



NDSA Digital Preservation 2026 Schedule

Conference Theme: Striking a Balance: Optimizing Labor for Sustainability and Resilience

As digital preservation professionals, we are accustomed to juggling diverse tasks and balancing multiple priorities. However, recent technological and political developments have impacted our perspectives on labor and how we can best allocate resources and effort. For the 2026 NDSA Digital Preservation conference, we invite proposals that explore the ways that we approach, manage, and perform labor from multiple angles. Which tasks can we assign to software applications, and which still require human intervention? How can we leverage the potential benefits of AI tools while protecting the security and integrity of our collections and digital assets from unauthorized exploitation? Our current reality of budget cuts and hiring freezes is coupled with ever-expanding digital collections. With this reality, what are the practical limits of our capacity and potential, and how do we line those up with our visions and ideals? How can we advocate differently to secure resources that can support a resilient preservation infrastructure in the midst of humanitarian and environmental crises? How can effective programs be established in the midst of constant change? Once established, what steps can be taken to stabilize a digital preservation program and ensure its continuance? What opportunities exist for community engagement that might help navigate these emerging challenges? What opportunities can we create? What self-care strategies can digital preservation practitioners adopt to manage the demands of productivity and the stress of an ever-changing environment?

Contents

This document contains information on all conference presentations and lightning talks, including their title, presenter(s), affiliation(s), and abstract. All times presented are Eastern Daylight Time.

Day 1 Schedule - Wednesday, November 4th

Time (Eastern Daylight Time)	Session
11:00 am - Noon	Keynote
Noon - 1:00 pm	Lunch + Sponsor Presentation
1:00 - 1:15 pm	Break
1:15 - 2:15 pm	Track 1A: Program Building
	Track 1B: AI at Human Scale
2:15 - 2:30 pm	Break
2:30 - 3:30 pm	Track 2A: Lightning Talks
3:30 - 3:45 pm	Break
3:45 - 4:45 pm	Track 3A: Organizational Lifecycles
	Track 3B: Scalability and Limited Resources
4:45 - 5:00 pm	Closing Announcements

Day 2 Schedule - Thursday, November 5th

Time (Eastern Daylight Time)	Session
11:00 am - Noon	State of the NDSA / Membership Forum
Noon - 1:00 pm	Lunch + Birds-of-a-Feather Sessions
1:00 - 1:15 pm	Break
1:15 - 2:15 pm	Track 4A: Shared Infrastructure and Collaboration
	Track 4B: Labor and Capacity
2:15 - 2:30 pm	Break
2:30 - 3:30 pm	Track 5A: Sustainability
	Track 5B: AI in the Workflows
3:30 - 3:45 pm	Break
3:45 - 4:45 pm	Outputs Reporting: Staffing Survey and Web Archiving Survey Groups
4:45 - 5:00 pm	Closing Announcements

Day 1 Schedule Details - Wednesday, November 4

[11:00 am - Noon]

Keynote Address

People Make #digipres: Placing Practitioners at the Heart of Preservation

Sharon McMeekin

Preserve Together

Riffing on her hometown's civic brand, "People Make Glasgow," Sharon's keynote will draw on a combination of her two decades in digital preservation, her work on mental health and wellbeing, and lessons she's learned in the three years since she was diagnosed as being autistic. The latter two, in particular, have caused her to reassess her own professional experiences, including feelings of self-doubt and imposter syndrome, whilst also encouraging her to better understand institutional barriers to digital preservation practice and how those affect the wellbeing of those in the field. She will explore those challenges, as well as potential frameworks and tools we can use to build more sustainable and supportive environments for practitioners in the world of #digipres.

[Noon - 1:00 pm]

Preservica Lunch Presentation

Cutting AV backlogs with human-centric AI

Helen Pilih

Preservica

Kari May

University of Pittsburgh

Audio and video collections are often among the hardest to make accessible and discoverable. Manual transcription and captioning take a lot of time, and backlogs keep growing. In this session, Helena Pilih, Head of Product at Preservica, shows how archival teams use AI-assisted transcription and captioning to work through AV backlogs up to 4x faster, with archivists staying in control of quality and accuracy. Kari May, Digital Archives & Preservation Librarian from the University of Pittsburgh joins her to share her team's experience in practice.

[1:15 pm - 2:15 pm]

Track 1A: Program Building

(1A1) One Bite at a Time: Eating the Digital Preservation Elephant

Marcella Lees

Art Institute of Chicago

This presentation will discuss my work as a Digital Archivist starting a digital preservation program for the Art Institute of Chicago as the sole person with expertise and responsibility for digital preservation. I will discuss the work I've done developing a plan and breaking down the work into smaller, more accomplishable steps. This process has included extensive collaboration and the development of workflows that can be scaled to include departments outside of the Archives. I will discuss strategies for advocating for resources as well as for navigating a large bureaucracy to make institutional change.

By showcasing a digital preservation program that is still in progress, this presentation aims to help others who may be at the beginning of their digital preservation journey—especially those who are working alone—to feel less overwhelmed and to give them ideas by showcasing an example of how someone else has broken down the work of starting a digital preservation program from the ground up.

