

COMMUNITY IS WE

Modeling collective action as a framework for digital preservation

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Abstract – This panel asks the question “how can collective action build global capacity for digital preservation?” Drawing on their own experiences participating in community-driven initiatives, panelists will describe and showcase how collective action efforts have created shared opportunities for advancing digital preservation goals. Following this discussion, panelists will reflect on the individual challenges and opportunities they faced in participating in such work. The panel will conclude with suggested next steps that can move the field globally towards a shared articulation of digital preservation work in practice.

Keywords – Best practices; education; collaboration; shared research

Conference Topics – We’re all in this together; From theory to practice.

1. INTRODUCTION

Born-digital stewardship in contemporary GLAM settings presents information professionals (scholars, practitioners, educators, and students) with a multitude of ongoing, persistent and intersectional challenges. Born-digital materials, defined as “items created and managed in digital form” [1], carry inherent risk (of obsolescence, degradation, bit rot) and thus a more urgent timetable for preservation actions [2]. The frequency and speed of changes in the born-digital collecting sphere underscores the need to build community support mechanisms that provide collaborative environments for shared learning, troubleshooting, and skill building.

At the same time, community-driven efforts to address commonly experienced digital preservation problems through collective action have proven to be particularly effective in advancing practice. Collective action is broadly defined as measures taken by a group working toward a common objective. In the last decade, the formation and growth of many international, distributed community networks have coalesced around the challenges and opportunities of current digital preservation work. They have created sustainable pathways for transitioning work from theory to practice by collaboratively developing resources and best practices, learning from the lived experiences of one another, and supporting rising professionals in learning the tools and skills to be successful. Showcasing the efforts of these communities has not been addressed comprehensively and efforts to map the terrain globally are underway [3].

2. PROPOSED PANEL

In response to the iPRES 2023 call for proposals related to the conference topic “We’re All In This Together”, this panel highlights the experiences of six community facilitators working in community-driven international digital preservation networks. Each panelist will be invited to contribute and reflect on topics such as the following:

- How does your community fit into the digital preservation landscape?
- How does your community define and approach “collective action”?
- How has your community collectively addressed a shared preservation challenge?
- How has your community balanced theory and practice?
- What challenges has your community faced in working collaboratively?
- Are there any upcoming projects or activities your community is hopeful to examine?
- How have you addressed sustainability in both your project and community formation?

The panel will be moderated to encourage both active discussion and audience participation.

3. INVITED PANELISTS

Invited panelists along with their affiliation and represented network (bolded) are described below:

Alexandra Chassanoff, Assistant Professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, will moderate the panel.

Stacey Erdman is the Digital Preservation Librarian at the University of Arizona and currently serves as Project Director for the **Digital POWRR Peer Assessment Program**, and as an instructor for the Digital POWRR Institute training events.

Jess Farrell is a Community Facilitator for the **Software Preservation Network** at the Educopia Institute.

Andrea Goethals, Digital Preservation Manager at National Library of New Zealand, represents **Australasia Preserves**.

Sharon McMeekin is Head of Workforce Development with the **Digital Preservation Coalition**.

Mikala Narlock is the Director of the **Data Curation Network** based at the University of Minnesota.

Hannah Wang is the former Community Facilitator for the **MetaArchive Cooperative**.

4. REFERENCES

- [1] Erway, Ricky. (2010). “Defining Born Digital.” Report produced by OCLC Research. <http://www.oclc.org/research/activities/hiddencollections/borndigital.pdf>
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- [3] Lindlar, Michelle; Pohlkam, Svenia; Zarnitz, Monica; Bahr, Thomas; Strathmann, Stefan. (2022). “Mapping the Landscape of Digital Preservation Networks.” Proceedings of the Eighteenth International Conference on Digital Preservation (iPRES), Glasgow, UK, September 12-16, 2023.