NDSA DIGITAL PRESERVATION

OCTOBER 9-10, 2025
Online

Conference Theme: Where We're At: Digital Preservation in Uncertain Times

In order for digital preservation to be successful, the practice requires an environment of stability and the ability to make long-term plans. Our current moment requires the community to examine, extend, and reinterpret the foundations of our work to ensure we can achieve our missions. For the NDSA Digital Preservation conference this year, we invite proposals that grapple with how we as digital preservation practitioners and leaders can continue this work in times of chaos and uncertainty. How are you thinking about succession and contingency planning for collections? How are you finding the resources to continue the work when they are becoming more difficult to procure? How are you engaging with the emotional labor necessary to succeed at this work? How are you building community to support your needs and solve problems?

Contents

This document contains information on all conference presentations and lightning talks, including their title, presenter(s), affiliation(s), and abstract. These are listed in alphabetical order by presentation title for both sections.

Presentations

Act Now, Archive Forever: Sustaining Born-Digital Collecting Through Outreach

Aaron Pahl
University of Alabama at Birmingham

In the realm of digital preservation, the window to collect born-digital content is vanishingly small. Whether it's a university web page, born digital publication, social media thread, or someone's files in the cloud the assumption that digital material will remain available "later" is a dangerous myth. This presentation will focus on advocacy and outreach strategies to address the urgent need to preserve born-digital materials while they still exist.

Drawing from outreach efforts within a university library, I will discuss how we make the case to stakeholders—faculty, students, independent creators, and community organizations—that born digital content is just as, if not more, fragile than physical items and needs to be collected now, not 20 years from now.

But urgency alone is not enough. Born-digital collecting efforts must also be sustainable. Rather than working towards one-time donations, we need to establish recurring deposit arrangements and succession planning to ensure digital collecting continues even if key individuals leave an organization. These long-term relationships not only ensure content is captured, but also build a resilient community of support around collections and the importance of preservation.

This session offers practical strategies for institutions of any size to advocate for their digital preservation mission, communicate the risks of delay, and create enduring partnerships. In uncertain times, passive collection is not an option—we must lead with urgency, empathy, and sustained engagement.

"Advocacy in the Age of AI": Empowering Human-Centered Digital Stewardship in GLAM Institutions

Angela Fritz
University of Iowa

When we talk about digital stewardship, we don't often spend a lot of time discussing advocacy, even though it is a cornerstone for what digital practitioners do every day. Digital archivists, digital preservationists, data librarians, and data curators must continually explain who they are, what they do, and why it matters. As digital practitioners navigate increasingly

AI-enhanced digital stewardship environments, there is a renewed urgency to address the evolving nature and growing importance of holistic advocacy strategies that support human-centered digital stewardship programs. In the age of AI, advocacy involves a unique balancing act--one that connects digital collections and emerging technologies with the people who engage in digital work. Even though this work has been traditionally “unseen” by the public, digital stewardship advocacy seeks to raise awareness of practitioners’ specialized work through ongoing outreach and engagement in both formal and informal contexts. Moreover, digital stewardship advocacy requires the careful contextualization of practitioners’ implementation of emerging technologies with the ethical responsibilities relating to collections care. With this as context, this presentation explores the broad continuum of digital stewardship advocacy that ranges from front-line efforts to the central role of advocacy networks. As the profession navigates AI-enhanced stewardship, examining this continuum helps to reconceptualize advocacy as an essential function that serves to prioritize digital practitioners’ agency, foster collaborative action and strengthen collective resilience.

Assessing the Sustainability and Digital Preservation Practices of Institutional Repositories in Botswana

Kelemwork Kassahun
Botho University

In the digital knowledge economy, institutional repositories (IRs) play a pivotal role in preserving and disseminating research-based knowledge. However, the rapid growth in digital content, coupled with infrastructural and policy limitations, poses significant challenges to the long-term sustainability of repositories, particularly in developing countries. This study aims to assess the current status of institutional repositories in Botswana, with a focus on how repository managers address digital preservation, server space management, and sustainable infrastructure planning.

Specifically, the study seeks to (1) assess the current status and operational characteristics of institutional repositories in selected Botswana universities; (2) examine the digital preservation practices applied by repository managers, including the use of descriptive and preservation metadata standards such as Dublin Core and PREMIS; (3) investigate server space and storage infrastructure management strategies; (4) identify the challenges faced in sustaining long-term digital preservation; and (5) propose strategic interventions to enhance repository sustainability and alignment with best practices in digital stewardship.

The study will employ a mixed-methods approach involving document analysis, semi-structured interviews with repository managers, and a technical audit of storage practices in selected Botswana universities. Based on the findings, the study will propose a sustainability framework for Botswana's IRs, incorporating local resource realities and regional collaboration opportunities.

Beginning with What We Have: Inventorying Data Sources for Resilience

Grete Graf
Yale Library

In a moment where digital preservation requires both flexibility and foresight, understanding what data sources we have (and where gaps exist!) is essential. This talk explores a preliminary effort by a library digital preservation unit to inventory its internal data sources, including structured data, systems, and documentation. The project offers an adaptable model for identifying needs, reducing institutional memory loss, and fostering resilience.

This project is loosely mapped to the NDSA Levels of Digital Preservation, using them as a lens to assess where data documentation or control may be lacking. This framing helps to identify potential risks as well as prioritize future actions. Importantly, the inventory creation process builds trust, surfacing previously undocumented knowledge and inviting collaboration in a time of uncertainty and shifting responsibilities.

This presentation will discuss project goals, evolving definitions of “data sources,” and lessons learned when trying to document a complex data environment, emphasizing how even early-stage inventory work can help facilitate more robust long-term planning. It will offer a flexible framework for those navigating digital preservation in uncertain times, in which documentation itself can be an enduring act of care.