(1A2) Moving Beyond Metrics: Using Conversation and Community to Advance Digital Preservation Work

Alyssa Davis

Michigan State University

Sarah Mainville

Michigan State University

Leila Sherbini

Michigan State University

Until recently, Michigan State University Libraries did not have a staff member solely dedicated to digital preservation, leaving the responsibility up to a scrappy digital preservation working group (DPWG) with good intentions but not a lot of time or resources to address preservation issues exacerbated by gaps in staffing, reliance on institutional knowledge, and a continually increasing workload.

Over the course of the last six years, the DPWG has utilized the DPC Rapid Assessment Model (DPC RAM) as a way to benchmark the library's progress toward sustainable digital preservation practices. Yet, even with years of results at hand, few inroads were made with administration or staff.

Recognizing this stagnation, and with a boost from new staff members, the DPWG has recently shifted their advocacy approach from focusing on metrics to raising awareness of the importance of digital preservation in all areas of library work, not just with our digital collections. Through more informal events such as co-working sessions, open houses, and student outreach activities, as well as targeted conversations with administrators, department heads, and colleagues, the DPWG is transforming digital preservation from an abstract concept to actionable practices that can be taken up by the broader library staff.

In this presentation, members of the MSU DPWG will highlight a number of their recent advocacy initiatives, recounting both the successes and the struggles, as well as next steps in their plan.

Track 1B: AI at Human Scale

(1B1) From Fear to Fluency: Helping Digitization Staff Embrace AI Without Losing the Work They Love

Irina Schmid

The American University in Cairo

When we introduced AI tools to support metadata creation at our Digitization Center, the technology was the easy part. The harder challenge was human: staff members were hesitant, and their hesitation was understandable. Some feared that learning to use AI meant training a replacement for themselves. Others had attended webinars on AI tools that felt irrelevant to their daily work — abstract, overly technical, and disconnected from the reality of describing a box of photographs or a folder of handwritten letters. Checking a professional development box is not the same as building genuine confidence.

We are a small team with no IT support and no programming skills, processing high volumes of mixed-format materials. We also rely on work-study students during autumn and spring—a welcome but inconsistent resource whose availability and quality vary from semester to semester. When student support is thin, the metadata backlog grows. We needed an approach that permanent, non-technical staff could own and sustain on their own.

This talk describes the dual challenge we faced: helping staff understand that AI is a tool for absorbing tedious, repetitive work — not a threat to the judgment, contextual knowledge, and subject expertise that makes their contributions irreplaceable — while simultaneously building simple, practical prompting workflows anyone can use.

We will share the resistance we encountered, the conversations that shifted perspectives, prompting strategies developed for photos, newspaper clippings, and manuscripts, and the boundaries we set around what AI should not do. The goal is not full automation — it is sustainable labor, with humans firmly in charge.

(1B2) Striking a Balance in Accessibility: Using AI to Meet WCAG 2.2 AA at Scale

*Megan Lohnash
California Revealed*

*Guadalupe Martinez
California Revealed*

*Christopher Winters
California Revealed*

Founded in 2010, California Revealed helps libraries, archives, museums, and historical societies digitize, preserve, and provide online access to materials documenting the state's histories, arts, and cultures. From the beginning, command-line tools—many of them homegrown—have been central to how our small team accomplishes this work at scale.

Recently, we extended that command-line experience to a new challenge: making our collections conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 Level AA. Generating transcripts, captions, and alt text across an estimated 1.5 million minutes of audio and moving-image recordings and 48,000 still images is enormously labor-intensive and far beyond what manual description can sustain for a program our size. To meet this demand, we turned to automation.

This talk walks through our workflow. We use OpenAI's Whisper (large-v3) to generate transcripts for audio and moving-image recordings and ALTText.ai for alt text on still images. But automation forces hard choices about where limited human review time should go. We correct 10–30% of generated alt text depending on volume, describe audio-less moving images by hand, and leave machine transcripts uncorrected, because reviewing 1.5 million minutes in real time exceeds our capacity.

We will share how we made these tradeoffs: which tasks we trust to software, which we reserve for people, and how we reconcile our accessibility ideals with real staffing limits. Attendees will leave with a practical, honest account of AI-assisted accessibility and the open questions we're still working through.

[2:30 pm - 3:30 pm]

Track 2A: Lightning Talks

(2A1) Digital Preservation Triage: Utilizing Risk Statements

Katie Santa Ana

United States Holocaust Memorial

In 2024, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum utilized the Digital Preservation Coalition's Risk Statements as part of a larger digital collections management project focused on achieving the following outcomes:

- Clarity of roles and responsibilities for digital collections management
- The office is staffed according to a functional model, including appropriate skills
- Risk to the digital collections is mitigated

The Risk Statements were integrated into a Risk Register Trello board to collaboratively evaluate with colleagues risks to our digital collections. We then proposed risk mitigation and prioritization strategies to Office leadership alongside our findings. Two years later, in 2026, we revisited the identified risks, evaluated our mitigation progress, and recommended areas for continued improvement.

