

MEMORANDUM



TO: Mark Prus
Provost

FROM: Amy Berg
Associate Provost for Information Resources

DATE: January 30, 2012

RE: Campus plan to end of life VHS/DVD Combination players

VHS players debuted in 1970. DVD players debuted in 1995. Blu-ray players debuted in 2003. Internet video streaming has become more stable with increased bandwidth to colleges and the home, and are now a viable alternative to all of the previous video formats (Memorial Library currently subscribes to over 17,000 titles).

The history of video formats clearly shows that VHS players are now obsolete. No manufacturer offers a standalone VHS player, and only one or two manufacturers offer a combination DVD/VHS player. In addition, pre-recorded VHS tapes are no longer being manufactured. The last major Hollywood movie released on VHS was in 2006.

The college has provided VHS/DVD combination players in each of the technology classrooms and in many other areas of the campus. However, we need to plan for the time when we can no longer support these players.

In response, Information Resources has implemented a video content streaming server called Ensemble. Moving video content to this server will eliminate the outdated format concerns of VHS and even DVD (Blu-ray is quickly replacing DVD). Of course, we will need to maintain the original VHS tape or DVD in an archive for copyright purposes. But the tapes and DVDs will not circulate.

All of Memorial Library's video collection has been converted to the Ensemble server and is available for viewing from the library catalog. Faculty may link to video content through their Blackboard courses or simply refer students to the library catalog. Another perk is that Ensemble videos are available for viewing from anywhere on or off campus. Converting video to the Ensemble server ensures the content is in a safe, sustainable viewing format for the future.

Now, we need to begin working with campus departments (both academic and administration) to identify appropriate, copyright-approved video content to be moved to the Ensemble server. Per the Ensemble Video Streaming Policy approved by the Cabinet last August, all commercial video content moved to the Ensemble server will be donated to Memorial Library to be included in the library catalog.

Departments and individual faculty may request a “folder” on the Ensemble server to store video content that has been created within the department for academic purposes.

Soon, the library’s bibliographers will begin visiting the academic departments to discuss the conversion of their video content to the Ensemble server. We will need to identify the content titles, formats (VHS or DVD), determine duplicates that we already have in the Memorial Library collection or one of our subscription video streaming services, etc.

Working with the departments, we should be able to have their video content moved to the Ensemble server by the end of spring semester 2013. Therefore, based on industry recommendations and our ability to move content to the Ensemble server, Information Resources would like to end-of-life VHS/DVD combination players on May 20, 2013. DVDs may still be played through computer DVD drives; however, end of life means that the combo VHS/DVD players will be removed.

We have set this end of life date for these players because we are highly concerned that the campus will continue to rely on this obsolete technology. We will not be able to purchase the combo VHS/DVD players for much longer. We must move off of ancient technologies and into a safe, sustainable video format.

Please support our suggested end of life VHS/DVD combination player date of May 20, 2013.