

Placentia Library Memory Lab

Guide to Identifying Formats



This guide is designed to help you identify the format(s) of your items and contains formats the Memory Lab is unable to digitize at this time.

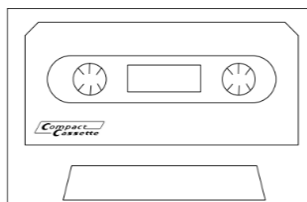
AUDIO – MAGNETIC

Sound recordings on analog magnetic tape: may be tape cassettes or reels.

1/8-inch Audiocassette

aka Compact Cassette or Standard Audiocassette

- Compact Cassette logo somewhere on cassette
- Introduced in 1962
- Used for professionals and amateur recordings
- Likely polyester or acetate substrate
- Dimensions: 4" x 2.5" x 1/2"
- Typically made of plastic
- Tape width: 1/8"
- Each tape holds 30 to 120 minutes of content
- Most have 4 track stereo configuration with Tracks 1 & 2 on "Side A" and tracks 3 & 4 on "Side B"
- Common Brands: TDK, Maxell, & Dolby



AUDIO – MAGNETIC

1/4-inch audio tape (reel-to reel)

- Introduced widely in 1948, though earlier prototypes developed as early as 1928
- Used for professionals and amateur recordings
- Either polyester or acetate substrate



WIRE

- Introduced in 1939
- Small spool of fine metal wire
- Spools about 2 1/2" diameter, 5/8" thick
- Used primarily for dictation and amateur recordings
- Superseded by magnetic tape recording in 1950s



DIGITAL

Sony Digital Audiotape (DAT)

- Introduced in 1987
- Most common digital magnetic audio format
- Similar in shape to audiocassette, but thicker
- Used for professionals and amateur recordings
- Likely polyester substrate



AUDIO – MAGNETIC

Microcassette

- Introduced in 1969
- Aka micro-cassette
- Used primarily for dictation and amateur recordings
- Polyester substrate
- Spooled right to left
- Slightly smaller than minicassette, approximately 2''



Minicassette

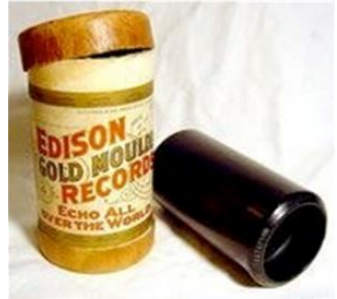
- Introduced in 1969
- Aka mini-cassette
- Used primarily for dictation and amateur recordings
- Polyester substrate
- Spooled left to right
- Larger than microcassette, approximately 2.15''



AUDIO – GROOVED MEDIA

CYLINDER

- Introduced in 1877, manufactured through the late 1920s
- Used for professional and amateur recordings
- Foil, wax and celluloid substrates
- Black is most common color; also, brown, blue and beige
- Name of the recording often inscribed on the beveled edge of the cylinder



BELT

- Introduced in 1947
- AKA Dictabelt or Memobelt
- 3.5" wide 12" circumference
- Color: Red (1950- 1964), Blue (1964-1975), or Purple (1975 onwards)
- Used primarily for dictation and amateur recordings



DISCS

- Introduced in 1895
- AKA gramophone, phono disc, records



AUDIO – GROOVED MEDIA

Discs Continued

- Used primarily for professional, but amateur and dictation recordings exist
- Dominant form of domestic audio in the 20th century
- Various coatings and substrates.

See following examples

Shellac Based

- Manufactured between mid-1890s and 1950s
- 10" and 12" diameter sizes are the most common
- Brittle and will shatter if dropped
- 78 rpms (revolutions per minute)
- Commercially produced



Nitrate or acetate coated, metal or glass based

- Manufactured and 1950s between mid-1890s
- Used as likely unique objects recording discs, instantaneous
- AKA acetates, instantaneous discs, lacquer discs
- 16" diameter



Vinyl based

- Introduced in 1948
- 33 1/3rpms, 45rpms & 78rpms
- 7", 10" or 12" diameter
- Discs thinner and lighter in weight than shellac or coated

AUDIO & VISUAL – DISCS

CD

- Introduced in 1989
- Variations of CDs: R/RW/ROM
- Typical capacity 700MB / 80min of audio



DVD

- Introduced in 1995
- Variations of DVD: R/RW/ROM, etc.