(2A2) Working on a WARC's Workflow

Hilary Wang

Brown University, John Hay Library

The John Hay Library has overseen the web archiving program for Brown University since 2016. With over 5.3 terabytes of archival material housed in Archive-It, web archiving has become a critical component of preserving institutional history. Spurred by the copyright lawsuits facing the Internet Archive, compounded by server outages in 2024 due to severe heat waves, the Library embarked on a journey to safeguard our WARC (Web ARChive) data.

This project highlights a successful cross-departmental partnership between a digital archivist and a library developer to build an automated pipeline that downloads, tracks, and backs up our web archiving data from Archive-It. I will cover how we balanced digital preservation and archival maintenance with the realities of technical implementations. This lightning talk will provide a brief overview of how we used Google Sheets and Archive-It's Web Archiving Systems API (WASAPI) to develop our workflow.

(2A3) Surveying ETD Submission File Format Requirements at R1 Universities

Grayson Murphy

University of Alabama at Birmingham

A digital preservationist's job is much easier if digital materials are created with preservation in mind. While this is easier in theory than in practice, we as practitioners can get involved in advocating that donors and stakeholders submit materials in formats most conducive to their preservation. This is especially true for materials we receive consistently and are of large import to our institutions, such as electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs). This presentation will cover the landscape of ETD file format submission requirements of R1 universities, or U.S. institutions classified as having very high research activity. This community was chosen

because institutions with high research activity generate a higher number of ETDs and to keep the scope of the project manageable. To generate the data presented, I researched each institution's website for information on submission requirements, identifying what submission platform each institution uses (ProQuest or an Internal Digital Repository), and what file format students were directed to submit their ETD as (PDF, PDF/A, Word or PDF, or None specified).

The results show that only a handful of the 187 R1 institutions require PDF/A submissions, which has downstream implications for people responsible for the preservation of ETDs. After discussing my findings, I will put forth a series of questions and talking points about the feasibility of normalizing ETDs to PDF/A to spark a conversation about the labor involved in doing so, and to ask the ultimate question: Should we intervene during the submission process to require PDF/A submissions?

(2A5) Social Media: Who Owns a Memory? The Future of Digital Preservation

Saja Noor
Wayne State University

William Neumaier
Wayne State University

Chelsea Rook
Wayne State University

Hannah Winkles
Wayne State University

Elisa Torres
Wayne State University

Social media platforms collect vast amounts of user data, the information from which is increasingly used to develop algorithms that shape the digital environment. However, users are only provided with limited access to retained information, whereas detailed user data is shared with third-party companies. This imbalance raises important questions about privacy, transparency, ownership, and the long-term preservation of contemporary digital life.

This presentation explores the gap between the data social media companies collect, and the data users can access, download, and preserve. We examined data export tools across several popular social media platforms, including Meta and Google products, and compared the results evaluating the usability of data-download systems, the clarity of privacy documentation, and users' ability to preserve their own digital histories.

Our findings suggest that users' partial access to their own data may have a negative impact on their ability to preserve their own content. Users may be unaware of the breadth of information collected due to a lack of transparency on the corporations' parts, and the design of these data

download processes may be purposefully discouraging through lengthy waiting periods and limited download windows in which to retrieve user data, as well as complex data download processes with numerous steps and windows to traverse. Digital preservation is becoming increasingly controlled by private corporations, shifting authority over what can be accessed, preserved, and remembered. This presentation highlights the need for greater transparency and informed decision-making among preservation professionals and everyday users.

(2A6) Extending Content Authenticity and Provenance Metadata: A Generalized Approach for Digital Preservation

David Cirella
Yale University Library

The trustworthiness of information is foundational to the preservation and stewardship of digital collections. The prevalence of widely accessible generative AI tools, able to create and modify content in ways that are difficult to detect, has transformed expectations and assumptions around the authenticity of digital media.

A core requirement for trustworthy digital collections is the ability to independently verify the origin, custody, and authenticity of an item across its life-cycle. While current best practices utilizing cryptographic checksums provide an open method for validating content integrity, a generally accepted method for verifying the authenticity and provenance of a digital item has yet to be widely adopted in the cultural heritage sphere.

Within the GLAM community, the C2PA standard, which defines the encoding of provenance information and verification methods, has emerged as a promising candidate. Developed primarily around photojournalism and media production workflows, current C2PA-compliant implementations depend on asset creation as the initiating event for establishing a signed manifest of assertions. For library and archival contexts that include previously digitized and born digital materials, C2PA-based tools must be extended to provide a generalized method, suitable for all types of collection items.

This presentation describes a pilot project at Yale Library to extend C2PA-based methods to born digital and previously digitized collection items held in our digital preservation system. The work includes tool development for generating and signing manifests, integration with existing digital preservation workflows, and an assessment of operational viability for future production use.