Building Resilience: Advancing a Digital Preservation Program Amid Technical Constraints and Institutional Uncertainty

Fatemeh Rezaei
The University of Baltimore

In 2019, the University of Baltimore’s Robert L. Bogomolny Library created a cross-departmental Digital Preservation Task Force in response to survey findings that revealed significant risks to its digital assets. Without a dedicated digital preservation position, and amid shifting institutional priorities, I led the implementation of a five-year plan to establish a sustainable digital preservation program.

We began by drafting and adopting a formal digital preservation policy, developing scalable workflows for a range of formats using microservices tools, and advocating for needed infrastructure. Through collaboration with IT, we successfully secured a 400TB storage system with geographically distributed redundancy and immutable file structures. I now manage approximately 250TB of digital content, including born-digital records and audiovisual materials digitized through grant-funded projects.

In the face of staffing transitions and software limitations, such as failing checksum tools and non-integrated workflows, we adapted by creating new baselines, exploring replacement tools, and documenting internal processes to ensure continuity. Throughout the program's development, we aligned our practices with the National Digital Stewardship Alliance (NDSA) Levels of Preservation and used the NDSA assessment tool to evaluate and demonstrate our growth, from a DPCMM Stage 1 baseline in 2018 to achieving Levels 2–3 in storage, metadata, control, and integrity by 2024.

This presentation offers practical, tested strategies for building a resilient, standards-aligned digital preservation program despite limited staff and institutional uncertainty, focusing on persistence, collaboration, and informed planning.

A Digital Preservation Strategy: How do we move forward if "feelings" are not mutual?

Rona Razon
Philadelphia Museum of Art

It is evident that while an organization operates under a specific mission, internal departments have their own set of objectives that drive the organization's goals forward. At the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Museum aims to amplify a dynamic range of voices that spark connection through increased community-focused programs. For the Library & Archives Department, this means maintaining and strengthening our digital preservation program to ensure lasting and trusted access to the Museum's primary source records.

However, the mission does not quite align with reality. Our tools, which support the preservation and dissemination of the Museum's archival holdings to the communities we serve, are continuously challenged by evolving budgets and financial constraints. There is also a profound misunderstanding among our colleagues about what is retained permanently and which system to use for digital preservation. In our case, these are the repeating questions we receive: "Why don't you delete these dormant records?" or "Why don't you just put everything in DAMS!"

There is a disconnect between the ideal of digital preservation and its practical implementation. This divide is further compounded by differing priorities across departments and differing understandings around the discrete roles involved in a network of information systems. Instead of facing these challenges alone, we advocate for a joint, institutionally driven approach, where each impacted stakeholder plays a role in advancing the mission. We aim to communicate and implement this reimagined approach through a Digital Preservation Advocacy and Funding Strategy, shifting our digital preservation practices from a reactive to a thoughtful and proactive approach.

Digitizing Iraqi knowledge: Protecting scientific assets in the post-conflict era

Ammar Aljawad
Digital Library of Al-Abbas Shrine

Moamel Tuhmaz
Digital Library of Al-Abbas Shrine

This research aims to explore Preservation Iraqi Assets project, which focuses on digitizing Iraqi knowledge to protect its scientific and academic heritage, especially in the post-ISIS era. The research will address in-depth the many challenges faced by this national project, including the massive destruction of educational and cultural institutions, the loss of many valuable documents and manuscripts, and the lack of infrastructure needed for digitization.

It will also highlight the efforts made to overcome these challenges, and how a public library in central Iraq was able to accomplish this national project by relying on the expertise of its staff and available resources, and how it was able to involve different Iraqi institutions such as universities and libraries in the process of preserving their scientific assets. The research will address the ten stages of the project and its twenty-four steps, which were prepared according to a solid work plan that resulted in the recovery, organization and digitization of the scientific content of academic institutions that was threatened with loss through the use of long-lasting magnetic storage media (LTO).

This analysis aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the national efforts made to preserve Iraq's scientific memory under difficult circumstances, and to provide lessons learned for future similar projects.

Expanding the Circle: Incremental Progress Toward More Inclusive Digital Preservation

Nathan Tallman
Academic Preservation Trust

Kara McClurken
University of Virginia

Sustainable, shared preservation infrastructure is essential for ensuring long-term access to digital content; however, many institutions, notably smaller or under-resourced ones, find participation out of reach. Academic Preservation Trust (APTrust) offers an Associate Membership model to facilitate access for institutions that lack the fiscal or administrative capacity to join as full members.

This model allows memory organizations to deposit content into APTrust through the sponsorship of an existing Sustaining Member who pays an annual membership fee. While this

does not remove all barriers, Associate Members still require a sponsor; it is a pragmatic shift designed to support greater inclusion within the limitations of financial and operational realities.

This presentation will share the motivations behind the Associate Membership model, explain how it was designed to maintain trust and accountability, and outline what has been learned from its early adoption. It will also reflect on the model's limitations and unresolved questions: How do we balance the greater preservation needs with sustainability? What are the risks of creating secondary tiers of participation? What more could consortial models do to lower the cost of entry?

Rather than positioning this as a definitive solution, the session will frame APTrust's approach as one step in a longer journey, contributing to a broader conversation about how digital preservation communities can evolve to include more voices, content, and collaborators.

Financial Uncertainty and CoreTrustSeal Certified Repositories

Rebecca D. Frank
University of Michigan School of Information

Staff members from digital repositories that have successfully demonstrated adequate funding to achieve CoreTrustSeal (CTS) certification continue to identify financial uncertainty as the most significant risk facing their repositories. Those same staff members find that a key value of certification is that it facilitates communication with external funders, making their repositories a more attractive target for support. This presentation will explore the tension between the need to demonstrate financial sustainability in order to become certified as trustworthy, while at the same time using that certification as a tool to acquire funding to address ongoing financial uncertainty.

