

- Southend File
- 1 Video Access Libraries are the answer to a fundamental public service need, that of making film/video available to the public on demand. The development of the new communications technology of video, flexible and user-friendly in its applications, has opened up new venues for arts documentaries and original work on film and video by artists.
 - 2 The best analogy is a book reference library, where the public has choice and an appropriate context in which to study. The mechanics of an access library are slightly different of course. The Librarian controls the play-back machine and television viewing booths that can accommodate up to 4 people, earphones are provided to prevent sound leakage and back-up written material is provided.
 - 3 The Film Section has assisted in the setting up of four Video Access Libraries to date. The ICA in London, Midland Group in Nottingham, Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle and Arnolfini, Bristol. The Arnolfini has grown from one television monitor in the corner of a gallery to a custom built area with four viewing booths and an average twenty-five unit users per day (average 45 minutes viewing time).
 - 4 The proposal for Southend is particularly important because it provides the opportunity for a pilot scheme within a local authority library. This will both be a different type of venue and provide access to a different section of the public.
 - 5 Southend is appropriate because the Library has a progressive approach and is the County Art Library so it also provides the right context for the proposal.
 - 6 Once installed, the catalogue of contents of a Video Access Library is infinitely extendable. It is envisaged that two main sections would be added, one a local community arts deposit, the other material funded by the Regional Arts Association in whose area Southend is situated.

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