(2A8) Six to Forty to Fourteen: Student Assistant Management in Texas Tech's Digital Scholarship Lab

Matthew McEniry
Texas Tech University

Joy Perrin

Texas Tech University

*Shelley Barba
Texas Tech University*

In 2008, the Digital Scholarship Lab (DSL) at Texas Tech University (TTU) Libraries was created with the simple mission of digitizing “every book we can scan” with a focus on digitizing our theses and dissertations. The DSL hired student assistants to scan, process, and perform quality review on a tremendous amount of material.

Over the next 15 years, as the scope of the DSL changed, so did its needs, especially in its student labor force. Changes in administration, the workforce, projects, and budgets necessitated a change in how the DSL managed its student assistants. Technological and logistical shifts enabled the DSL to continue even as its original mission diminished in organizational importance. Of significant note is how despite the COVID-19 pandemic setting the DSL back to a near zero student assistant workforce, we rebuilt and expanded to include a digital scholarship internship program. This presentation will share the history of our student workforce, how our mission and scopes have changed, our workplace and workflow efficiencies, and our reflections on how significant student assistants are for digital scholarship at TTU Libraries.

(2A7) Reporting Is Infrastructure Lessons from a Large-Scale Digital Preservation Migration

*Grete Graf
Yale University*

Large-scale digital preservation projects generate constantly changing operational questions: What content requires attention? How is it currently configured? How do we monitor ongoing work? And how do we build confidence that preservation activities have been completed successfully?

This lightning talk shares lessons from developing reporting to support a storage migration involving approximately 100 million preserved files. As the project evolved, reporting shifted from defining scope and understanding complexity to monitoring progress, identifying failures, and supporting post-migration validation.

The project demonstrates that reporting can function as preservation infrastructure, making complex operations visible, supporting decisions, reducing repetitive effort, and building confidence in outcomes.

[3:45 pm - 4:45 pm]

Track 3A: Organizational Lifecycles

(3A1) Digital Preservation in the Time of Vendor Solutions: Perspectives on Navigating Library-Vendor Relationships

Alisha Baginski

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Due to the trend in recent years away from homegrown digital preservation systems toward vendor solutions, vendor relationships are a part of the everyday fabric of digital preservation work, and, when they are successful, we hardly notice them. However, when issues with vendors or vended solutions arise, we feel the impacts on daily operations acutely. The hidden labor associated with managing vendor relationships may include communicating about repeat vendor issues, setting realistic expectations with internal stakeholders, altering workflows, and rethinking project timelines. Additionally, other important work may go untouched as vendor relationship management consumes a significant amount of time. These impacts may lead to a developing mistrust in your digital preservation program and digital preservation practitioner burnout.

This session is not about a specific vendor, but rather it will examine the impacts vendor relationship management has on digital preservation programs and share lessons learned from examples at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries including strategies to sustain your digital preservation practice and cultivate a positive vendor relationship despite ongoing issues. Lastly, the session will discuss the importance of having an exit strategy from vended solutions and having clearly defined system requirements to know when a vendor is no longer compatible with your program's needs.

(3A2) Sunsetting as Stewardship: A Framework for Closing with Care

Chelle Sanders

Software Preservation Network

Sunsetting was not part of the Software Preservation Network's founding conversation. Organizations are built to last — or at least that's the implicit assumption baked into most strategic plans, member recruitment pitches, and grant applications. But what happens when an organization has done what it set out to do? Or when the ecosystem has shifted in ways that make continuation less meaningful than closure? Or when the honest answer is that the energy, resources, and community trust carried by an organization would do more good somewhere else?

These are the questions that SPN's Transition Team sat with as it began its sunsetting process in early 2026. And in sitting with them, something became clear: even discussing closure is

taboo in the nonprofit sector, leaving little documentation of what it looks like to do it well, i.e., with intention, with values intact, and with an eye toward what the field needs next.

That gap is part of what SPN hopes to address. This is the account of an organization at the end of its lifecycle, and how we're embracing this final act and working to preserve everything worth keeping. Through this presentation, we hope to communicate the importance of developing a sunset strategy, share strategies for composting resources to bring new life to the work in the future, and how we're still working towards community development as we close down operations.

(3A3) Preserving the Publisher: Stabilizing Governance for an Electronic Literature Journal

Alex Kinnaman
Virginia Tech

Soham Patel
Virginia Tech

The New River Journal (TNRJ) is a 30-year-old electronic literary journal published by the Virginia Tech (VT) English Department. Recently, the TNRJ migrated to hosting by the University Libraries with a renewed interest in implementing an archival approach to the journal's maintenance. While e-literature is often discussed in terms of preserving legacy and complex digital objects, TNRJ illustrates a different reality: the greater preservation risk is not the works themselves, but the sustainability of the entity responsible for maintaining them. This presentation will explore the beginning stages of collaborative effort between VT Libraries and TNRJ to address gaps in change management, governance stability, and organizational resiliency in the journal.

Over the past two years, TNRJ has experienced a transition in editorial leadership, platform migration, and loss of department-level IT. The journal operates without dedicated funding or formal governance and relies on one FTE and graduate student editors. Nearly every submission to TNRJ has already undergone triage and conservation by The NEXT, an access and archival platform for born-digital material housed within the Electronic Literature Lab at Washington State University. However, the recent transitions and lack of knowledge transfer or digital object management policy has resulted in limited operational continuity within the journal itself.

