

Mark Harrison

Controller of Production, BBC North

Digital Archives: who needs them?

Abstract:

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The move to end to end digital production in television appears to offer enormous business and creative benefits – not least around the potential to store, search and find material. But how true is this in practice? As a business lead for the BBC in exploring digital archive solutions, and as Chair of the industry-wide Digital Production Partnership, Mark Harrison has looked in detail at what it means to store and archive digital media. He asks: how do we separate myth from reality? What really are the creative benefits and opportunities – if any? And what are business realities, both for broadcasters and production companies, of trying to make digital media findable and retrievable?

Biography: Mark Harrison began his career as an Historian at Cambridge University, before moving into broadcasting. He spent fifteen years as a freelance film director and executive producer making programmes for the BBC, Channel 4 and The Discovery Channel across a range of genres, and working with a number of independent companies. Among the awards for this work were ones from the RTS, BFI and an International Emmy. In 2000 he became Managing Director of Soul Purpose Productions, and then in 2002 was appointed Head of Arts for the BBC. He subsequently became Head of Multiplatform Production for the BBC, and during that time established a reputation for production innovation.



In 2011 he became Controller of Production for BBC North in Salford and was responsible for defining and delivering new ways of working. Mark is a founder member of the Digital Production Partnership (DPP), created by the BBC, ITV and Channel Four in 2011 to accelerate the move to end-to-end digital production and distribution in British Broadcasting. He recently authored *The Creative Revolution*, a report for the DPP on how digital technology is changing creativity in television.