ETD Preservation and Archiving: Can Old Strategies be Applied to New Media?

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Overview

• Preserving Print Collections
• Preservation Strategies
• Print Environment Factors
• Digital Environment Factors
• Library Concerns
• Library Expectations of Producers
• What Libraries Can Do
Preserving Print Collections

- Early Library Preservation Efforts
  - Repair and rebinding
  - Reprints or facsimiles
- 1960s: Growing Recognition of Problem with Brittle Books
  - ARL survey of member collections
  - CLR sponsored study of effects of environment on longevity of books
  - 80 million books in danger, 12 million unique
- 1970s: Growth of Preservation Programs, Education and Training, Research
- 1978: Title II-C Funds for Preservation
Preserving Print Collections

• **1989: Brittle Books Program**
  – 20 year plan to preserve 3 million books
  – Appropriate to National Endowment of the Humanities of $12.5 million
  – Components
    • Microfilming
    • Encourage use of alkaline paper
    • Encourage research on deacidification
Library Preservation Activities

• 1996-97, ARL Libraries spent
  – Over $80 million on preservation
  – 9% from external sources

• Preservation expenditures were about 8% of library materials expenditures and 3% of total library budget

• Preservation activities included
  – Conservation treatment
  – Mass deacidification
  – Commercial binding
  – Microfilming
  – “Digitizing”
Success?

- 320 million volumes in research libraries
- 80 million books in danger
- 12 million unique
- Plan to microfilm 3 million
- 850,000 preserved thus far
- NEH projected funding level never achieved
- Number of volumes microfilmed by ARL libraries dropped 37% over past two years
Preservation Strategies

• Build a coalition of key stakeholders
• Launch nationwide program
• Implement cooperative projects
• Improve capacity of research libraries
• Increase financial support
• Establish professionally managed programs
• Expand range of strategies and techniques to improve efficiency
Print Environment Factors

• Archival technology was available
  – Microfilming began in the 1930s

• Libraries owned copies of the materials and preservation activity was supported by copyright law

• Federal funds were available to support filming activity
  – Encouraged cooperative projects
  – Supported development of infrastructure

• Rise of some commercial interest in filming

• Understanding of why print deteriorated led to strategies to help prevent the problem
  – Environmental controls
  – Standards for alkaline paper
  – Standards for library binding
Digital Environment Factors

- No proven archival technology or methodology exists
- Libraries do not necessarily own copy of the resource
- Time to deterioration is very short (5-10 years?)
- Limited federal funding for digital preservation research (DLI)
- Commitment of some publishers and some organizations to assume responsibility to preserve digital resources
- No consensus on standards, although there is understanding of the problems and complexities
Library Concerns

• Can we trust producers to take responsibility for preservation?
• Can we afford to take this on ourselves?
  – We don’t know what it costs
  – We don’t know what “it” is
• Can we afford to pay others for it?
• Can we convince funding sources of the need for support?
Library Expectations of Producers

- Take responsibility for archiving your products
- Develop resources with preservation issues in mind
- Adopt standards and best practices that are currently available
- Document standards and practices used
- Migrate, if appropriate
- Run routine back-ups
- Create periodic archival copies on industry standard media, store copy off-site
- Create plan for transferring files to an archival library or agency should the company go out of business or decide it is no longer able to maintain the data; devise the access terms that will dictate access and use of these files
What Libraries Can Do

• Work to raise awareness of issues
• Participate actively in the development of standards and best practices
• Help identify content for preservation
• Lobby for federal funding to support research and development in these areas
• Encourage computer scientists on our campuses to become engaged in the issue
• Recognize that libraries will need to pay for preservation of resources
• Begin identifying archival libraries and agencies
Further Reading

• Issues and Innovations in Preserving Digital Information (ARL Transforming Libraries series)  

  [http://www.rlg.org/ArchTF/](http://www.rlg.org/ArchTF/)

• Strategic Policy Framework for Creating and Preserving Digital Collections / Arts and Humanities Data Service  
  [http://ahds.ac.uk/manage/framework.htm](http://ahds.ac.uk/manage/framework.htm)