of American history – Richard Thomas, Thomas Sugrue, David Bailey, Earl Lewis and Julia Robinson-Harmon – to identify important themes in African American history that are represented in the ABJ shows. Scholars reviewed the complete database list of show titles, guests, topics, hosts and rights information and watched twelve full programs representing different eras of program style. Through this process, the scholars identified ten themes that cross major issues in African American historiography and the particular experience in Detroit:

1. Education and Families: Building Opportunity and Community
2. Leadership: Politics, Politicians, and Reform
3. Musical Roots and Branches: Jazz, Motown, Gospel, HipHop, & Techno
4. Literature and Language: The Richness and Diversity of Black Voices
5. Religion and Spiritual Life
6. Sports and Entertainment: Actors, Athletes and the Black Community
7. Africa and African-Americans
8. Urban Challenges: Development, Re-development, and Community Life
9. Poverty, Progress, and the Rise of African-American Businesses and Professionals
10. Motor City & Motown: Detroit in Regional and National Context

The consultancy also supported development of a pilot website, which provided online access to four shows from in-house transfers and included contextual essays and educational resources by project humanities scholars. Such thematic organization moves this project beyond an earlier generation of online archival projects that simply provide access to raw materials. These themes provide a practical and contextual frame for selecting and presenting ABJ shows, so that they will be more easily used for scholarship and, especially, teaching.

Following the humanities consultation, in 2004 MSU received an implementation grant from NEH Public Programs to expand the pilot website with substantial materials along each theme (to be completed Fall 2007). Staff and advisors worked with the database list and selected an additional 26 tapes in good condition for transfer. MSU's MATRIX staff set up a ¾" transfer

workstation, calibrated the system with professional assistance, trained two technicians, reformatted these shows, produced streaming media files, set up the Public Broadcasting Core metadata scheme as ABJ's Video Core Scheme within the MATRIX repository, and developed a template for displaying the repository material and metadata in the *ABJ Online* website. (See website screenshots in Appendix A6.) All this content is now accessible for the scholars to review and create contextual narrative and framing materials for the website. NEH has granted an extension to complete this engagement with the humanities scholars and launch the new material into the website.

Through funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Partnership for a Nation of Learners program (2007 – 2009), MSU and DPTV have partnered with Michigan Historical Center to develop an innovative set of publicly available multi-media resources on African American history in Michigan, titled "From Resistance to Rights: An Audiovisual Resource on Michigan's Civil Rights Legacy." Using selected archival public television programs and interviews, curated excerpts of legal documents, images such as photographs and drawings, contextual narrative and carefully linked metadata, the resulting project will explore Detroit's role as a site of contestation between anti- and pro-slavery forces, Michigan as a microcosm of larger national and international forces of slavery and freedom, and the connections among 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century dimensions of America's civil rights movement. That project aims to advance secondary school student and adult understandings of civic engagement in public and legal processes. Partners will produce a new DPTV broadcast for *American Black Journal*, a new demonstration at the Michigan Historical Center, and an innovative webbed resource from MSU's MATRIX that links all of these activities through contextual documents and images, specially-tagged, searchable videos, and educational materials. Evaluation instruments and a kiosk at MHC Museum will provide assessment to inform further development. To date, we have convened planning meetings, made preliminary selection of primary source materials from MHC and DPTV collections, and assembled a team of teachers for advising about content and program use. This IMLS/CPB funded work certainly will dovetail with the extensive preservation and cataloging work proposed here for funding by NEH. Teachers in Lansing and in Boston will begin using the ABJ videos streaming on the web in history classrooms beginning in Fall 2007.

DPTV and MSU have committed substantial cost share to this partnership. The partners have committed over 55% of the total project costs on this particular proposal. In addition, both MSU and DPTV will cover all additional costs, including additional travel, office expenses, publicity, and archival CD media for backing up digital files not itemized in the budget proposal. Through MATRIX and the Historical Voices Digital Library (which has received two National Science Foundation grants), MSU has committed to maintain long-term on-line access to the ABJ streaming video and online catalog. The technology used in this project is part of MATRIX's core digital library technology and it will be refreshed and migrated forward as necessary. MSU has taken on this responsibility and is not seeking external funds for this purpose.

The completed activities have developed a strong base of usable materials and valuable contextual materials. But it has focused primarily on playable tapes for specific content uses. The rest of the corpus remains mostly inaccessible and at-risk. DPTV's impending move to new studios in 2007 highlights the urgent need for reformatting and cataloging the whole collection to

save it for research and use now and in the future.

### **III. Methodology and Standards**

The state of the collection is a challenge for selection methodology on this project. The detailed contents of each tape cannot be determined without viewing the tapes, yet the tapes, which have not been played for years, cannot be played and viewed without risk. Thus, the most strategic and efficient process is to schedule careful handling and reformatting for as many tapes as possible, basing selection on fragility and accessibility of format (3/4" and 2" faring the worst on these two counts), visual inspection, label description, and what is known about the contents from the program files (guest names and limited topic description). Then during reformatting, shows will be watched and contents logged in real-time to provide descriptive information.

