FROM COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED VALUES TO ACTION

Operationalizing the Digital Preservation Declaration of Shared Values

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Abstract – Operating from a foundation of shared values, the community-supported digital preservation services represented in the Digital Preservation Services Collaborative (DPSC) empower stewards of digital content to make informed decisions by offering transparency and accountability. These values have become increasingly important as resources for digital preservation fail to meet the needs of organizations, forcing many mission-critical digital preservation activities to be outsourced to commercial providers. In the DPSC Planning Project, this group of mission-aligned service providers are working to establish closer and more intentional collaboration between their organizations, in order to guarantee the continued availability of services that prioritize transparency and accountability to the cultural heritage organizations they serve. In this interactive panel, partners from the DPSC Planning Project will discuss the importance of the shared values for digital preservation good practice, how they have enacted these values within their organizations, and other project findings.

Keywords – Digital preservation; collaboration; values; transparency; accountability

Conference Topics – We're All In This Together; From Theory to Practice

I. INTRODUCTION

The Digital Preservation Declaration of Shared Values, first put forth in 2017, sets aspirational but achievable standards for the efforts of the Digital Preservation Services Collaborative (DPSC) [1]. The DPSC is a volunteer alliance of representatives from community-supported digital preservation service providers, including APTrust, Chronopolis, CLOCKSS, LYRASIS, MetaArchive, and Texas Digital Library. These collaborating organizations are united in their commitment to preserve the cultural, intellectual, scientific, and academic record for current and future generations, using community-supported approaches. For the past six years, the values in the Declaration have established a foundation for these organizations to work together with a sense of trust and mission alignment.

Community-supported digital preservation initiatives foster community empowerment through governance, transparency, and accountability. These services also empower the organizations that are stewarding digital content to make informed

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decisions by providing them with much more than "black box" solutions. The organizations and the practitioners they serve, however, operate in a challenging technological and economic landscape where there are fewer and fewer resources for digital preservation. In the 2021 NDSA Staffing Survey, almost 70% of respondents stated that their organization did not have the staffing needed to manage the digital content that they steward [2]. This has fostered a landscape where digital preservation functions are increasingly outsourced to commercial providers. Outsourcing these activities, without proper mechanisms for governance, transparency, and accountability, carries inherent risks for digital cultural heritage. Despite the benefits of values-centered approaches, however, community-based digital preservation service providers are operating in the face of claims that community-based approaches cannot innovate quickly enough to keep up with marketplace demands due to governance structures that are overly burdensome [3].

Within this neoliberal landscape, members of the DPSC desired closer and more intentional collaboration between their organizations, and they embarked on an IMLS Planning Project to propose a feasible service model for this collaboration [4]. The digital preservation community has long supported and recommended more collaborative approaches. The NDSA's 2015 National Agenda for Digital Preservation noted the need for a more coordinated ecosystem of distributed services [5]. This project is an effort to translate the DPSC's set of shared values into action, exploring exactly how much and what kind of collaboration among like-minded service providers is possible. In addition to finding strategic alignment and potential efficiencies between their services, the partners aim to demonstrate that the community governance and accountability offered by their services are not hindrances to innovation, but rather preconditions and catalysts for digital preservation good practice. The continued availability of services that prioritize transparency and accountability to the cultural heritage organizations they serve is necessary for these organizations to grant broad and sustained access to their digital material.

In this panel, three of the DPSC partners will discuss the importance of the shared values for digital preservation good practice, how they have enacted these values within their organizations, and other project findings.

II. PANEL FORMAT

This panel will explore the topic of operationalizing a set of community-supported and -supportive values into digital preservation practice. The format of the panel will be interactive, with panelists both reflecting on this topic and posing questions to the audience about their own digital preservation values and needs. Questions posed during the panel will include:

- How are these shared values being challenged?
- How can library executive-level staff contribute to value- and good practice-centric digital preservation programs?
- How can digital preservation service providers best support digital preservation staff in libraries, archives, and special collections?
- What are the risks of dependency on commercial providers of digital preservation services?
- How can non-commercial service providers incentivize community-based digital preservation partnerships?

III. PANELISTS

Hannah Wang is Program Officer for Digital Infrastructure at Educopia Institute, where she facilitates the work of the MetaArchive Cooperative and serves as Project Director for the DPSC Planning Project.

Jess Farrell is a Community Facilitator at Educopia Institute. She will moderate the session.

Courtney Mumma is the Deputy Director of the Texas Digital Library consortium, where one of her roles is managing Digital Preservation Services using Chronopolis and DuraCloud@TDL. She has worked in web archiving at the Internet Archive and is one of the creators of the Archivematica open source digital preservation workflow system.

Sibyl Schaefer is the Chronopolis Program Manager and Digital Preservation Librarian at the University of California, San Diego. She coordinates digital preservation activities across the UCSD Library and manages the Chronopolis distributed digital preservation system.

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