Drawing on the results from a survey of CTS certified repositories, this research reveals a fundamental paradox: repositories must prove financial stability to achieve certification, yet continue to face persistent concerns about funding loss, over-reliance on short-term grants, and unpredictable resource requirements. Despite satisfying external audit requirements for financial sustainability, staff members from these organizations view certification as a tool that has the potential to reduce financial uncertainty by making their policies and practices legible to external stakeholders such as parent institutions and external funders.

This presentation will examine this apparent contradiction in detail, exploring what it reveals about the relationship between certification standards and the practical realities of managing a digital repository. By understanding this paradox, I argue that we can move toward an understanding of TDR certification that recognizes its utility as a tool for mitigating risk and addressing financial uncertainty. This reframing has implications for how repositories, funders, and certification bodies approach long-term sustainability in digital preservation.

From Overwhelm to Action: Incremental Progress in Digital Processing

Jane Kelly
Harvard Divinity School Library

In 2022, the Harvard Divinity School Library acquired a post-custodial collection of over 500 GB of digital images of at-risk material related to the Hungarian Unitarian Church based in Transylvania, Romania. Staff turnover, overly ambitious project goals, and ever-shrinking resources have made the processing, description, access, and preservation of this collection challenging. Inheriting these challenges, the Library's first Digital Archivist had to navigate a path forward with limited institutional memory, no ongoing contact with the donor, and constrained resources.

This presentation explores how we can shift from a mindset of "what I can't do" to "what I can do" to sustain digital processing and preservation work in uncertain times. By embracing incremental, measurable progress, we moved beyond paralysis and perfectionism and provided public description and mediated access to the collection.

The presentation will address how the Digital Archivist implemented new approaches and strategies in order to move the project forward. By collaborating with colleagues and experimenting with minimal processing approaches and ChatGPT, the Digital Archivist was able to describe the collection, facilitate access, and backup the files as a stopgap measure prior to deposit in the Library's digital preservation repository. The session will also touch on the emotional labor involved in independently managing a large processing project and the value of internal support for new approaches. Attendees will learn how shifting focus from the many obstacles, challenges, and unknowns to achievable intermediate steps can move stalled projects forward.

From Tools to Trust: A People-Centered Approach to Digital Preservation Assessment

Stacey Jones
University of Arizona

What if digital preservation assessment centered people as much as infrastructure? As we finalize the white paper for the IMLS-funded POWRR Peer Assessment Program, our team is reflecting on what we learned—not just about organizational capacity, but about confidence, connection, and care.

This session will preview key findings from the forthcoming white paper, which documents a peer-based training and assessment initiative designed for small and under-resourced organizations. Participants engaged in a structured process using tools like the NDSA Levels of Preservation, DPC RAM, and the NEDCC Digital Assessment Framework. But what stood

out most were the relational outcomes: increased self-efficacy, reduced isolation, and a sense of shared purpose.

These insights prompted us to draft a companion framework that explicitly foregrounds people: their support systems, communication patterns, emotional labor, and institutional dynamics. This emergent model reimagines assessment not as a checklist, but as a reflective process that honors trust-building, empathy-driven practice, and the realities of hidden labor.

In this talk, we'll introduce both the white paper's findings and the first iteration of our people-centered framework. We'll invite discussion on how community care and cultural humility might become more deeply embedded in assessment practices across the field.

For anyone who has ever felt that digital preservation work is more human than technical—or who's seeking assessment tools that meet people where they are—this session offers an alternative lens and practical insights.

GINKONet: Growing roots for a new digital preservation network

Rachel Howard
University of Louisville

Danielle Taylor
Indiana University Bloomington

Ben Parnin
Purdue University

Reid Boehm
Purdue University

As GLAM institutions increasingly face reduced funding and staff, digital preservation can feel like a herculean task. When the MetaArchive Cooperative sunset in 2025, partners in Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio seized an opportunity to create GINKONet (Greater Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio Network), a LOCKSS 2.0-based network to preserve their digital cultural, educational, and research materials. The affordability, collegiality, and functionality of LOCKSS remained appealing despite the demise of the MetaArchive Cooperative and the uncertainties of external and institutional funding. Like the resilient and enduring ginkgo tree,this new PLN is designed to overcome these challenges.

For over a year the GINKONet project has worked to create a regional LOCKSS network and digital preservation community of practice through conversations with one another and with the Stanford University LOCKSS Program and statewide networks in Alabama and Michigan. During this time GINKONet faced many challenges including funding cuts, finding partners, defining the scope of GINKONet, and creating a project plan. This presentation seeks to reflect

on these challenges and how we are working to overcome them. The presentation will also examine methods, strategies, and resources on how to form a new PLN or consortia from scratch. We hope this presentation offers an opportunity for others to share the ways they have had to pivot in the face of funding cuts, and find opportunities for partnerships.

GovArchive.us as a Case Study of Mirroring Websites with Web Archives Using Webrecorder Tools

Ilya Kreymer
Webrecorder

The current political climate makes digital preservation both more necessary and more difficult than ever before. Climate data, women's health research, information on LGBTQIA+ rights, and similar information is being actively erased from the web, presenting a crucial challenge for cultural heritage organizations to meet at the same time that those very organizations are constrained by limited resources and political instability.

This talk will discuss web archiving approaches that can help with some of these pain points, using GovArchive.us as a case study for mirroring or even replacing complex websites with web archives. GovArchive.us features mirrors of several US government websites captured by Webrecorder using Browsertrix as part of the End of Term Web Archive project that have been removed or significantly censored in the months since the change in US presidential administration. These mirrors, each hosted on a separate subdomain and powered by a web archive embedded on a simple static web page, aim to replicate the original sites and their URL structures as closely as possible, providing a snapshot of a website as it existed at a moment in time.

The talk will walk participants through the thinking behind and process of creating GovArchive.us using free and open source software created and maintained by Webrecorder. It will then discuss how the same approach and tools can be used to replace complex, difficult to maintain websites with web archives, including at the same domain, thus greatly simplifying their ongoing maintenance and hosting for resource-constrained organizations.