This project will follow project advisor Peter Brothers' 7-Step Physical Inspection process for tape collection analysis to determine which tapes can be transferred in-house and which require professional restoration. Following Brothers' recommendation for cost saving and capacity building, any tapes requiring restoration will be cleaned and restored at a restoration house and then transferred to preservation and duplication masters at workstations at MSU, so long as restored tapes are stable. Based on Brothers and advisor Lisa Carter's per-tape cost estimates for tape restoration, we have allocated funding in years one and two for the expected eventuality of restoration work on the 1" and 3/4" tapes. Once triage-failing tapes are identified, exact cost estimates will be obtained from vendors. From our inventory and experience transferring tapes so far, we do not foresee fungal problems, so the figures do not anticipate fungal infestation of the tapes or contamination with an adhesive that requires chemical decontamination. Chemical decontamination would be handled on a per-tape basis and incorporated in the cost estimates. In the event that such problems emerge during triage and restoration, fewer tapes would be restored.

#### **Files and Formats**

Following Brothers' advice on *access-based preservation* protocols, the project's staff and advisors have decided at this time to reformat the collection to two master formats, Panasonic DVCPPro50 (the Society of Motion Picture Television Engineers' D7 Standard) and DV digital files.

DVCPPro50 is the production format adopted by DPTV and already is part of the station's plan for long-term migration to High Definition Digital TV. Our choice of DVCPPro50 takes into consideration the availability and ongoing use of other digital tape formats, such as Digital Beta. On review, we believe the DVCPPro50 option to be better for this project both for short-term preservation and forward migration. In comparison to DigiBeta, DVCPPro uses the same 4:2:2 sample scheme, records at 50 Mbits per second, and is capable of capturing the entire signal present on the analog originals, which were significantly less robust than either DVCPPro or DigiBeta. Both tape formats are metal particle, and therefore less likely to develop the sticky shed problems of metal evaporated tape. The DVCPPro format is being used at more than 750 U.S. television stations, which helps to ensure both availability of playback machines and market-wide availability of DVCPPro resources. Concern over the narrow tape width (6.35mm) should be offset by the plan to forward migrate in the next five to ten years.

MATRIX staff members have substantial experience with digital video in the digital lab and have developed an effective workflow for digital capture and preservation of video. MATRIX currently is conducting a video preservation project with the MSU African Studies Center called the South African Film and Video project (funded by the U.S. Department of Education). We have studied the reports on Motion JPEG2000 (lossless JPEG2000 codestream) and the debates about various “wrapper” standards, including the work of Jim Lindner of Media Matters, Carl Fleischauer at the Library of Congress, and Glenn Pearson at NIH.<sup>8</sup> At the time of writing this proposal, however, Motion JPEG2000 software tools have not advanced to the level required for this project. Therefore, we will reformat tapes to DVCPPro50, followed by capture to Final Cut Pro, which can edit in native DVCPPro50 format. From these DV files, we will produce downsampled DVDs for access at the Wright Museum and MSUL Special Collections. Shows selected by the scholar advisory board will be made into streaming files for online access. MATRIX has elected to use industry-standard DLT data tapes in the S4 format for long-term storage of the DV files created during this workflow. These digital masters will be held at MSU, which will take responsibility for forward migration of the master video content. These tapes can store 800GB of uncompressed video per tape. Each hour of videotape played occupies approximately 12GB of storage. Thus, each data tape can store approximately 65 hours of video. Because this is a rapidly advancing field, by the start of the grant period (July 2008) better options may be available for digital media preservation files, wrappers, and software. We will revisit the most current research for a final decision at the onset of the project.

The following copies will be made of each tape for preservation and access:

- Duplicate masters in DVCPPro50 to be used at MSU for making access copies, and stored at DPTV for reuse and broadcast;
- 1 master in DV to be stored in MATRIX digital repository on DLT S4 cartridges;
- 2 consumer-format DVD copies, for access, to be stored at Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in their research library and at MSU Libraries Special Collections;
- Files compressed to stream online will be made available as Flash and WindowsMedia allowing users to select their preferred viewing format.
- 1 intermediary MPEG4 Part 10 (H.264) file, created for each show during capture for compressing the streaming files, will be burned to Mitsui Gold Archival DVD's and stored as additional access copies in MSU's digital lab (this will be an MSU add-on process and is not written into the budget).

The original ¾”, 2” Quad and 1” tapes will be returned to MSU Special Collections for climate (temperature and humidity) controlled vault storage.

