

PROPOSAL FOR VIDEO DISTRIBUTION RESEARCH

- (1) We have already discussed this proposal with Messrs Buston and Wilson, secretaries of the relevant Committees.
- (2) We are asking each Committee for a recommendation to the Arts Council Research Department for this research to be funded.
- (3) Because video is a diversified activity and because the Arts Council funds it through 2 different panels--Art Films and Community Arts--we think any distribution activity funded by the Arts Council should include both lines of interest.
- (4) The Arts Council is the major arts funding body in the UK and we look to it confidently for a strong lead. Production without distribution is like a table with one leg.
- (5) If public money is to be put eventually into video distribution by the Arts Council, research should be done first in order to avoid pitfalls.
- (6) Our credentials as researchers and practitioners in this field are already established (see Appendix)

The Present Situation

- * Most of the tape showings up to the present have been sporadic and uncoordinated with each other. There is, as yet, no organised video-tape distribution in the UK, serving independent video producers in the arts and community field. Nor have rates and codes of practice been established.
- * Unlike community theatre, which is now relatively highly subsidised, and has been able to develop touring circuits, videotape distribution is not subsidised at all, and no circuits have yet been developed. It is important to realise that tape distribution does not always have to be done in person, and can sometimes be done by mail--which would make video distribution often much cheaper than the distribution of community theatre, which of necessity requires a whole travelling company to be present at each venue.
- * Presently there is a gap between present audiences and videotape makers. We think that audiences for video have to be created from the potential audiences in arts centres, galleries, community centres, colleges, festivals, exhibitions and broadcast TV.
- * In Sweden, videocassette is already regarded as a delivery vehicle for material originated on film, particularly Super-8. We think ~~xx~~

there is a considerable possibility of including film-originated material on videotape. Also, both videotape and reel-to-reel, and black-and-white and colour formats will be included.

Our Own Efforts

* Our current attempts at videotape distribution are modest but purposeful, and are built on a considerable experience of event promotion over the last 10 years, including the showing of avant-garde film. We are halfway through a short season of free showings of the best videotapes we can get hold of (mainly from the UK) where all the resources, including tapes themselves, equipment, venues, publicity and labour, are contributed free. We are trying to develop a format for tape showing which can be used for any type of videotape, whether art on the one hand, or community material on the other. We are also fortunate in having the confidence of many videotape makers in the UK, which is the key at the moment to promoting this type of free showing.

* At future showings we would at least like to be able to pay the AVW minimum rate to tape makers. This is £6.00 per half hour(b/w).

The Proposal

We want to carry out some research prior to making a grant application for establishing video distribution. The research would be aimed at investigating the potential for distribution among the types of venue, outlet etc referred to above, partly by personal visits, but mainly by a questionnaire mailing. In addition, to test audience reaction, promotion format, etc, a series of pilot showings varying in content and form will be held and treated as research. The results of the research will be published in a form easily available to potential users, perhaps on the lines of the UK Video Index previously funded by the Arts Council.

Cost Breakdown

* Information research (for details see below): £500. This assumes that the mailing facilities of the Arts Council are available.

* Printing: £150. This would provide approx. 500 copies of a 16-page booklet to be produced, for free distribution through the Arts Council itself.

Mailing(cont)

Mailing would be provided by the Arts Council. We would supervise the mailings and collate sort and produce the information coming back from the survey.

APPENDIX : Existing Research

U K Video Index, 1st ed. 1973; 2nd ed. 1974 (Arts Council funded)

U K Video Abstracts, 1974 (Arts Council funded)

Sociocultural Applications of TV Technology in the UK. 1975, Council of Europe.

Video and Decision-Making, 1975, Council of Europe

Technical Reports 1 - 3, 1975 (on Low Gauge Video).

Half-Inch Video Editing, 1976, Greater London Arts Association.