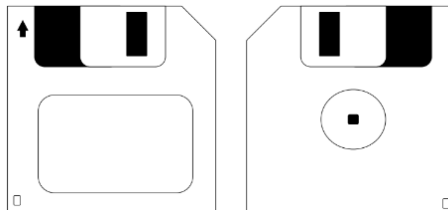
LaserDisc

- Short-lived consumer video disc format (late 1970s-1990s)
- Looks like a DVD or CD but larger and heavier
- Will usually be in a cardboard sleeve like an LP

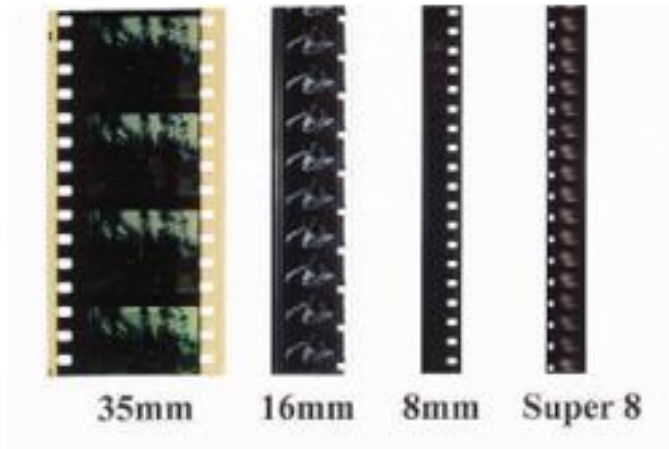


Floppy Disk

- Floppy disks look like the Save Icon!
- Size of floppy disk is actual measurement
 - 3.5" Floppy Disks are 3.5 inches
- Common Brands: IBM & Memorex



MOVING IMAGES – FILM



35mm

- Introduced in 1895
- Primarily used by professionals but amateur recordings exist
- Nitrate, Acetate and Polyester substrates
- 35mm wide, perforations on both edges.
- Silent or sound, color or black and white
- Negative, positive, sound only (either magnetic or optical), composite.

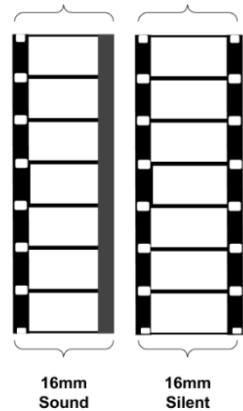
16mm

- Introduced in 1923
- Used by amateurs and professionals
- Acetate and Polyester substrates
- 16mm wide
- Films with sound have perforation on only ONE side

MOVING IMAGES – FILM

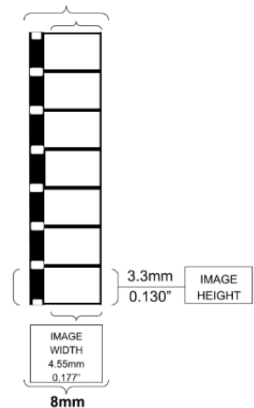
16mm continued

- Films without sound have perforations on BOTH sides
- Perforations are same as 8mm
- Color or black & white
- Negative, positive, sound only (either magnetic or optical), composite.
- If the film is Kodak it will have edge code symbols that represent the year the film was made. ● ■ ▲ + ✕
- DO NOT TOUCH- handle only the sides or use gloves