### **Intellectual Property Rights and Clearance**

Through careful research, DPTV has determined the provenance of most of the corpus. In preparation for this project, DPTV staff members undertook detailed rights research in program

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<sup>8</sup> Media Matters, LLC, “Dance Heritage Preservation Reformatting Project” Dance Heritage Coalition, June 2004 ([www.danceheritage.org/preservation/DigitalVideoPreservation1.pdf](http://www.danceheritage.org/preservation/DigitalVideoPreservation1.pdf)); and Pearson, Glenn and Michael Gill, “An Evaluation of Motion JPEG 2000 for Video Archiving”, Proc. Archiving 2005 (April 26-29, Washington, D.C.), IS&T ([www.imaging.org](http://www.imaging.org)), pp. 237-243.

files. Since the beginning of ABJ, DPTV policy has been to obtain signed releases for the programs from the show guests. These releases have evolved over the 30-year period to cover increasingly more specific uses. In general, DPTV owns the rights to all these programs (with the exception of some performances) including the right to rebroadcast them “in any manner” of DPTV programming. The only exception to these re-use rights involves certain musical and dance performances. DPTV advisors have determined that these DPTV clearances allow the material (excising the few restricted musical performances) to be streamed via the Internet. In accordance with its public mission, the station intends to take this opportunity to create access to these materials. The digitized shows and catalog of archival materials will be fully available for research and reference. Selected shows will become part of the public site for online access and folded into public presentations for educational and public use as streaming media.

### **Selection Criteria**

The selection criteria for preservation and digitization for this proposed project are based on the primary audience of humanities researchers, teachers and students and on the requirements of the tapes proposed for preservation. Under this proposal, all at-risk two-inch, one-inch and three-quarter-inch tapes will be scheduled for tape preservation, migration, and digitization, because these are the most historically important tapes, as they date from a time when there was little African-American presence on television. These tapes are currently not accessible in their existing formats and are most at risk to be lost forever. Within that plan, complete programs and edited segments will be given first priority. We expect that the project will digitize and preserve all existing complete programs on these tape formats. Raw footage and supporting field-produced elements will be prioritized based on the following criteria, which are modified from the WGBH appraisal criteria for the *Say, Brother* video preservation project:

- Significance of material for illuminating issues in history, American studies, African American studies, and media fields (including topic, guest, content)
- Uniqueness of subject
- Technical quality/production standards
- Rights clearance
- Potential for use in further programming

### **Preparation and Processing of Material**

Reformatting the tapes to DVCPro50 will constitute digitization of the materials. In preparation for processing, engineering staff at DPTV and technical staff at MSU will work with restoration expert Peter Brothers to triage the ABJ tapes and separate them by tape condition. Brothers and the preservation advisory board will advise on the best cleaning procedures for tapes in good condition and any restoration measures needed for degrading tapes. A test sample of the tapes in best condition (but with least vital content as determined by the project’s selection criteria) will be cleaned and played back for transfer to assess the quality of existing electronic information.

A workflow will be developed for playback and digitization to ensure duplication during initial playback. Standard protocols for image, color control, time base correction, and audio quality control will be set with staff, advisors and DPTV engineers. Calibration will be checked by DPTV engineers periodically and recalibrated as necessary. Playback equipment will be cleaned and calibrated by technical staff at regular intervals and before and after playback of any problematic tapes to prevent cross-contamination. Engineering standards will be overseen by

DPTV vice president of engineering Helge Blucher.

Dr. Peter Berg of MSU Libraries Special Collections will oversee moving the ABJ tapes and program documentation archive from Detroit to Special Collections in East Lansing, where it will undergo a thorough review to determine the condition of the contents and whether there are any paper materials that need immediate attention for preservation. If problems are discovered, the MSU Libraries professional paper conservator will assist with repair and conservation in the state-of-the-art Wallace Conservation Laboratory. After this review, Dr. Berg will plan for the organization and inventorying of the collection (see below) and order preservation supplies.

### **Organization of and access to material**

Supporting materials and videotapes will be organized in Special Collections storage chronologically by show title beginning in 1968, which follows the original production process and is roughly the order the tapes and materials are already arranged. Description for the videotape materials will follow the PBCore standard description scheme for public broadcasting entities. Cognizant of the competing description standards with strengths for different user communities, we have chosen PBCore for its applicability within the public broadcasting and digital library communities, and for its history of development and compatibility with Dublin Core descriptive metadata standard. The MATRIX repository system (described below), where we will initially describe the videotapes, allows mapping to other standards and can export data in XML format for compatibility with other moving image databases. (See screenshots for sample metadata scheme and summary record in Appendix A7.)

For the supporting materials, MSUL's Special Collections utilizes a traditional inventorying convention recommended by the Society of American Archivists for arranging and describing archives and manuscripts.<sup>9</sup> Special Collections will use this opportunity to update its item-level inventory process. Dr. Berg will consult with MSU Archives and adopt an inventory format that will be compatible with mapping to Dublin Core. Dr. Berg and MATRIX librarian Catherine Foley will create the map to Dublin Core. A descriptive inventory for the supporting materials will be prepared at Special Collections using the new inventory standard, which will serve as an item-level funding aid for the materials. This method of organization will be the most effective way to integrate the two types of media and to assist researchers to identify and use materials.