Guided by Section 3 of ISO 16363 on "Organizational Infrastructure" and existing TNRJ documentation, the University Libraries is taking a preservation-based approach to support the stabilization of TNRJ. This talk will outline the goals, preliminary work, and planned strategies for stewarding our longstanding e-literature publishing program.

Track 3B: Scalability and Limited Resources

(3B1) The Middlebury Model: A Scalable Digital Collections Strategy for Small Teams

Patrick R. Wallace
Hamilton College

Kaitlin Buerge
Middlebury College

Many small digital collections teams operate without a structured preservation-and-access strategy, due to the absence of a practical model that fits real staffing and budget constraints. Too often, scarce capacity is absorbed by expensive platforms and vendor-defined workflows. This session presents a proven alternative centered on collection development, infrastructural flexibility, and staff empowerment.

The model is straightforward: Internet Archive as the sole public access layer developed locally; local storage plus Archive-It Vault ensure long-term dark preservation; and locally managed workflows, built with open tools, are increasingly supported by AI-assisted scripting and automation. No enterprise DAM, no proprietary preservation suite, no vendor lock-in. The architecture scales up or down with team size and remains usable, documentable, and resilient through staffing and technology change.

Its evidence is a decade of sustained practice. From 2015 to 2026, Middlebury College Special Collections and Archives built this stack from scratch, with a team that never exceeded 3 FTE. By 2026, the program had published 70,000+ items across administrative records, oral histories, audiovisual media, publications, student ephemera, web/social content, and rare books/manuscripts. The collections now support curriculum, campus culture, funded collaborations, and reach hundreds of thousands of users annually.

Co-presented by the model's architect and successor, the session pairs strategy with a discussion of succession and continuation, as well as how the approach is now being extended at Hamilton College.

(3B2) A Digital Preservation Toolkit for Organizations with Limited Resources

Martha Anderson
University of Arkansas

Chelsea Denault
Michigan Digital Preservation Network

John Dewees
University of Rochester

For those working in cultural memory, the prospect of engaging in digital preservation is often seen as an overwhelming and expensive endeavor, but it doesn't have to be. This new toolkit is designed to act as a supportive guide intended to meet practitioners where they are, encourage them to take the next step, and celebrate accomplishments big and small. It is about building confidence and capacity in digital preservation, one small, meaningful action at a time.

This toolkit includes an overview of digital preservation theory and practice, definitions of terms to demystify jargon, and distinguishing between different stages of the process and what they mean, including: selection, appraisal, preservation, maintenance, and deaccession. The resources of organizations vary quite widely, from available technology, to what funds are available (including none), to how many people are able to engage in the work. These practical and actionable workflows are designed for every size organization, especially in a context where resources are constrained and long-term access must be balanced with realistic capabilities.

Come hear about the ongoing work to create this toolkit and provide valuable feedback to the authors based on your own experiences working with small and under-resourced organizations to help us ensure this resource meets the needs of the intended audience. We very much welcome input and ideas from the community to make this toolkit as useful as possible, which has been accepted as an open access publication as part of the CLIR Pocket Burgundy series and slated for completion in 2027.

[4:45 pm - 5:00 pm]

Closing Announcements

End of day announcements and reflections.

Day 2 Schedule Details - Thursday, November 5

[11:00 am - Noon]

State of the NDSA / Membership Forum

Stacey Jones (NDSA Leadership Co-Chair)
University of Arizona

Matthew McEniry (NDSA Leadership Co-Chair)
Texas Tech University

NDSA Leadership will share an update on the Alliance's activities and accomplishments over the past year, including progress on NDSA's transition to an independent nonprofit organization, plans for the year ahead, and announcement of newly-elected Coordinating Committee members. The session will then shift to a member forum moderated by the Membership Working Group, with NDSA Leadership participating in the conversation. Members will have an opportunity to ask questions, share feedback, and help shape priorities for NDSA's next phase. Topics may include organizational sustainability, potential approaches to generating revenue, the future of membership, and other ways NDSA can continue to serve and engage its community.

[Noon - 1:00 pm]

Birds-of-a-Feather

Informal discussion and networking drop-in session over lunch.