8mm

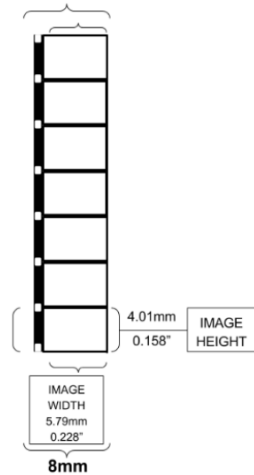
- Introduced in 1932
- Used primarily by amateurs, but some were made available on this format home use.
- Acetate and Polyester substrates
- 8mm wide, perforations on 1 edge
- Color or black & white.
- Usually silent, but magnetic sound available
- Negative, positive, composite
- Image will likely be blurry- this was a form of film for amateurs.
- If the film is Kodak it will have edge code symbols that represent the year the film was made. ● ■ ▲ + ✕
- DO NOT TOUCH- handle only the sides or use gloves



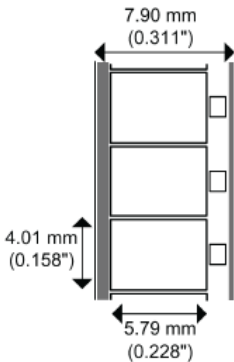
MOVING IMAGES – FILM

Super 8mm

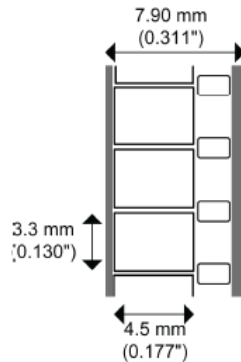
- Introduced in 1965
- Used primarily by amateurs, but some were made available for home use.
- Acetate and Polyester substrates
- 8mm wide, perforations on 1 edge, that are smaller than regular 8mm.
- Color or black & white.
- Silent or sound (mostly magnetic, rarely optical)
- Negative, positive, composite perforation of Super 8 is smaller.
- DO NOT TOUCH- handle only the sides or use gloves



* Super 8 and 8mm are both 8mm wide, but the perforation of Super 8 is smaller.



Super 8



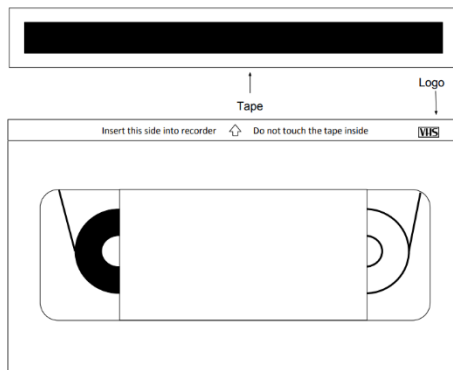
8 mm

MOVING IMAGES – ANALOG MAGNETIC

Sound recordings on analog magnetic tape: may be tape cassettes or reels. Many formats, especially cassettes, will have format names on the object.

VHS

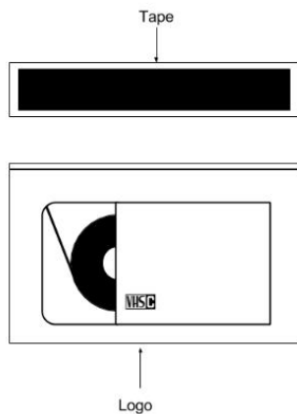
- Introduced in 1976
- Variation: S-VHS
- Used for professional and consumer recordings
- VHS Logo on upper right-hand corner
- Dimensions 7.375" x 4.0625" x 1"
- Typically, black plastic with white hubs and clear window to show tape.
- Tape width is ½ inch.
- Sometimes in a plastic container, or paper sleeves
- Common Brands: Sony, JVC, Panasonic, Fuji, Maxwell, & Q.



MOVING IMAGES – ANALOG MAGNETIC

VHS-C

- There will be a VHS-C logo somewhere on the middle of the tape
- Tape width is $\frac{1}{2}$ inch
- Dimensions: 3.625" x 2.25" x 0.8"
- Typically, black plastic with a white hub and clear window.
- Common Brands: Sony, JVC, Fuji, TDKI, Panasonic
- Can be played/digitized in a VHS player ONLY with an adapter.