After the accession, organization, and description are completed, a collection-level MARC record will be created by the MSU Libraries Special Collections staff that will include links to both the Special Collections detailed inventory description and to the MATRIX online repository of the streaming video. This is standard practice for all archival collections in Special Collections and is designed to provide the widest possible access to the archive. This MARC record will be available through MSU's online catalog and OCLC bibliographic database. (See Appendix A8 for samples of collection-level MARC records and the current inventory convention.)

Metadata records for all reformatted tapes and digital files of tapes selected for streaming will be stored and accessed through MATRIX's digital repository, currently in its second generation

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<sup>9</sup> The Society of American Archivists *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts*, the Archival Fundamentals Series (Chicago: 1990).

called “Project Builder.” Developed with substantial funding from the National Science Foundation, this software is the underlying digital repository for a wide range of humanities projects at MSU including the Quilt Index, Historical Voices, and Overcoming Apartheid (which were funded by NEH), and the African On-line Digital Library (which was funded by NSF and the US Department of Education). This online database-driven repository (running in MySQL and PHP) facilitates ingesting, managing, storing and delivering both digital objects (files created by digitizing original physical holdings) and the associated metadata needed to store and locate those digital objects. Modeled after the Metadata Encoding Transmission Standards (METS) effort, the database table structure was developed to be highly flexible, incorporating a schematized table design. MATRIX developed PHP-based tools that use metadata scheme information for dynamic creation of ingestion/administration forms for each project. This utility allows each contributing project to select from existing metadata schemes for describing objects to be stored in the repository (in this case, PBCore incorporated in ABJ’s Video Core). Contributors also can supplement an existing scheme by adding project-specific metadata fields. This information is then stored and used to generate that project’s data entry forms for entering metadata and uploading objects. These in-house-developed tools also aid in searching the repository and facilitate the process of turning stored database objects into online project displays such as galleries or search results.

As partners in the METS initiative, MATRIX recognizes the long-term value of storing and serving native XML documents. MATRIX’s digital repository, like most current digital libraries, uses a relational database program for metadata storage because of speed, reliability, searchability, and ease of use. The entire repository can be easily exported to XML so that materials in the repository can be read independent of the repository software.

MSU administration has approved releasing Project Builder as an open source development application. The Beta stage of this software is now available to early adopters for use and development of add-on applications. The software has been demonstrated at national forums including EduCause, CNI, and WebWise, and is already being adopted by four university libraries and digital media centers including the University of Virginia’s Robertson Media Center.

### **Storage, maintenance, and protection of electronic data**

Storage, maintenance and protection of the data are part of both DPTV and MSU’s commitment to this project. Original cleaned tapes and DLT S4 cartridges containing preservation files will be stored in MSU Libraries Special Collections climate-controlled vault along with the paper materials. MSU Libraries follows the Amigo Library Services standards for environmental controls of audio and video materials (Basic information can be found at: <http://www.amigos.org/preservation/avbasics.html>). The production master on DVCPro50 will be maintained in the climate-controlled storage at DPTV, for redundancy and station use. This copy will provide easy access for producers and editors at DPTV to reuse the material and thereby increase public presentation of the content. Compressed digital video and associated catalog records will be stored on the MATRIX repository servers in the MSU Computer Center.

MSU has made intensive efforts to ensure that adequate facilities and procedures to protect and deliver the resources in its care exist and are properly maintained. By locating our storage and

web access servers in the MSU Computer Lab (MSUCL), MATRIX is able to take advantage of multiple safeguards against data loss. All servers are subject to a strictly enforced tape backup regimen. All systems are backed up incrementally daily; all are backed up fully at least weekly. Tape sets are rotated to provide several months of historical backup sets, and one full backup copy is created for permanent archival retention every six months. This system protects against most hardware failures and against user or program error. An off-site tape rotation system is in place to protect against "complete destruction" scenarios such as major fires. MSUCL is staffed 24x7 and offers redundant environmental control with fire alerting and suppression systems. The nearest local fire station is on campus, half a mile from MSUCL. MATRIX operates a large UPS system to protect against power outages; in addition, the campus generation plant, which has an excellent record of uptime far exceeding the local commercial utilities, provides electric service to the facility. Large campus computing facilities are high on the priority list for early return of power after an outage. MSUCL staff control access to the facility using authorized personnel lists, card readers, cypher locks and an alarm system. The facility is above the highest recorded water level. MATRIX uses commonly available hardware, e.g. Dell and Sun, for its servers. Most are covered by next business day warranties. Use of commodity hardware also eases purchase of replacement parts from local stores or via overnight shipment from mail order houses.

MATRIX staff members endeavor to keep security fixes current while also practicing good password creation and protection. File protections are designed to limit write access to files, and all staff use SSH to encrypt login sessions, thereby reducing password sniffing. Non-essential services are disabled to limit opportunities for misuse. In case of an outage, an automatic service monitoring system is in place, and several MATRIX staff members carry pagers.

