

## **Channel 4 and British Film Culture Conference**

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### **Linking archival and academic practice: the digitisation of Channel 4's Press Information Packs**

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Among Channel 4's many broadcasting innovations was the publication of weekly Press Information Packs between the years of 1982 and 2002, giving comprehensive programme listings, highlighting special television events and previewing every broadcast feature film. A significant aspect of the University of Portsmouth's AHRC-funded Channel 4 Project has been the digitisation of the complete run of press packs printed prior to June 2002, when press information was made available digitally via the broadcaster's website. This process has been overseen by BUFVC Research Executive Linda Kaye, who has also been responsible for the development of the press pack database and accompanying microsite.

Throughout the course of the digitisation there was an ongoing dialogue between the University of Portsmouth's academic researchers and the BUFVC's information specialists. Working together, we were able to present our respective findings and develop corresponding methodologies. Following the OCR scanning of the packs, the research team discussed how the accumulated data should be tagged, thus determining which fields would be searchable within the final database. This was extremely productive, as it allowed the academic researchers to better understand the taxonomy of the database content, while concurrently making the information specialists aware of the users' research requirements. Although it was always intended that the database would develop in accordance with the needs of its users, the diverse methodological outcomes of this collaboration had not initially been predicted.

This paper will examine the methodologies that have emerged as a result of the press pack digitisation. Focusing on the work of BUFVC Research Executive Linda Kaye and PhD student Rachael Keene, it will assess the project's attempts to create links between archival and scholarly practice. It will also discuss the broader significance of digital literacy and the need for transparency in collaborations between information specialists and academic researchers.