$\frac{3}{4}$ " Umatic

- Introduced in 1971
- Variation: "Umatic SP"
- Professional and amateur recordings



MOVING IMAGES – ANALOG MAGNETIC

2" Quad

- Introduced in 1956
- In use through early 1980s
- Professional recordings
- Open reel, 2" tape width



1" Type C

- Introduced in 1978
- In use through 1990s
- Used for professional recordings
- Open reel, 1" tape width



1/2" Open Reel

- Introduced in 1965
- In use through later 1970s
- Used for professional and consumer recordings
- Open reel, 1/2" tape width



Betacam SP

- Introduced in 1986
- Variation: Betacam, introduced in 1982
- Used for professional recordings
- Cassette, 1/2" tape width
- Cassette & case is usually grey and/or black



MOVING IMAGES – DIGITAL MAGNETIC

DIGITAL

Video recordings on digital magnetic tape will be in cassettes. Many formats, especially cassettes, will have format names on the object.

Digital Betacam

- Introduced in 1993
- AKA DigiBeta
- Used for recordings professional
- Cassette, 1/2" tape width
- Cassette & case is usually blue and/or grey



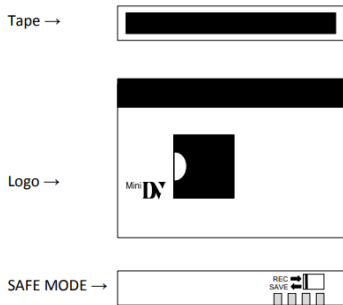
MiniDV

- Introduced in 1995
- AKA DV or DVC
- Used for professional recordings and amateur
- Cassette, 1/4" tape width
- Logo on the left-hand side
- Dimensions 2.56" x 1.88" x 7/16"
- Tape width 5/16 inch (8mm)
- Most common dark gray tape with a light blue anti-static cover and 1 clear window
- Often stored in clear hinged plastic box



MOVING IMAGES – DIGITAL MAGNETIC

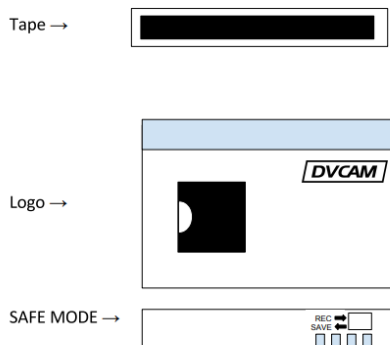
MiniDV continued



- Have SAFE and REC mode
- Common Brands: Sony, JVC, & Panasonic

DVCam aka Small DV Tape

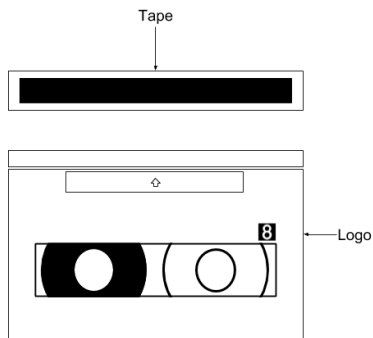
- DVCam logo in upper right-hand corner
- Dimensions: 2.563" x 1.875" x 0.5625"
- Most common are dark gray tape with light blue anti-static and 1 clear window
- Often in hard plastic container with snap closure
- SAFE mode and REC mode
- Common Brands: Sony



MOVING IMAGES – DIGITAL MAGNETIC

Video8

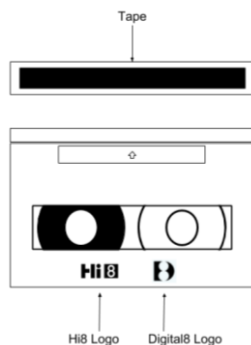
- Introduced in 1986
- Variation: Hi8, introduced in 1989
- Used primarily for amateur recordings
- Tape width: 0.3125" (8mm)
- Dimensions: 3.69" x 2.38" x 0.56"
- There will be a Video8 logo somewhere on the front side of the near the clear window
- Typically, black plastic with white hub and clear window
- Common Brands: Sony, Fuji, Panasonic