Hitting the Reset Button: Creating a Shared Digital Preservation Vision at the University of Michigan Library

Lance Stuchell
University of Michigan Library

In 2019, staff at the University of Michigan Library realized the foundations of our preservation program needed a reset. While several factors contributed to this situation, differing opinions on what constituted "digital preservation" were at the root of our problem.

To address the situation, stakeholders formed the Digital Preservation Steering Committee and, in 2021, released “Baseline Digital Preservation: Advancing Digital Preservation at the U-M Library.” The document, based on several sources, including the NDSA Levels of Digital Preservation, outlined the agreed-upon minimal activities required for proper preservation at our institution.

While the Baseline represented a shared vision of where we wanted to be, we needed to determine how far we were from achieving it. The Steering Committee spent a year assessing our current systems and approaches against the criteria outlined in the Baseline. In 2023, findings were released in our first-ever full Systems Assessment, which identified gaps between our current reality and the shared vision for the program. Since then, we have incorporated lessons learned from the assessment into Version 2 of the Baseline (2024) and are undertaking a second round of assessment to document progress made since 2023.

This presentation will focus on how other institutions may adapt lessons learned from this process (using what worked and what didn’t), including how to merge perspectives on digital preservation into a shared vision using a community approach, how to make assessments part of core preservation work, and how this process can help prioritize resources in a financially constrained environment.

Leveling Up Environmental Sustainability: the latest NDSA Levels of Digital Preservation Revision

Elizabeth La Beaud
University of Southern Mississippi

Edith Halvarsson
Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford

Sophia van Hoek
Municipality of The Hague

Keith Pendergrass
Harvard Business School

Sibyl Schaefer
University of California San Diego

Dina Sokolova
Columbia University

Keith Pendergrass
Harvard Business School

Sustainability has long been a core condition of digital preservation and stewardship. In fact, sustainability is one aspect that sets these efforts apart from standard information technology

practice: we provide ongoing value for our communities by building preservation and stewardship programs that can sustain the maintenance and care required to ensure digital materials remain accessible and usable over time. However, many digital preservation programs treat another aspect of sustainability—environmental sustainability—as separate from core preservation requirements. As the effects of climate change and ecological harm increase and threaten the stability of our global society, and as our digital preservation and stewardship endeavors contribute to these impacts and harms, it's time to shift environmental sustainability from the periphery to the core of digital preservation and stewardship practice.

Building on over three decades of environmental sustainability scholarship and practice, and addressing community feedback since the last revision, the NDSA Levels of Digital Preservation 2024–2025 revision seeks to advance the re-alignment of environmental sustainability as a core preservation concern. In this presentation, the Levels Working Group will provide a status update on the revisions and introduce the Environmental Sustainability Guide, a new supplemental Levels resource that facilitates embedding environmental sustainability considerations into preservation decision-making via the Levels assessment framework. The new guide surfaces core sustainability concepts as guiding principles that are broadly relevant to all aspects of digital preservation work and detailed considerations for sustainability decision points that align with specific recommendations in the Levels of Digital Preservation matrix.

Preserving in Precarity: Adaptive Project Design for Digital Preservation under Institutional and Political Uncertainty

Irina Schmid
American University in Cairo

Elizabeth Day
American University in Cairo

In times of institutional change and uncertainty, preserving not only historical collections but also the present-day processes that shape an institution is crucial. At the American University in Cairo (AUC), the Digitization Center has taken the lead on a self-initiated effort to document and preserve AUC's evolving built environment—despite limited resources, shifting priorities, and logistical challenges.

This digital preservation project captures construction processes across campus through a mix of born-digital photographs, drone footage, and annotated field notes. Accompanied by structured metadata—including geolocation, project phases, and contextual narratives—this documentation will allow future researchers, students, and university leadership to trace the material and strategic development of the institution over time. It positions infrastructure itself as a historical actor, worthy of long-term preservation and interpretation.

This presentation explores how the Digitization Center adapted to internal obstacles such as limited staffing, lack of formal storage, and delayed access to technical infrastructure. By embracing flexible workflows, metadata resilience, and interdepartmental collaboration, the team managed to ensure long-term preservation of both content and context.

The session will offer practical insights into how digital preservation can move forward even without external funding, and how documenting institutional processes—like construction—can enrich the historical record. It argues for recognizing everyday institutional change as worthy of preservation and shares strategies for doing so under uncertain or constrained conditions.

RAG Pipelines for AI-Enhanced Discovery in Web Archives

Corey Davis
University of Victoria Libraries

Web archives are full of valuable cultural and historical content, but they're notoriously hard to work with: messy layouts, repetitive boilerplate, and clunky keyword search make discovery a real challenge. Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) offers a way to cut through the noise by letting people ask natural language questions and get grounded, source-based answers.

In this talk, I'll share a custom RAG pipeline we built at UVic Libraries to improve access to WARC-based web archives. We were inspired by WARC-GPT—an open-source tool from the Harvard Library Innovation Lab—and wanted to take the next step by building our own version from scratch. That gave us a chance to dig into the components, experiment, and adapt everything to our local infrastructure and needs.

Our setup includes cleaner text extraction, smarter chunking, GPU-accelerated embedding, and prompt strategies to cut down on hallucinations and improve results. To test it, we used a web archive of the Bob's Burgers Wiki (yes, really), which gave us a great sandbox for measuring retrieval accuracy, citation quality, and system performance. The custom pipeline ended up being faster, smaller, and more precise, reducing index size by over 95% and giving clearer, more accurate answers.

I'll walk through what we built, what we learned, and why this kind of system could help libraries and archives make web collections more useful, without giving up on trust, provenance, or human oversight.

Reflections on Mental Health and Wellbeing in a Changing Digital Preservation Landscape

Sharon McMeekin
Preserve Together

In March 2025, the Digital Preservation Coalition released a report, authored by Sharon McMeekin, that summarized the findings from a 2023 survey on Mental Health and Wellbeing

in the Digital Preservation Community. The report details the high levels of stress, anxiety, and fatigue experienced by practitioners, the importance of organizational culture on mental health and wellbeing, the negative impact that the lack of support for and engagement with digital preservation is having, and the issues that exist relating to unclear roles and responsibilities and unmanageable workloads.

