Community-Driven Approaches to Digital Preservation

Dr. Martin Halbert
Dr. Katherine Skinner
Central topics

- Why do we need to collaborate?
- Who is collaborating and how?
- What are some core principles of collaborative preservation?
- What do they look like in practice?
  - MetaArchive Cooperative
Why collaborate?

Start with our historical missions

- **Collections**
  - Acquiring and protecting books, journals, newspapers, unique items, etc.

- **Services**
  - Building, disseminating, and preserving collections
    - Once solitary activity; now defies such boundaries
    - Competition vs. collaboration issue
    - External competitors
    - Viability at stake

Collaboration - Halbert and Skinner, 8/12/11
80% of ARL respondents state that they are preserving digital content; 16% plan to soon

Most are doing so *in house*

- 90% report they are engaged in or intend to engage in *local* activities
- 50% report they are already preserving their most important collections *locally*
- 24% report running *collaborative* digital preservation solutions with a *local component*
In future projections, ARL respondents reported that they plan to continue turning to library-managed and collaborative solutions above vendor-based, hosted solutions for these core collections (64% library-managed, 34% collaborative, and 29% vendor-based).

Collaboration and preservation

- So what are collaborative digital preservation solutions, and why do they matter?
Why does collaboration matter?

- Allows us to accomplish two preservation goals:
  1. To preserve the digital collections we create
     - Maintain integrity so that we can continue to access both “born digital” and digitized materials
  2. To preserve our own institutional missions
     - Outsourcing a core mission is a dangerous proposition
Successful approach

- Especially when compared to other, non-collaborative solutions, these collaborative offerings are:
  - Cost effective
  - Scalable
  - Transparent
  - Controlled by libraries
  - User responsive
  - Standards based

Collaboration - Halbert and Skinner, 8/12/11
Blue Ribbon final report (2011)

Key findings:

- “One-time” funding models are inadequate
- Poor alignment between stakeholders & roles
- Lack of institutional, enterprise, and/or community incentives to support the collaboration needed to enforce sustainable economic models
- Complacency that the problem is not urgent
- Fear that digital access and preservation is too big to tackle
So we know we should collaborate...

Now how do we do it?
Collaborative Network: An association of autonomous entities collaborating to achieve common or compatible goals.

Source: Wikipedia.org
Collaborative network building

- Enables communities to work together on a common solution to a common problem
- Demands attention to organizational structure in order to work
- Requires three key elements:
  - A common cause
  - Solid institutional buy-in
  - Attention to the organizational arrangement that governs the partnerships
One successful exemplar:

MetaArchive Cooperative is a digital preservation network created and hosted by and for cultural memory organizations.

Welcome

To learn more about joining MetaArchive, please contact our Program Manager.

UPCOMING EVENTS
- Make It Work: Improvisations on the Stewardship of Digital Information First Combined NDIP/NDSA Partners Meeting
  July 19-21, 2011
  Washington, D.C.
- ETD 2011 Pre-Conference Distributed Digital Preservation Workshop
  Sept 16, 2011
  Cape Town, South Africa
- PLN Community Meeting 2011
  October 24-25, 2011
  Simon Fraser University Vancouver Campus, British Columbia
A distributed digital preservation cooperative for digital archives, based on LOCKSS

286 TB network with 24 secure caches

Preserving collections for/with 18 members and 46 institutions in 4 countries

Actively growing (outreach campaign in progress, aim to double membership)

Provide preservation consulting and training
MetaArchive Basics

- Compatible with any repository/content management system
- Three membership levels
  - Preservation members: $3,000K/yr
  - Sustaining members: $5,500K/yr
  - Collaborative members: $2,500/yr plus nominal fee/yr per participating institution
- Server cost: $4,600/3 yrs
- Storage cost: $1/GB/yr

Collaboration - Halbert and Skinner, 8/12/11
MetaArchive Services

- Data preparation
- Replication
- Geographical Distribution
- Bit Integrity Checking
- Versioning
- Security
- Restricted Viewing
- Content Restoration

Collaboration - Halbert and Skinner, 8/12/11
Trust and TRAC

- Completed self-audit with external auditor in 2010 (see http://metaarchive.org/documentation)
- MetaArchive successfully conforms in all 3 categories and 84 criteria
- “trustworthy digital repository”...ensures that processes and policies and workflows meet the standard for long-term preservation
- Helped us identify places where we could improve our policies and documentation

Collaboration - Halbert and Skinner, 8/12/11
Sustainability

- Cooperative framework
- Strong organizational center
- Limited dependence on any one member
- Collaborative model for long-term preservation
  - Geographic diversity/distribution
  - Expertise diffusion
  - Maintain cost-effective, in-house options

Collaboration - Halbert and Skinner, 8/12/11
Preserving our missions

- Outsourcing core services = risky proposition
- Core missions:
  - Building collections
  - Disseminating collections
  - Preserving collections

Cannot focus on the *collections* at the expense of the *services* ... need both in order to carry our missions and memory forward

Collaboration - Halbert and Skinner, 8/12/11
Contact Info

- Dr. Martin Halbert
  martin.halbert@unt.edu

- Dr. Katherine Skinner
  katherine@metaarchive.org