

Preserving Memories
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We are so excited to see you all back in the library! We look forward to helping our patrons as best we can with our current restrictions for the health of our staff and you. One new way that we are able to assist you is through our Memory lab. It took a while to work out the bugs, but it is now up and running. If you haven't heard of it though, then you may be wondering, "What is a Memory Lab?"

A Memory Lab is space with the equipment and technology to convert older forms of media into digital files that can then be used in a variety of ways. Technology in the last 60 years has changed tremendously, as I spoke about in my last article, and that means many forms of media have or are becoming obsolete. What kinds of media can we convert? We have a microfilm scanner to convert microfilm slides into digital images. We have a digital scanner to convert documents into PDF files or photographs into image files. We have a 3.5" floppy disk reader to allow old files to be transferred onto modern computers. We can convert (are you ready for some acronyms?) VHS, VHS-C, DV, miniDV, HDV 1080i, and DVCAM video cartridges and cassettes into digital video files of various formats. We can convert phonograph, audio cassette, and Betamax tapes into audio files of various formats as well.

At this point you might ask, "Well what can't you do?" There are a couple things. First and foremost, we can't do it for you. The Memory Lab is intended as a self-service area. We'll train and assist as necessary, but you are the one responsible for your media. One reason for this is that digitization occurs in real time. That means that if you bring in a VHS tape with 3 hours of home videos on it, then it will take 3 hours JUST to record the videos into a digital format. That does not include the setup time beforehand or the file finishing and formatting after. We love our patrons, but we do not have the time to sit for 3 hours with your media. Be prepared to bring something to do during your recording process. You might also think about chunking your sessions into more manageable lengths of time.

Second, and this is something we would like to add at some point, we do not currently have the capability to write files to a CD or DVD. If you want to take your new digital files with you after you finish, then you will need to bring a flash drive (sometimes called a memory stick or thumb drive), an external hard drive, or be prepared to upload it on the internet into a cloud based drive. If you didn't understand any of that, don't worry! We do a one hour training for all first time users, and we're always happy to answer your questions. Once we are able to do in-person programming here at the library again, we'll look at offering classes with instruction and one on one coaching as well.

If you're interested in making an appointment, the Memory Lab is open Monday thru Friday from 10am until 5pm with 1 hour slots. You can call us to set up a time or go to our website at www.newulmlibrary.org and click on the Memory Lab tree to setup an appointment online. We are excited to be offering this service to the community, and we

hope that you will use it to preserve your memories for the next generation of your family as well as the next generation of technology.