In the two years since the circulation of the survey, the context in which many digital preservation practitioners are operating has deteriorated due to unstable political climates and eroding funding streams. The first half of this presentation will aim to provide a brief summary of the main findings of the report and place them in relation to the current context of the evolving political, economic, and social landscape of digital preservation.

The second half of the presentation will then look to the future, discussing how we might begin to prioritise the challenges we face, how we can build recognition of the difference between what we could do and what we should do, and how we might work collaboratively through organizations like NDSA to support each other through difficult times.

Resilience and Hope in an Age of Uncertainty

Anna Perricci
Digital Preservation Coalition

In its more than 22 years of operation the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) has weathered proverbial storms before, though there is no exact precedent for the situations in which many of us currently find ourselves. In 2002, the DPC's future was in question and in 2010 it seemed to be at even greater risk for closure. The financial crash of 2008 harmed to the global economy then by 2010 a radical program of budget cuts in the UK followed as agencies and programs were deleted, downgraded and diminished. Key grant-giving agencies were shuttered; national institutions were thrown into turmoil; and core digital preservation programs were terminated. A short time later, Brexit closed funding from European institutions. Years later, there was calamity stemming from COVID-19. How despite all this is the DPC still here? How is it possible to maintain a slow but continuous process of growth through so much turmoil?

In this presentation we will share what can be learned from our experiences (resilience) as well as convey founded hopes about how the DPC will continue to serve the digital preservation community worldwide.

The DPC is a registered charity in the United Kingdom, and it makes many resources freely available to members and non-members alike, including the Digital Preservation Handbook, technical guidance publications and webinars. Members govern the DPC and membership fees are the largest source of income for the DPC. Members drive our agenda, which enables the DPC to nimbly maintain a welcoming and inclusive community that works together.

A Roadmap for Building a Collaborative Regional Preservation Network

Dr. Chelsea Denault
Michigan Digital Preservation Network

The Michigan Digital Preservation Network (MDPN) was created with the shared goals of making digital preservation more accessible to small or underresourced organizations that needed a way to preserve their unique and at-risk cultural memory materials, while reducing redundant preservation efforts across the state. With a vision to build easy workflows for users without robust technical or archival skills, a sustainable technical infrastructure, and a governance model that prioritized community, the MDPN successfully applied for a grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in 2022. Presenters will share insights from their IMLS Implementation Grant "Demonstrating and Documenting a Statewide LOCKSS 2.0 Preservation Network for Cultural Memory Institutions," including community formation and visioning, technical implementation using the new LOCKSS 2.0 software, tiered funding model to accommodate severely underresourced organizations, and approachable, collaborative documentation efforts. The presentation will also share details about MDPN's preservation storage grant for digitized materials that were considered to be at-risk or that documented underrepresented communities as a way to serve the cultural memory community in Michigan, collaborate with potential future network members, and "road test" our workflows with a range of users. Presenters will also address how the uncertainty around the future of IMLS impacted our work, and how we're collaborating with nascent networks like GinkoNet to build a service that isn't dependent on federal funding.

Scaling Digital Preservation: Strategy, Infrastructure, and Sustainability at the University of Texas Libraries

Mirko Hanke
University of Texas Libraries

Vivian Nguyen
University of Texas Libraries

Karla Roig Blay
University of Texas Libraries

Jeremy Thompson
University of Texas Libraries

Establishing effective digital preservation practices remains a complex challenge for many cultural heritage institutions. While theoretical frameworks offer guidance, there is no universal blueprint for implementation. At the University of Texas Libraries (UTL), we have maintained simple yet robust digital preservation strategies for over two decades. Today, we steward more

than 16 million digital files totaling over 500 terabytes—and our current systems are reaching critical scalability limits.

This presentation will explore how UTL's Digital Stewardship unit assessed existing workflows, identified areas for improvement, and developed a five-year digital preservation strategy to modernize and standardize our approach— "leveling up" along the way. Central to this strategy is a focus on project management, cross-departmental collaboration, and sustained advocacy.

We will also share how the Libraries' IT team is building a more scalable and sustainable technical foundation to support this work. By combining open-source software with cost-effective storage solutions, they are developing infrastructure that supports automation and long-term access. This evolving system is designed to align with our strategic goals and adapt to the growing and changing needs of our digital collections.

By aligning strategic planning with technical capacity-building, UTL is laying the groundwork for a sustainable digital preservation ecosystem that can grow with our collections.

Starting Digital Preservation in the Year of the Dragon

Ryder Kouba
Duke Kunshan University

Organizations around the world are struggling with the economic and political uncertainty wrought by the current US administration; this presentation will focus on Duke Kunshan University (DKU) in China and how it is trying to navigate the current uncertainty. DKU was founded in 2014 as a Sino-Foreign Joint Venture university, which operates in an exciting (and somewhat confusing) space between the United States and China. Given the current geopolitical challenges and uncertainty about the university's future (the contract with the local government expires in 2028), how does one start and grow a digital preservation program with the goal of long-term preservation, but looming extinction? The speaker arrived as the first University Archivist in 2024 and will discuss his experiences so far starting digital preservation from scratch during these tumultuous times.

The first part of the presentation will focus on how the DKU University Archivist has tried--with some success and some failures--to build a digital preservation program under unclear circumstances. The talk will focus on working with faculty, students, and our information technology department to collect and preserve university records with historic value.

The second major focus of the presentation will be on web archiving, which is required in order to document the history of DKU, though with the added twist of being largely on the Chinese internet and WeChat. This has posed some technical challenges in creating high quality captures, but has largely been a successful start for the program.