[1:15 pm - 2:15 pm]

Track 4A: Shared Infrastructure and Collaboration

(4A1) From Single-Tiered to Multiple-Tiered Storage: Redesigning the Amata Digital Preservation System for Chulalongkorn University

Siriporn Khamayard
Chulalongkorn University

Pimnapa Amaritworachai
Chulalongkorn University

Cherdwong Hongsrichinda
Chulalongkorn University

The rising costs of digital technologies, data centers, and personnel retention, compounded by preservation-grade data quality requirements, necessitate a reassessment and redesign of storage solutions within the Chula Amata Digital Preservation System — an in-house-developed and hosted system by the Office of Academic Resources at Chulalongkorn University. Through an internationally collaborative case study, this presentation examines peer institutional library practices in storage solution selection, tier strategy, network architecture, and data staging workflows. The findings reveal that while Chulalongkorn University Library maintains a robust infrastructure — including automated workflows, multiple user interfaces, and multiple recovery site locations (LOCKSS) — its uniform deployment of server storage across all collections, regardless of access demand, results in unsustainably high costs. In contrast, peer institutions employ a tiered storage model assigning storage solutions based on access frequency, reserving low-cost cloud storage for low-touch collections while dedicating instant-access solutions exclusively for high-demand collections and staging. This tiered approach informs Chulalongkorn University Library's ongoing storage redesign, shifting from uniformly high-cost server deployment toward a cost-effective, access-driven allocation. The Library is currently working with multiple campus stakeholders to update its digital preservation infrastructure and strategy, improving its technology, services, and pricing models to better serve the university's growing volume of digital assets.

(4A2) A Model for a Collaborative and Accessible Digital Preservation Network

Chelsea Denault
Michigan Digital Preservation Network

This presentation shares findings from the Michigan Digital Preservation Network's (MDPN) Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)-funded project to demonstrate a replicable model for a collaborative distributed digital preservation network using the LOCKSS 2.0 software and prioritizing easy-to-use workflows for non-technical users to help make digital preservation services more accessible to a diverse range of cultural memory institutions.

Building off a statewide needs assessment that identified a digital preservation gap among small and under-resourced cultural memory institutions in Michigan, the MDPN sought to build a network that could be accessible - both financially and technically - for most organizations. Leveraging a range of engaged partners and the newly rearchitected LOCKSS 2.0 software, the MDPN approached the project with a sense of "shared authority" - the guiding principle of Public History practice that acknowledges the needs, expertise, and experiences of all stakeholders equally in the process of history-making. Translated to digital preservation, shared authority suggests a collaborative approach to network development in which partners bring expertise grounded in their own experience to the table to help improve the service for all.

The model MDPN developed is presented through several reusable and adaptable resources in the grant deliverable, "Statewide and Regional LOCKSS 2.0 Digital Preservation Network Implementation Toolkit," organized around five focus areas: community formation, technical infrastructure, workflow development, governance, and outreach and training. The Toolkit is intended to help guide groups of collaborators seeking to build a new distributed digital preservation network or existing networks seeking guidance in one or more of the focus areas.

Track 4B: Labor and Capacity

(4B1) The New Kid on the Block: Building a Foundation for Successful Collaboration and Preventing Burnout in a New Digital Archivist/Digital Preservation Librarian Position

Evan N. Miller

Indiana University Indianapolis

Starting a new job obviously comes with new responsibilities. However, every new role also comes attached with unexpected institutional baggage, such as undocumented policies, unfamiliar organizational practices, or shifting expectations from predecessor positions or other departments. Balancing onboarding in a new position, doing the day-to-day work, taking in the landscape, and reviewing past projects can be overwhelming, but jumping into making quick changes based on one's own personal knowledge and experience without first assessing what came before and the valuable efforts of past contributors can lead to a lack of collaboration and missing lessons that they learned through the growth and changes at an the institution over time.

Evan N. Miller started as the inaugural Digital Preservation and Digital Collections Archivist at Indiana University Indianapolis in August 2025. Being the outcome of merging multiple past library roles due to institutional budget cuts with new strategic priorities, the position required Miller to work across departments and interpret differing institutional practices while charting and advocating for a new vision forward. Miller will share his experience as "the new kid on the block" at his institution, and his process for authentically and sustainably assessing and documenting the state of his institution's digital collections and digital preservation practices, including specific information he aimed to collect and why along with specific tools and workflows he used to gather, document, and share the information.

(4B2) Making Digital Preservation Work Visible: Using Labour Market Evidence to Support Sustainable Workforce Development

Dorothy Waugh

Digital Preservation Coalition

Amy Currie

Digital Preservation Coalition

Job advertisements offer a snapshot of how organisations understand digital preservation work. They reveal where responsibility sits, which skills are valued, what level of experience is expected, and how much capacity is assumed to exist. Read collectively, they can show how the field is defining, distributing and resourcing digital preservation labour.

This talk draws on the Digital Preservation Coalition's Labour Market Analysis work, including emerging insights from our upcoming report, which analyses digital preservation job data from 2023–2024. Building on previous reports, based on data from 2018-2020 and 2021-2022, this new analysis examines how digital preservation roles are described, scoped and resourced in practice, and what has changed over time. The talk will share what this evidence reveals about the current shape of digital preservation labour, and what it may mean for recruitment, skills development and sustainable practice.

It will also consider how labour market evidence can be translated into practical support for the community. At the DPC, this evidence is feeding into work on recruitment guidance, learning resources, and clearer ways to identify the skills and support needed across roles and teams. Mental health and wellbeing are central to this work, because role expectations, capacity gaps and organisational support all affect whether digital preservation work is sustainable in practice.

This talk will provide insights into the digital preservation labour market and an understanding of how DPC is using these insights to support community conversations, resources and guidance around more sustainable digital preservation work.