Growth potential is covered by the nature of the building: additional electrical power is close at hand, as the facility originally supported several large mainframes. All Internet connectivity off-campus originates 50 feet from the MATRIX server rack. This limits exposure to service outages due to campus network problems. MSU has extensive and redundant connectivity to the Internet. There are two OC-48c links, plus other smaller links. Providers include Abilene, Equinix, Norlight, AADS, Qwest and C&W.

In order to prevent accidental or unauthorized changes or replacements of electronic files, the MATRIX repository has a time-stamped, password-protected record lockout process as well as a verification system based on a strict OAI system for verifying information packages. Once the entire cataloging is completed, those files will be locked from further revisions. MSU is committed to long-term access to the digital collections ingested in its repository. The archival files will be maintained in the repository system and a long-term migration plan is being developed for the future of the project.

Rights information will be included in the metadata records for each program, with the repository already programmed to honor any access restrictions; unauthorized access to materials will be prohibited. Technical documentation concerning development and implementation of MATRIX repository software is in development, and plans for continued maintenance and updates will be part of the MATRIX repository plan and the archival migration plan.

MSU, as one of the largest public research universities in the United States, has long made a serious commitment to providing the infrastructure and resources necessary to bring online material to scholarly endeavors. MSU is a leader in developing Internet II and will continue to be at the forefront of Internet development into the next century. The commitment to information technology is a modern version of MSU's original mission. As one of the original land-grant institutions, MSU is officially dedicated to a balanced effort in the areas of teaching, research and outreach. MSU is therefore committed to providing continuing access and maintaining object permanence of the archival materials and digital collection accessioned as part of this project. MATRIX is a national and international leader in humanities computing and has been committed to the best practices of the academic digital community. MATRIX staff members are directly engaged in wide-reaching national and international discussions of standards and are pioneering the application of emerging standards to digital collections and projects.

#### **IV. Work Plan**

At the beginning of this grant period, all materials will already be at MSU. Transfer stations at MSU will be checked and recalibrated if necessary. Sixteen 2" Quadraplex tapes, for which functional playback equipment is not readily available, will be sent at the outset to Specs Brothers, where they will be evaluated, cleaned, restored and transferred to DVCPRO50 masters. Digital preservation files will be made from these masters at MSU. These sixteen tapes comprise the remaining 2" tapes after the NTVPF-funded services grant.

During the initial months of the project funding, MSU and DPTV staff will work with Peter Brothers on a two-day onsite consultation. Brothers will train the project staff in 7-Step Physical Inspection, triage the collection, and advise on ongoing, long-term maintenance, as well as on preservation and restoration standards.

We plan that all ¾" tapes will be assessed then reformatted in-house or professionally restored and then the stabilized tapes reformatted in-house. Trained staff will first assess all ¾" U-Matic tapes using the 7-Step process and separate the tapes into two groups: 1) those that pass the triage protocols will be sent to MATRIX's digital lab for in-house reformatting and 2) those that fail the triage protocols and thus require professional restoration. The passing tapes will be scheduled for transfer in MATRIX's digital lab equipped with a ¾" U-Matic workstation and trained technicians. The failing ¾" tapes will be identified and cataloged. A list of tapes and problems identified for restoration will be used to obtain cost estimates from restoration vendors based on the known requirements. Based on experience with the collection thus far, we anticipate that all failing ¾" tapes can be restored within the budget. If any cannot be accommodated within the budget, they will be stored separately in the Special Collections vault and prioritized for future funding activity.

After assessing the ¾" tapes, trained staff will triage all 1" tapes. Passing 1" tapes will be scheduled for transfer beginning in year two, after the more at-risk ¾" tapes have been reformatted. Failing 1" tapes will be identified and included in external restoration services. Any tapes that fail the protocol but cannot be chosen for restoration due to funding limits will be held separately in the archive while additional funding is sought.

During reformatting to DVCPRO50, detailed show contents will be cataloged by project assistants, and PBCore metadata records will be created in MATRIX's digital repository. After reformatting, original tapes will be returned and housed separately in the climate-controlled Special Collections vault. Duplicate DVCPRO50 tapes will be sent to DPTV. DVDs will be created of all reformatted tapes for access.

Project staff and Scholars Advisory Board will review the cataloged tape contents and tag shows of particular use or interest for humanities research to determine which shows merit additional time and treatment for broad public access via streaming files on the website. We will prepare approximately 100 shows for streaming. Once the shows have been digitized, compressing streaming files is largely a processing issue that workstations do over evenings and weekends and does not pose significant additional costs to the project. Project staff will complete activities as noted according to the following timeline:

Months 1-4 (July 2008 - October 2008): Project Preparation, Triage and Cataloging