Strength in Numbers: Cultivating a Regional Digital Preservation Community

Palash Bosgang
Bard College

Kimberly Gianfrancesco
Vassar College

Jennifer Palmentiero
Southeastern New York Library Resources Council

After years of assisting member organizations in digitizing their unique collections, the Southeastern New York Library Resources Council (SENYLRC) recognized an increasing need to support members in adopting digital preservation practices—both to manage existing digitized materials and to address the challenges of incoming born-digital content. Building on the existing community SENYLRC had created around digitization, in October 2024 the Digital Preservation Special Interest Group (SIG) began meeting over Zoom to share resources, demonstrate tools, and generate discussion between SENYLRC's diverse constituency of public, academic, and special libraries, historical societies, archives, and museums across eight counties, most of which have limited resources. Over the SIG's first year of existence, we have learned that while information sharing is always valuable, the real benefit of these meetings is to foster a sense of community, build confidence through peer support, and create a space where members can collaboratively troubleshoot challenges and celebrate progress. As Bard College developed its digital preservation workflows, its efforts naturally aligned with the goals of the newly formed Special Interest Group. This presentation uses Bard's experience as a case study to show how individual initiatives can both shape and benefit from community collaboration.

What's The Logic? : Building a Decision-Friendly Digital Accessioning Program at Harvard Library

Julianna Barrera-Gomez
Harvard Library

In spring of 2024, Harvard Library Digital Preservation Services established the Digital Accessioning Program (DAP) to support curatorial stewards across the Library and the wider University with their digital accessioning needs through a centralized service. Building on the 2015-2019 work of the Library's Digital Forensics Working Group, DAP was originally cast as a technical component of a disk imaging process that would be applied broadly. Digital Accessions Specialist Julianna Barrera-Gomez was tasked with launching the Program, informed by leading practices shared from other well-established programs at the University and at other institutions. Through working with pilot partners from various Harvard libraries,

she saw an opportunity to revisit the assumptions of the earlier working group, particularly through the lens of meeting curatorial stewards where they are in terms of time and resources available for processing, funding for storage, and patron access planning. By discussing newer resources to aid in making decisions about the accessioning process (e.g. DANNNG's Disk Imaging Decision Factors) as well as the downstream ethical and sustainability implications for adopting a disk-image-first digital accessions methodology (Lassere & Whyte 2022, Pendergrass 2017), Barrera-Gomez has built an adaptive, project-based program that allows curatorial stewards to feel informed and in control of the accessioning workflows they would like DAP to utilize for their collections materials. This presentation will share the outcomes of these pilot projects, dissect the reasoning behind a contextual approach from both curatorial stewards and DAP staff, and advocate for encouraging adaptive approaches that can better meet changing needs.

Where Do We Go From Here? Different Approaches to Digital Preservation

Brenna Edwards
Harry Ransom Center

Oscar Lewin
Dolph Briscoe Center for American History

Have you asked for the moon and landed back on Earth? Where did you go from there? How did you approach your collections and goals for the year? Did you identify any workflows that needed to be improved? Do people you work with have a better understanding of digital preservation now?

After a year and half of research, meetings, and presentations, the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History and the Harry Ransom Center were told "not yet" on their proposal of a shared digital preservation and access system. Simultaneously, the Briscoe Center underwent staffing turnover for integral positions, which has constrained resources devoted to digital preservation. Throughout this process, the digital archivists had lightly planned for alternative solutions, but are now stepping back and thinking through those plans in more detail.

This presentation will discuss the digital preservation platform proposal, strategies, challenges, and successes experienced during the proposal process. It will also consider what could have been done better, plan Bs, and the next steps for digital preservation UT institutions. Presenters will share how their thinking and approach has changed, along with lessons learned for those who are interested in starting this journey.

Where We're At: Digital Preservation for HBCUs During Uncertain Times

Constance Caddell, Ph.D.
Tuskegee University

Cheryl Ferguson
Tuskegee University

Tuskegee University, an HBCU founded in 1881, boasts a rich history supported by extensive archival collections. The institution benefited from key university archivists and record keepers, such as Monroe N. Work, Jessie P. Guzman, and Daniel T. Williams, who recognized the importance of preserving these records.

In current times, HBCUs are experiencing greater challenges and threats to their institutions. Examples of some of these threats include decreased funding, active suppression of Black history, and shortage of qualified professionals. It is only natural that these hardships have a trickle-down effect on the archives within these environments. Therefore, archival professionals are striving to identify alternatives to ensure the maintenance of their current records while increasing access to these records. Digitization is a necessary tool to help these repositories achieve these goals. However, most HBCUs lack the current digitization tools and software necessary to meet these needs.

At Tuskegee University Archives, we regularly explore options to meet the needs of our repository despite the challenges affecting our department. First, connecting with the institution's key leaders and stakeholders to highlight the vital work of the archives has proven effective. Second, applying for grants from various organizations has significantly aided us in our preservation projects. Third, collaborating with surrounding institutions and universities on archival projects is essential to our growth. In this presentation, attendees will gain insight into the various methods used by a modest HBCU archival department while noting the benefits and challenges of each method.

A Year in Headlines: 2025 Takeaways from the NDSA Climate Watch Working Group

Sibyl Schaefer
University of California San Diego

The NDSA Climate Watch Working Group was formed in late 2023, with the goal of providing timely and relevant information related to climate change to the digital preservation and cultural heritage communities. By doing so, we endeavor to empower our community to prepare and respond to the impacts of climate change and build a resilient community equipped with the knowledge to advocate and adapt to the emerging realities of climate change. In early 2025, after a year of creating and refining our work processes, we released our first newsletter on the

Substack platform. This presentation will, pulling from a selection of publications we have discussed in our newsletter, outline a cohesive update on climate change issues and news from the last year, and posit what they portend for the digital preservation community.