(4B3) Where Will the Work Make a Difference? Navigating Capacity and Constraint in Digital Preservation

Stacey Jones
University of Arizona

Digital preservation practitioners are frequently asked to do more: complete another assessment, learn another tool, write another policy, or advocate more effectively. Yet additional labor does not always produce progress. A practitioner may understand what needs to be done but lack authority, organizational support, confidence, relationships, or sufficient capacity to act.

Developed through the Digital POWRR Peer Assessment Project, the Navigating Uncertainty framework offers a multidimensional alternative to linear maturity models. It examines six interdependent aspects of digital preservation capacity and recognizes that individuals and institutions may possess significant strengths while remaining constrained in other areas.

This presentation will explore how the framework can help practitioners determine where limited labor is most likely to make a difference. Through brief composite examples, it will illustrate common patterns, which will demonstrate why more training, documentation, or technical activity may fail to address the underlying barrier. By helping practitioners align ambition with actual capacity, the framework offers a way to balance immediate preservation needs with the longer-term sustainability and resilience of both programs and the people who support them.

The presentation argues that sustainable digital preservation depends not on maximizing activity, but on directing labor toward the conditions that can unlock meaningful and durable progress.

[2:30 pm - 3:30 pm]

Track 5A: Sustainability

(5A1) Many to One (and Back Again): Our Adventures Designing a Digital AV Archival Workflow

Lindsey Memory
Brigham Young University

Karen Glenn
Brigham Young University

Miyamoto Jensen
Brigham Young University

Abby Beazer
Brigham Young University

Michael Gates
Brigham Young University

At the BYU Library, the creation of a new Audiovisual Digitization Lab Manager position launched an 18-month, cross-divisional evaluation of archival audiovisual workflows. Harmonizing AV digitization, description, and arrangement remains the Wild West of archival practice. Early on, we confronted what Duke University has termed the “many-to-one” dilemma: a single intellectual AV entity may span multiple carriers, and alternately, a single carrier may contain multiple intellectual works. Our team grappled with foundational questions: how to describe both physical and digitized media in ways patrons can understand; when and whether carriers can be discarded; at what level identifiers should be assigned; and how reappraisal can ensure the labor invested is proportionate and effective. A set of pilot digitization projects further demonstrated the scarcity of shared best practices for AV digitization, description, and preservation. There is no consensus around what constitutes a discrete digital archival AV object, nor an established practice for aligning preservation and access metadata. Ultimately, the workflow design group determined that ARK identifiers could be flexibly assigned at various levels of a finding aid to connect intellectual entities to access systems, while preservation systems required separate, purpose-built structures. Digital preservation workflows—traditionally file-centric—adopted a structured parent-child model to correspond with ARKs. Our work remains in progress, and sustainability at a programmatic level is a key consideration in our ongoing experimentation. Because few institutions openly share

approaches to reconciling AV digitization, arrangement, and digital preservation, we aim to lead out and share what we have learned so far.

(5A2) You Can't Always Get What You Want: Rethinking Digital Preservation Approaches Under Resource Constraints

Sarah Dorpinghaus
University of Kentucky

Douglas A. Boyd, PhD
University of Kentucky

Andrew McDonnell
University of Kentucky

How do we build sustainable digital preservation programs when budgets tighten, staffing changes due to IT centralization, and digital collections continue to grow? At the University of Kentucky Libraries, what began as a search for ways to reduce digital preservation storage costs became a broader examination of how labor, workflows, and institutional priorities shape preservation programs.

Our cross-functional Digital Preservation Working Group initially set out to evaluate vendor-hosted preservation platforms and identify opportunities to reduce our storage footprint (and thus costs). Along the way, we discovered that our biggest challenges were not technical—they were organizational. Storage duplication often reflected uncertainty rather than preservation strategy: multiple copies existed because responsibilities were unclear, documentation was incomplete, systems were not consistently trusted or accessible, and staff understandably hesitated to delete content. We realized that the true cost of preservation extended far beyond terabytes and storage invoices to include staff labor, policy decisions, workflow complexity, infrastructure maintenance, and organizational coordination.

This presentation explores how treating digital preservation as a labor and sustainability problem fundamentally changed our approach. We will discuss the difficult decisions involved in defining preservation tiers, managing extraordinary data footprints of audiovisual collections, balancing local and vendor-hosted infrastructure, and determining which preservation activities should remain institutional responsibilities and which can be delegated to external services or not completed at all. Rather than presenting a vendor implementation story, we offer challenging considerations for aligning preservation infrastructure and strategies with the labor and dollars that we actually have.

[2:30 pm - 3:30 pm]

Track 5B: AI in the Workflows

(5B1) AI Transcription in Practice: What Works for Archival Media?

Yongli Zhou

Colorado State University

AI transcription tools can significantly reduce the time required to create transcripts and captions, but their performance varies widely with archival and educational media. This presentation compares five AI-based transcription platforms using recordings that include poor audio quality, multilingual speech, overlapping speakers, uncommon proper nouns, and on-screen text.