- Work group meeting with appropriate staff from MSU and DPTV (Kornbluh, Berg, Woods, Pennington, Foley and assistants)
- Order supplies, including tapes, DVDs, CDs, archival boxes, acid free folders, and photographic enclosures. (Pennington, Berg, Woods)
- Revisit digital file workflow, wrapper and software packages with current research (Kornbluh, Pennington, MATRIX staff and project advisory board)
- Consultancy and triage training with video restoration expert Peter Brothers at DPTV and MSU (Kornbluh, Berg, Woods, Pennington, Foley, Blucher)
- Set up transfer workstations, test and calibrate new VTRs at MSU (Blucher, Woods, Pennington, staff)
- Assemble material for orientation of technicians and online communication of Advisory Board (Pennington, Foley, Bailey)
- Orient transfer technicians (Woods, Blucher Pennington)
- Review and triage collection for preservation and organizational issues and problems (Berg, Pennington, assistants)
- Consult with University Archives on description protocols and update Special Collections inventory format, and map to Dublin Core (Berg, Foley, Assistants)
- Send 2" tapes to Specs Brothers for cleaning and transfer (Pennington, Woods)
- Complete detailed inventory of tapes, review information from DPTV's internal spreadsheet on program content (program logs, notes, stories and telephone notes from the producers, releases, research material, press clippings and other documents) and compare to actual tapes and label information, organize them in chronological sequence, and continue triage. (Pennington, Foley, Berg and assistants)
- Identify any tapes failing triage protocol and develop a workplan to address these tapes (Woods and Pennington to lead)
- Develop a schedule for transferring tapes that can be safely cleaned and transferred in house. (DPTV and MSU technicians)

Months 5-10 (November 2008 - April 2009): Digitization Phase I

- Begin reformatting ¾" tapes to DVCPRO50 (Pennington and assistants/technicians)
- Begin capturing digital files, saving to DLT S4 cartridges, burning access DVDs of shows

- and archival CD's of intermediary MP4 access files (Pennington, technicians)
- Begin cataloguing show content as reformatting occurs and creating tape-level PBC records (assistants)
- Consulting (and restoration as necessary) failing tapes, (archivist advisors, Woods/Pennington, Brothers)
- Cataloging and inventorying entire corpus (MSU Special Collections, Berg, assistants)
- Prepare needs report and request cost estimates for restoration work on any problematic tapes (Pennington)
- Develop report for long-term migration and disaster management (Kornbluh, Pennington, Foley, Berg, Woods)
- Begin reviewing video records for humanities value (Bailey, humanities advisors)
- Interim project evaluation (Kornbluh, Pennington, Woods, DPTV, MSU, Advisory Board)

Months 11-16 (May 2009 - October 2009): Digitization Phase II; Preparation for Selection

- Complete reformatting ¾" tapes and begin reformatting 1" tapes to DVCPro50 (Pennington, Woods and assistants/technicians)
- Continue capturing digital files, producing access DVDs, saving to DLT S4 cartridges and burning archival CD's of intermediary MP4 access files (Pennington, technicians)
- Continue cataloguing files as reformatting occurs and creating tape-level PBCore record (assistants)
- Continue organizing and preserving paper materials and preparing inventory (MSU Special Collections, Berg, assistants)
- Send triage-failing tapes to restoration vendor (Pennington)
- Continue reviewing video records for humanities value (Bailey, humanities advisors)
- Distribute long-term migration and disaster management plan to Advisory Board members and others for feedback (Pennington, Foley)
- Design detailed outreach plan (Foley, Woods, Scholar Advisory Board, Wright Museum)

Months 17-22 (November 2009 - April 2010): Selection and Access

- Work with Scholar Advisory Board to review program logs and select material for online accessibility (Kornbluh, Foley, Scholar Advisors)
- Complete transfer of playable 1" tapes to DVCPro50 (Pennington, Woods, technicians)
- Compress streaming files of shows chosen for access on *ABJ Online* (Pennington, assistants)
- Deliver DVDs to Wright Museum (Pennington, technicians)
- Install computer for public access dedicated online viewing station (Woods, Wright Museum)
- Complete inventory (MSU Special Collections, Berg)
- Ingest inventory data as Dublin Core into corresponding show records in digital repository (Foley, MATRIX assistants)
- Prepare MARC record for whole collection (MSU Special Collections, Berg)
- Continue reviewing video records for humanities value (Bailey, humanities advisors)
- Draw from preserved tapes to develop show topics for new ABJ productions (Woods, DPTV)
- Begin to implement outreach plan (DPTV, MSU, Wright Museum and advisory board)
- Finalize long term migration and disaster management plans (Pennington, Foley, all)

Months 23-24 (May through June 2010): Dissemination and Future Planning

- Implement outreach plan (DPTV, MSU, Wright Museum and advisory board)
- Contact appropriate websites to promote the site and develop cross-linking of resources (Pennington, Foley, Scholar Advisory Board)
- Finalize long term migration and disaster management plans (Pennington, Foley, all)

Future Phases:

- Reformat any remaining failing tapes
- Implement migration plan
- Develop educational materials and educational and historical context for all streaming videos
- Digitize key items from supporting materials Special Collections and enter into digital repository linked with associated streaming files from relevant ABJ shows.
- Develop materials for visually- and hearing-impaired

## V. Staff

*Preserving American Black Journal* will bring together the expertise of MSU Library archivists, MATRIX and DPTV staff, and two groups of expert advisors – the Humanities Content Advisory Board and the Media Preservation Advisory Board.