Lightning Talks

Best of times, worst of times: Building a cross-campus partnership for a digital preservation strategy in uncertain times

Jessica Lange
McGill University Libraries

Dr. Anthea Seles
McGill University Archives

Stewarding and preserving our collections for future generations is one of the guiding principles of libraries and archives, however finding the resources to undertake these activities can be challenging. This is true even more so during periods of fiscal restraint and contraction.

While McGill Libraries and McGill University Archives are both departments with over a century of experience, neither unit had formally nor consistently undertaken digital preservation efforts. Partnering together, the Libraries and Archives drafted a preservation strategy and are in the beginning stages of implementing its first steps.

This presentation will discuss the partnership between the units, the drafting of its strategy and principles, as well as future work to valorize digital preservation efforts at McGill. Institutional priorities and financial considerations will also be discussed.

The Digital Processing Collaborative: an institutional approach to answering “What is born-digital processing ?”

Amy Berish
Rockefeller Archive Center

Ima Oduok
Rockefeller Archive Center

Darren Young
Rockefeller Archive Center

The DPC is a working group led by the Processing Team with a mission to prioritize collaborative learning about born-digital records and digital processing activities. The group is responsible for working together to identify learning opportunities, future projects, and

institutional goals related to digital processing. The DPC is made up of individuals from various program areas, so not everyone has a background in processing, digital transfers, or working with born-digital records.

The first year of the Collaborative focused exclusively on knowledge sharing and discovery. The second (current) year focuses on creating digital processing workflows and learning about the tools and tasks involved in that work.

This talk will be based on the RAC blog post, [The Digital Processing Collaborative: Laying the Groundwork for Collaborative Learning](https://blog.rockarch.org/dpc-collaborative-learning), with additional insights from this year's 2024-2025 DPC. Our goal is to share our experience learning about born-digital processing and the importance of including archival staff who are not directly responsible for processing in these conversations. Learning about the impact of processing on other stages of the record's life cycle, including discovery, delivery, and preservation, provides a holistic understanding of what it means to be stewards of born-digital records.

Efficient Capture and Transformation of Metadata for Born Digital Description

Lara Friedman-Shedlov
University of Minnesota

Given the many challenges in the born digital preservation workflow, description of these materials in finding aids to facilitate discovery and access is often deprioritized. it is not unusual to see such material described only at a very high level, for example as simply "digital records," with little to no additional information on the contents. While "something is better than nothing," "something more" is even better. In cases where files have been organized into folders and subfolders, that structure can yield helpful metadata to assist the researcher in understanding and navigating the material, but entering that information into a finding aid takes time that is in short supply. The presenter will demonstrate a Python script that can quickly generate a hierarchical list of folders in a directory, along with basic size information, in ways that make it easy to import into an archival finding aid.

Oats and Mammoths: Telling compelling stories about sustainability and maintenance

Emmeline Kaser
Cornell University Library

In 1986, Ursula K. Le Guin published "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction," in which she remarks on the dominance of the "mammoth hunter" narrative of human history. She points out that even though early humans survived largely on gathered food, our cultural imagination

favors the more exciting narrative: that humans survived by hunting mammoths. It is more difficult to tell a compelling story about the steady, critical work of gathering oats.

In 2025, many memory institutions in the United States are facing a reduction in resources for innovation. Big innovations – whether they're new technologies, new tools, or large, novel projects – are the mammoths of our field. They are large contributions and create exciting stories. But most of our work involves gathering proverbial oats: whether that's making sure we have the resources to keep our processes and infrastructure going, planning for potential problems, and considering the environmental impact of our decisions. This work ensures sustainability, and while sustainability can feel like an unglamorous consideration, it demonstrates care for both the collections and human beings in our work environment.

This talk will reference work by feminist artists, including Mierle Laderman Ukeles and her concept of "Maintenance Art," who examine the often invisible or overlooked labor that holds communities together and provides the reserves of energy that can carry us through uncertain times. It argues that digital preservationists should reframe their sustainability efforts and maintenance work as innovations in themselves, and that we must find compelling ways to tell those stories.

Obtaining and maintaining digital inventories

Dale Poulter
Vanderbilt University

In the era of digital transformation, institutions increasingly depend on digital assets—ranging from digitized cultural heritage and research data to born-digital records and multimedia content. Yet without robust inventory systems, these assets risk becoming invisible, inaccessible, or even lost over time. This presentation explores practical strategies for developing and sustaining comprehensive inventories of digital objects as a cornerstone of effective digital stewardship, long-term preservation, and reliable access.

Large-scale digitization initiatives, digital donations, and the re-evaluation of legacy digital collections often reveal significant metadata gaps. This presentation highlights the approach developed at Vanderbilt University to address these challenges by implementing a flexible system to maintain and track changes to digital objects, even in the absence of complete metadata. The method also supports the collection of meaningful metrics, enabling improved oversight, resource planning, and reporting on the status and evolution of digital holdings.

Attendees will gain insight into scalable practices for digital inventory management that can be adapted across a range of institutions and project types.

Planning a Digital Preservation Program: One Step at a Time

Scott D. Bacon
Coastal Carolina University

Assembling a digital preservation program can take years, requiring the funding of staff roles dedicated to learning digital preservation best practices and gaining buy-in from campus funders and practitioners on policies and procedures. One midsize university has finally been able to begin a digital preservation program in earnest after several years of false starts. A digital preservation plan was developed for the libraries. Before the plan was completed, all internal workflows and standards had to be finalized. This required the archiving and preservation of audio, video, text, image, manuscript, and born-digital items. Several resources were critical in creating the libraries' program: the POWRR workshop helped in the development of an initial action plan; the NDSA Levels of Digital Preservation served as a guiding foundation for early preservation practice; multiple workshops and webinars helped keep digital preservation plans from being shelved from the libraries' strategic plan. Amazon S3 is now used to automatically archive items in our institutional repository. We are planning on uploading all of our source materials to Glacier this summer. Our digital preservation plan will be shopped to various campus units to generate interest in the program and also help stakeholders begin their own preservation plans. This presentation will chart the journey from day one to today to serve as a guide for others just beginning their own programs and as an opportunity for experts to nod along as they recognize similar difficulties they may have encountered in their own journeys to create a digital preservation program.

