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Maria M. Zhukova

Russian University for the Humanities, Moscow, Russian Federation

Radio and Television Audiovisual Documents as a Part of National Documental Heritage:
Issues of Acquisition, Storage, and Study

Abstract

The article introduces the results of studying the history and contemporary status of radio and television audiovisual documents as a part of national documental heritage. Based on the assumption of information value of archival radio and television records, the author reviews national scholarship studying old shows as archival documents and historical sources and analyzes stages of records acquisition by the Archival Fund of the Russian Federation and the national library and information fund. The author also focuses on legal and practical consequences of the break-up of records collections in various archives and organizations that

are to store legal deposit copies of shows. After reviewing professional literature, it can be concluded that films, sound and video records of shows are specific documents that need special instruments for appraisal, selection, and description. Having studied documents of the Soviet State Broadcasting Committee, Soviet and Russian laws on archival science and practice, and contemporary experience of the All-Russian State Broadcasting Company, the author comes forth with three main periods in acquisition of radio and television records: 1930s – mid-1960s; late 1960s – 1980s; 1990s – 2010s. The author also determines reasons why television records were not included in the Soviet State Archival Fund collections: it was due to rivalry between the Soviet State Archives Department and State Broadcasting Committee and to disinclination of the archives to deal with television tapes records. The article includes recommendations on updating appraisal policy as far as audiovisual records are concerned. Records selection has lost its significance due to legal prescription to safeguard all programs as legal deposit copies, and it now seems more effective to appraise the records while they are being described in finding aids. Records assessment and selection based on formal criteria can be made within television and radio broadcasting companies' archives after legal deposit copies have been delivered to liable organizations.

Keywords

Audiovisual document, broadcasting, radio and television records, appraisal policy, Archival Fund of the Russian Federation, national library and information fund, legal deposit copy.

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About author

Zhukova Maria Mikhailovna, Russian State University for the Humanities, History and Archives Institute, department of document science, audiovisual and scientific and technological archives, senior lecturer, Moscow, Russian Federation, +7–916–515–66–80, m.m.zhukova@mail.ru

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