Project co-director and lead humanities technology scholar is **Mark Kornbluh**, Director of MATRIX and Professor and Chair of History at MSU. Kornbluh is a historian of 20<sup>th</sup> century U.S. social and political history and an expert in delivering online humanities materials. Kornbluh has directed a wide range of digital humanities projects including the National Gallery of the Spoken Word and the African Online Digital Library, and has served on leading advisory and oversight boards including the National Academy of Science's Computer Science and Technology Board's Taskforce on Digital Preservation and the National Archives, the American Historical Association's Task Force on Intellectual Property, the National Advisory Board for the Society of History Education, and the Scholars Advisory Board to the Digital Library Federation. Kornbluh will oversee the preservation and access process, ensuring compatibility with national standards and will provide his historical expertise in the development of the humanities content and online presentation.

**Peter Berg** is an MSU Libraries assistant director, serving as head of Special Collections since 1988. He holds a Ph.D. in late 19th and early 20th century American social and cultural history. In addition to building and making accessible important print and archival collections, Berg has been a co-PI on a number of federally-funded digital and preservation projects, including "Shaping the Values of Youth: Sunday School Books in 19th Century America," "Feeding America: Historic American Cookbooks," and the recently NEH-funded "Saving America's Treasures" project to preserve a collection of 19th century American schoolbooks. Berg's other preservation work has included organization of the Richard Ford Papers and the Tom McGuane Papers. He has supervised the organization of more than 30 other archival collections in the past five years. Berg will lead the inventory processing revision, cataloguing, organization, and item-level inventory process at Special Collections, with the support of a half-time archival assistant.

**Jim Woods**, Executive Producer of *American Black Journal*, is the DPTV project director for this partnership. For this proposed project, he will serve as the DPTV liaison -- overseeing the

tape management at the station's archives, assisting in selection of material for use in thematic presentations, and participating in the advisory boards. A three-time Emmy award winner, Woods first worked with *American Black Journal* in 1972. His longevity with the program and with DPTV provide unparalleled depth of knowledge for the project.

The *Preserving ABJ* project will employ staff with specialties in metadata, video production, and online presentation of humanities materials. Media specialist **Scott Pennington** will devote 50% of his time to this project as MATRIX Digital Lab Director and project manager of the partnership. He will coordinate the MATRIX technical activities, conduct quality checks on database information, and manage the production standards for the video transfers, website development and catalog incorporation from the Special Collections inventory. **Catherine Foley**, MATRIX Librarian and will lead the metadata development, advisory board activities, and disaster planning aspects of the project as part of her regular job duties.

MATRIX associate director, **Dean Rehberger**, an expert in usability for humanities computing, will oversee the project development throughout. **Dennis Boone**, MATRIX systems administrator, will work closely with Rehberger and Pennington in developing the computing power and scaling up for the significant additional volume of streaming video. Both Rehberger and Boone will serve the project through MSU cost share.

DPTV staff participants will include an hourly technician for tape handling, paid for with NEH funds. In addition, **Jeff Forster** and **Helge Blucher** will serve the project via DPTV costshare. **Jeff Forster**, DPTV Vice-President of Production and Station Enterprises, will provide general oversight and integration with the station's other production and education initiatives. Forster has more than twenty years of experience in commercial and non-commercial television as director, producer, and executive producer. He has extensive experience managing large project teams with tight deadlines and high quality standards. **Helge Blucher** is chief engineer at DPTV and will oversee machine calibration and technical standards throughout the project.

#### **Humanities Content Advisory Board**

All aspects of this program will be guided by a Humanities Content Advisory Board, consisting of a select group of scholars and experts on African-American topics. These advisors will review the detailed contents of the reformatted videotapes and will guide project staff to determine which of the reformatted tapes merit full public access through online streaming and development of additional contextual materials.

The Humanities Content Advisory Board for this proposal will be led by **Dr. David T. Bailey** (PhD, University of California, Berkeley), Associate Professor of American History at Michigan State University. Dr. Bailey will devote additional time via MSU cost share to reviewing new content and advising on metadata and historical framing materials. Other members of the humanities content board for the overall program are: **Dr. Julia Harmon** (PhD, Michigan State University), Assistant Professor in the Departments of Comparative Religion and Africana Studies at Western Michigan University; **Dr. Thomas Sugrue** (PhD, Harvard), Bicentennial Class of 1940 Professor of History and Sociology and Chair of the Graduate Group in History at the University of Pennsylvania; and **Dr. Richard Thomas** (PhD, University of Michigan), Professor of American History and Urban Affairs at Michigan State University; **Cliff Russell**,

former producer of ABJ and current on-air host; and **Sandra Clemons**, retired director of Detroit Public Libraries and member of DPTV’s community affairs advisory board.