Playing with Art: Using Unexpected Technology in Interactive Art Preservation

Mert Overcash
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

During a review of cd-roms in the Art Library collection at UNC Chapel Hill, we discovered Betye Saar's "Digital Griot". A unique project unlike any other cd-rom in the collection, "Digital Griot" is an artwork that is only able to be experienced in the interactive cd-rom format. Unfortunately, the cd-rom was unusable due to hardware and software limitations. This presentation will focus on how, after trying several different methods to restore functionality including emulation, the team pivoted to thinking about the cd-rom differently. Instead of thinking of it as an artist's project or software program, what options would be available if we thought of it as a computer game? This led to us reaching out to the volunteer development team of ScummVM. ScummVM is "a program which allows you to run certain classic graphical adventure and role-playing games, provided you already have their data files... ScummVM is a complete rewrite of these games' executables and is not an emulator." Working with the devs across Discord led to not only the cd-rom being playable in the Art Library, but also to any institution that owns the cd-rom.

Racing Against the Redesign: Lessons from Preserving the University of Idaho Website

Rebecca Hastings
University of Idaho

In this presentation, I will discuss the challenges involved in preserving the University of Idaho website, which is due to undergo a thorough, “student-centric” redesign in the summer of 2025. Facing the removal of large amounts of web content accumulated over the course of many years, members of the university community have turned to the University of Idaho Library, its Special Collections and Archives department in particular, to ensure continued access to materials of enduring value. As the department’s Digital Archivist, I worked with campus stakeholders and fellow Library staff members to find web preservation solutions under a looming deadline. Ultimately, we used a few different solutions, both in-house options and third-party tools, to meet the needs of the campus community while using our resources responsibly. An additional challenge has been my own newness to the field of digital archiving; with a responsibility as imposing as capturing the university website, I found that seeking support and advice from more experienced colleagues was critical in arriving at a successful outcome. My experience in archiving the University of Idaho website highlights the importance of adaptability, collaboration, and the “done is better than perfect” mindset in digital archiving.

Repository Crisis Scorecards - An Assessment of Organizational Resiliency to the Unexpected

Joseph Gum

The Repository Crisis Scorecards (RCS, 10.5281/zenodo.15122045) are meant to measure how resilient a repository might be in its normal state and during certain crises. This includes a measure of how well a repository might weather an example crisis, how easy it might be to restore metadata, and how much societal impact a missing repository would have. The scorecards are based off of the model data preservation rubric developed by Schuster et al, 2023.

There are three parts to the Repository Crisis Scorecards, a fact finding pre-worksheet to set the scene and two scorecards. The Repository Resilience Scorecard (RRS) is organized around the idea of whether a repository can survive a crisis and fulfill its mission. The Data Impact and Recovery Scorecard (DIRS) covers the ideas of dataset completeness and third party impact, specifically whether another organization is able to make sense of deposits and continue the mission of the impacted repository.

This presentation will discuss current progress including feedback from users and aim to build connections for future collaboration.

Succession of Memory: Preparing for What Comes Next

Bridget Day
City University of New York

The Cultivating Archives and Institutional Memory Project at CUNY is focused on elevating stories, often those excluded from history. Thanks to a generous grant, CUNY has engaged us to survey archival collections across all 31 campus archives, make historically important collections discoverable by many and to unify practices. The team's digital archivist will share how we're creating a future roadmap for their colleagues to follow.

In uncertain times, archives already in precarious conditions for sustainability experience an outsized impact in comparison with their more stable peers. We are meeting the moment by identifying what is imperative to preserve, and by utilizing best archival practices to do so. During this three-year project, we're creating deliverables like user manuals, archival governance mechanisms and guidance for processing and digitizing collections, as well as the deployment of both ArchivesSpace and JSTOR. These tools will support the work of CUNY archivists into the future.

The first step is surveying both physical and digital collections. Discovered during surveying is the inconsistency of digital collections due to uneven resourcing. Importantly, these surveys establish digital storage snapshots that opened the door to conversations with leaders who advocate for long-term support.

Establishing collaborative relationships with IT and Marketing departments creates a pipeline for support and opportunities for archives to broadcast their work broadly even after our work has ended.

We work every day aware that under resourcing and austerity measures will be a reality for CUNY's archives. Our greatest objective is to prepare CUNY's archives for what comes next.

Utilizing Archivematica's METS files to Conduct a Large-Scale File Format Analysis of our ETD Collection

Grayson Murphy
University of Alabama at Birmingham

As Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETDs) enter their third decade, it's important to examine the file formats and versions in which they've been submitted, particularly in terms of digital preservation. While most ETDs are submitted as PDF files, there are a plethora of PDF file subtypes, each with different digital preservation ramifications. Additionally, supplemental files vary widely in both type and number, complicating long-term access.

This presentation examines the file formats of 8,000+ ETDs submitted to a large R1 research institution over the past 20 years. Digital preservation efforts at UAB Libraries began in earnest

in 2023, culminating in an implementation of a self-hosted instance of Archivematica. With nearly 15,000 digital objects ingested, analysis of the resulting METS XML files became a central part of preservation planning.

These METS files include detailed technical metadata generated by tools such as FITS, FIDO, JHOVE, MediaInfo, and Siegfried, each of which identify and describe the characteristics of files within a Submission Information Package (SIP). To evaluate this data at scale, I used Python to automate extraction of METS XML files from AIPs, parse the relevant metadata, and compile the information into a spreadsheet. Additional tools were used to create visualizations of the results.

I will highlight the range of file formats encountered (especially PDF types), discuss their preservability, and share how these insights are shaping future file normalization strategies for ETDs. This session will benefit professionals working in digital archiving, preservation, and institutional repositories by illustrating data-driven approaches to managing ETD file formats.