MOVING IMAGES – DIGITAL MAGNETIC

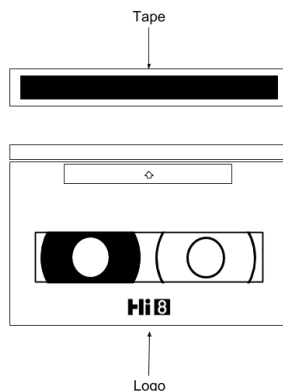
Digital 8 Tape

- There will be a Hi8 logo or Digital8 logo somewhere on the front side of the tape near the clear window
- Digital8 is recorded on standard Hi8 tapes. There may not be any distinguishing marks to indicate the recording is Digital 8.
- Tape width: 0.3125" (8mm)
- Dimensions: 3.69" x 2.38" x 0.56"
- Typically, black plastic with white hub and a clear window
- Common Brands: Sony, Fuji, Panasonic



Hi8 Tape

- There will be a Hi8 logo somewhere on the front side of the tape near the clear window
- Dimensions: 3.69" x 2.38" x 0.56"
- Tape width: 0.3125" (8mm)
- Typically, black plastic with white hub and clear window
- Common Brands: Sony, Fuji, Panasonic

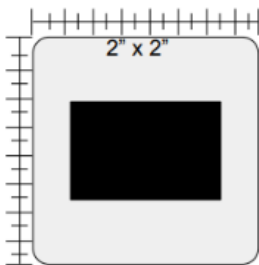


IMAGES – FILM

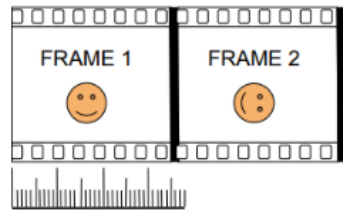
35mm Slides

- Are Positive
 - Meaning you can see the image clearly as it was taken
- Most are mounted
 - In cardboard or plastic
- When unmounted, Slides have exactly 8 perforations on both sides.
- Horizontal Orientation
 - Regardless of image orientation.

This is 35mm slide in a mount

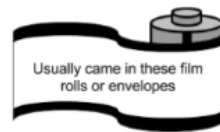


This is a 35mm slide without a mount



Film Positive

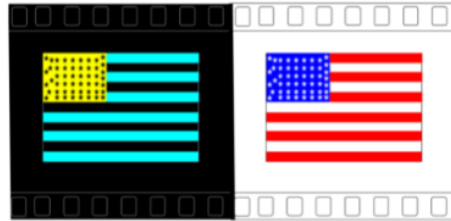
- Can be black & white or color
- The image will look just as prints
- The cameras “reversals” they are made from negatives
- Can be scanned and digitized



IMAGES – FILM

Film positive continued

- Through a chemical process can be processed into print
- Positive film can be individual, strips, or framed



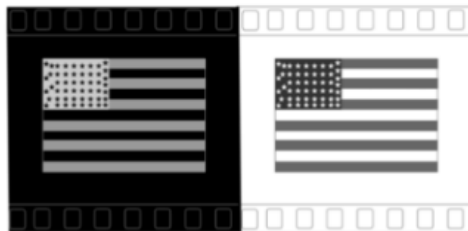
Color negative

Color positive

Film

Negative

- Can be Black & White or Color
- The cameras “originals”
- Negatives are inverted
 - The image on the film is the reverse colors and luminescence of an image
- Typically comes in long strips
- Must be developed and processed to get a printable image



Black and white negative

Black and white positive

For more information about the Placentia Library Memory Lab, please visit <https://www.placentialibrary.org/memory-lab>