

Digital Preservation Assessment: Readying Cultural Heritage Institutions for Digital Preservation

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Cornell Study

- 100 distinct institutions participating in NEH funding 2003-2005 workshops;
- 50% academic, 27% gov't, 5.2% museum, 3.5% public libraries, 14% other
- Participants held 9-11 different formats
- 50% of attendees had developed policies; 30% implemented policies
- CD/DVD principle storage medium (90%), online 85%, 75% tape
- 59% of the institutions had staff charged with digital preservation responsibilities.
- 38% of institutions were funding programs with institutional funds

2005 NEDCC Survey Results

- 33.1%--academic libraries; 14.5% archives; 9% art museums; 7.8% public libraries; 24.7% other
- Who's responsible—66% institutions no one is responsible for digital preservation activities
- Continuing education—84% supported CE activities for digital preservation
- Preservation solutions—
 - **78% networked hard drives;**
 - **65% removable magnetic media;**
 - **data is stored in-house**
- Cause for concern: 30% have been backed up one time or not at all

On site visit Findings

- Issue of digital preservation is just now coming to the forefront of discussion and action
- Many institutions still at “Digital Project” vs. “Digital Program” stage
- Written policies and documented digital preservation practices are lacking
- Preservation/Conservation Staff are generally not directly involved in many of the digital initiatives

Key Findings-Digital Preservation

- Few have coordinated institutional approach to their digital initiative, especially in the areas of:
 - Standards (Imaging, Metadata)
 - Quality Control
 - Access
 - Promotion
 - Digital Preservation
- Lack of understanding of when institution has a ‘born digital object’ and then what strategy must be implemented to maintain those objects.
- DAM: Some projects see DAM as solution to digital preservation issues.

Findings-con't

- CD/DVD major storage media; moving to networked servers
- Refreshing data on CD/DVD with lengthy periods between refreshing
- Quality control of master images – inconsistent at best
- Backing up is viewed as digital preservation
- Education is important before institutions start “doing” digital preservation
- Ability to advocate for digital preservation is lacking at many institutions
- Funding primarily through local funds and grants.

Policies

- **11. Does your institution have a WRITTEN policy or procedure document that addresses digital holdings in each of the following areas? (List the URL if a copy is on the Web; otherwise, please attach a copy.)**

– Mission and goals	yes	no	being developed URL
– Collection development	yes	no	being developed URL
– Emergency prep'ness	yes	no	being developed URL
– Exhibitions	yes	no	being developed URL
– Preservation	yes	no	being developed URL
– Strategic planning	yes	no	being developed URL
– Public services	yes	no	being developed URL
– Rights and licensing	yes	no	being developed URL

Outsourced Repository question

68. Does the Repository have:
- | | Yes | No | Don't know |
|--|-----|----|------------|
| A publicly available Preservation Plan? | | | |
| Have you reviewed the Preservation Plan? | | | |
| Contingency plans incase of emergency? | | | |
| Are you aware of what these plans are? | | | |
| Escrow arrangements for software | | | |
| If they do, do you have access to it? | | | |
| Off-site backup of the database? | | | |
| Separate professional staff supporting the digital repository? | | | |
| Authentication/authorization? | | | |
| Customer documentation? | | | |
| Customer administrative module? | | | |
| Usability testing? | | | |
| Migration strategy (may be part of preservation plan) | | | |

Survey question

69. How does the repository demonstrate that they are a financially viable organization?

- Publicly available audit**
- Audit available upon request**
- Financial statement available upon request**
- Other, please specify**

Are the repository's business plans and practices transparent, and compliant with generally accepted accounting practices and auditable?

Do you have a contract or formal agreement?

73. What components does the contract cover? Yes No

- Who has access to the digital objects and at what frequency**
- Delivery options**
- Preservation rights**
- Copyright**

Type of recommendations

- Improved documentation—continuity planning, workflow processes, etc.
- Review digital preservation activities, including refreshing schedules, quality control, etc.
- Review system back-up procedures and implement offsite storage
- Review optical media utilization, including storage retrieval and duplication
- Incorporate preservation information into metadata
- 53% of the recommendations were discussed and 48% of the recommendations acted upon

So what does all this mean?

- Focus of long term preservation has been on the technology and standards, certification, etc. to build the infrastructure
- To make it reality we now need to
 - Expand advocates for long term preservation
 - Expand the knowledge base of professionals and practitioners
 - Move from digital project to digital program
 - Integrate preservation into all aspects of digital lifecycle
 - Develop best practices
 - Make policy examples available

Digital Curation Curriculum

- Education needs to be:
 - National programs are nice, but we need to move to the state and regional level
 - Professional and CE
- Needs to focus on:
 - Technology, standards and best practices
 - Policies, Tactical strategies (Development and implementation)
 - Workflow and Documentation—How to do it
 - Business planning—and all that it involves such as market research, financial analysis and planning
 - Continued emphasis on collaboration—particularly beyond the library or museum or campus

Conclusion

- Progress is being made on digital preservation particularly in technology, standards
- Increased awareness of importance
- Most institutions who are doing digitization, however aren't doing the most basis of digital preservation readiness activities.
- We can lay the foundation for long term preservation by establishing policies, creating documentation, advocating for digital preservation even if we don't have the funds to implement long term preservation solutions.
- Must be done as a collaborative effort, all but largest institutions don't have the resources to go it alone.