### **Media Preservation Advisory Board**

All preservation aspects of this project will be guided by input from a Media Preservation Advisory Board, consisting of a select group of scholars and practitioners conversant in the issues facing film media and two of whom are active in standards development for film preservation. These consultants, along with the Humanities Content Advisory Board, will help to define project priorities. The Preservation Advisory Board consists of:

**Peter Brothers** is the C.E.O. of Specs Brothers, a magnetic tape restoration and disaster recovery facility whose clients include the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Disney and the Getty Foundation. Peter Brothers is a member of ANSI and has developed ISO preservation standards. He has also provided testimony to the Library of Congress on “The Current State of American Television and Video Preservation” (1997). Brothers will serve on the preservation advisory board as well as conduct onsite evaluation and triage training of DPTV and MSU staff.

**Dr. Howard Besser** (PhD, University of California, Berkeley) is Professor of Cinema Studies and Director of New York University's Moving Image Archiving & Preservation Program, as well as Senior Scientist for Digital Library Initiatives for NYU's Library. His four main interest areas have been image and multimedia databases (particularly in cultural institutions), the social and cultural effects of information technology, digital library issues (particularly around standards, longevity, and intellectual property), and the development of new ways to teach with technology (including web-based instruction and distance learning).

**Lisa Carter**, Director of Archives at the University of Kentucky's Special Collections and Digital programs, has more than 10 years of experience preserving and providing access to archival audio-visual collections. She is project manager for the National Television and Video Preservation Fund. She advises public television stations seeking solutions to archival challenges and has presented on issues involved with digitizing video and implementing metadata standards.

**Mary Ide** is Director of Media Archives and Preservation Center for the WGBH Educational Foundation. Ide’s work includes leadership roles within the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) and publications including “Preserving Moving Images: Assessing Risk and Value” (2004), “Developing Preservation Appraisal Criteria for a Public Broadcasting Station” (2003) and “Videotape Collections: Care and Management” (2001).

Together with staff members, the Preservation Advisory Board will review the ABJ programs inventories and catalogue information, define priorities and make preservation decisions as well as define long-term migration and disaster management plans. An electronic listserv for consulting about the project will allow participants to share information and discuss approaches.

## **VI. Dissemination**

Preserved ABJ shows and archival materials will be available for humanities use in several formats and locations; and their accessibility will be publicized widely to potential users. The paper archive and DVD copies of all reformatted shows will be available for onsite research at

MSU Libraries Special Collections. Also, DVD copies will be available at Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit. Shows selected by the humanities advisors will be available streaming along with their metadata at *ABJ Online*. These will serve as the access copies for researchers, students, scholars, teachers and the general public anywhere. Each reformatted tape will have a corresponding metadata record to allow for searching and research via the website.

The preserved materials at MSU and Wright Museum in combination with *ABJ Online* will be showcased as a new project in DPTV's various outreach materials and on-air announcements to the station's audience of more than one million viewers. Moreover, once the programs have been fully cataloged and transferred to accessible formats, they will again be available for use in DPTV production. DPTV plans to re-broadcast some historic ABJ programs on ABJ. Other shows will form the basis for retrospective review programs and for new programs that will revisit the issues and locations of earlier programs in order to observe and reflect upon change.

The existing *ABJ Online* website will be broadened and enriched as newly reformatted tapes are selected for streaming. We will then advertise the project widely through various electronic and traditional media. MATRIX is well represented at professional conferences and forums nationally and internationally in humanities computing and digital culture.

In addition, the project will be disseminated through the world's largest distributor of online scholarly discussion networks, H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online, whose technical and administrative hub resides at MATRIX. H-Net reaches more than 150,000 scholars and educators around the world through over 150 email networks edited by field experts. H-Net's more than 150 subject- and discipline-specific networks, including many audiences with an interest in ABJ content from whom we can solicit additional feedback from scholars and practitioners and publicize the results and progress of this project. Relevant listservs include: H-Afro-Am, African-American Studies; H-Amstdy, American Studies; H-Arete, Sports Literature; H-High-S, Teaching High School History and Social Studies; H-Labor, Labor History; H-Labor-Arts, Cultural and Artistic Heritages of Working People; H-Local, State and Local History Museums; H-Michigan, History and Culture of Michigan; H-Oralhist, Studies Related to Oral History; H-Pol, United States Political History; H-Public, Public History; H-Teach, Teaching College History; H-Teachpol, Teaching Political Science; and H-Urban, Urban History.

DPTV and MSU will work with The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit for dissemination of the project in the city where it originated. The Charles H. Wright Museum is the world's largest institution dedicated to the African American experience. The Museum provides exhibitions and programs that explore the diversity of African American history and culture. The Museum houses over 30,000 artifacts and archival materials and is home to the Blanche Caggin Underground Railroad Collection, Harriet Tubman Museum Collection, Coleman A. Young Collection and the Sheffield Collection, a repository of documents of the labor movement in Detroit. As part of the project cost-sharing, DVDs of all reformatted shows will be deposited in the research library at the museum in Detroit. These DVDs of the original shows will be available for viewing in the museum or for borrowing via interlibrary loan.