The evaluation examines accuracy, functionality, usability, and cost. Findings show that no single solution meets all accessibility, budget, and production needs. Open-source tools are often more affordable but require additional technical expertise and post-processing, while commercial platforms provide more user-friendly features at a higher cost.

(5B2) Bridging the IT Gap: AI as a Troubleshooting Partner in Solo Digital Preservation Workflows

Palash Bosgang

Bard College

Digital preservation practitioners are increasingly asked to do more with fewer resources while maintaining the integrity and accessibility of complex digital collections. This presentation offers a case study of an under-resourced institution navigating a mid-2024 transition from high-risk Google Drive storage to a resilient 3-2-1 compliance model. Experiencing a career transition from Digital Projects Coordinator to a newly minted Digital Preservation Manager and Institutional Repository Administrator, the author engineered a pipeline utilizing a DPOE-N grant-funded hardware mirror alongside a regional consortial dark archive service (SENYLRC) to securely ingest terabytes of data into an AWS, Archivmatica, and Amazon Glacier environment.

A major roadblock presented itself during the first round of fixity checks on the local drive. The external hard drive unexpectedly stopped appearing in a macOS environment, entirely halting preservation workflows. Compounding the crisis, institutional downsizing had recently eliminated dedicated in-house technical support, leaving the author with limited access to immediate assistance from an already overextended campus IT department.

When traditional troubleshooting forums offered minimal guidance, the author reluctantly pivoted to generative AI (ChatGPT) as an on-demand technical partner. Through an intensive, iterative 28-page dialogue tracking log files and device configurations, the tool diagnosed a

cross-platform operating system conflict involving an NTFS-formatted drive and recommended a lightweight software solution.

After independently verifying the recommendation and testing the software, the author successfully advocated for licensing, resolved the bottleneck, and resumed stewardship activities. This session illustrates how AI can directly support digital preservation labor in small institutions and understaffed programs. Rather than replacing professional knowledge, AI functioned as a patient troubleshooting partner that helped narrow possibilities, surface hidden technical concepts, and build practitioner learning. Furthermore, the author's understanding of systems and how they work together was expanded through the process—a deep technical onboarding that may not have happened as naturally by simply outsourcing the problem to IT. This presentation demonstrates how thoughtful use of AI can be utilized to navigate technical resource gaps, deepen systemic self-reliance, and optimize labor for long-term institutional resilience.

(5B3) GCU's Digital Preservation Metadata Generator: Designing Sustainable Metadata Workflows

Nicky Stewart

Glasgow Caledonian University

This presentation examines the development of the GCU Digital Preservation Metadata Generator, a tool designed to automate the generation of ISAD(G)-compliant metadata for archival ingest in our DP system while preserving the integrity of the archival records.

Rather than beginning as a software project, the work started with manual and semi-automated workflows that required a combination of domain understanding and technical expertise. Through iterative refinement, these workflows were formalised into a structured decision architecture that defined how metadata could be generated from source and output in a DP system compatible format.

By utilising the power of AI, we then moved to an automated system that successfully reduced technical barriers and enabled users to quickly produce consistent, standards and system compliant metadata. However, a key principle throughout development was to automate only what could be reliably derived from the source, while preserving areas where expert input is required. This included avoiding transformation of source data and ensuring that the system does not impose decisions on users but flags potential problem areas for consideration.

The presentation will explore how this project has made workflows for metadata generation sustainable at our institution within the constraints of a small team. It will also reflect on the role of AI in the project, which was used to streamline development rather than replace expertise.

[3:45 pm - 4:45 pm]

Outputs Reporting: Staffing Survey and Web Archiving Survey Groups

Rachel Appel (Staffing Survey Working Group Co-Chair)
University of Pennsylvania

Hannah Wang (Staffing Survey Working Group Co-Chair)
U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

The 2025 Staffing Survey is the fourth NDSA benchmarking study examining digital preservation staffing and skills, building on surveys conducted in 2012, 2017, and 2021. This latest survey offers an updated look at how digital preservation work is structured, experienced, and sustained within organizations. The findings show encouraging progress in policy, infrastructure, and assessment, alongside a highly capable and resourceful workforce. At the same time, the survey highlights a persistent challenge: sustainable digital preservation depends less on practitioner expertise than on organizational alignment and adequate resources. This presentation will explore the survey's key findings and what they suggest about the investments, leadership, and support needed to sustain the field.

Elena Colon-Marrero (Web Archiving Survey Working Group Co-Chair)
University of Michigan

Melissa Wertheimer (Web Archiving Survey Working Group Co-Chair)
Library of Congress

In 2026 NDSA Web Archiving Survey was released to track the evolution of web archiving programs around the world and to help us better understand what individuals and institutions collect, challenges, and the resources and infrastructure needed to support these efforts. Members of the Web Archiving Survey Working Group will discuss the findings from our survey report and examine longitudinal trends and attitudes to web archiving.

[4:45 pm - 5:00 pm]

Closing Announcements

End of day announcements and reflections.