

The Future of the Community Media Archive

Subtitle: From Operating the Archive to Stewarding the Record

One-line description

After seventeen years spent *saving* community media to the Internet Archive, the effort is turning from operations to stewardship. See the vision and how you can help shape what the archive becomes.

Abstract

Every PEG station carries the same quiet fear: that decades of Public, Educational, and Government access programming (the council meetings, the graduations, the local shows nobody else was recording) will simply disappear when a channel is deleted, a platform folds, or the franchise money finally runs out. For seventeen years the Community Media Archive has fought that fear the only way it could: by getting community media onto the Internet Archive before it vanished, roughly 3.2 million items across some 2,200 collections, one worker machine and one uploaded channel at a time. This session asks the question the Archive is now mature enough to take on: once the work is *saved*, how do we make it *matter*: findable, studied, and defensible?

Where this heads is stewardship rather than solo survival. It looks like Archive Corps, a volunteer program that lets community members contribute at any scale without a career-sized commitment; like hosting an archive worker machine that's remotely managed; like captions and transcripts that turn decades of proceedings into something a researcher, a neighbor, or a city council can actually search; and like a coverage map that shows exactly where local democracy is going unrecorded. We'll share the vision, contrast it honestly with the operational era that made it possible, and open concrete ways stations can help steward the record their own work created.

What you'll take away

- **From saving to stewarding:** why preserving PEG programming is only step one, and what it takes to make a station's archive findable, defensible, and enduring rather than just stored.
- **Concrete ways to steward:** how your content and local knowledge feed the archive, and how the forthcoming Archive Corps volunteer program

turns preservation into ongoing community engagement, and into evidence of PEG's value.

Speaker bio

John Hauser founded and leads the Community Media Archive and the emerging Archive Corps volunteer program, which preserve PEG and community media on the Internet Archive. After years operating the archive channel by channel, John's focus is now stewardship: making the record findable, defensible, and enduring.