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## Digital Preservation Assessment: Reaching Cultural Heritage Institutions for Digital Preservation

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 DigCCur-2007  
 April 20, 2007

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## Cornell Study

- 100 distinct institutions participated in NEH-funded 2003-2005 workshops;
- 50% academic, 27% gov't, 5.2% museum, 3.5% public libraries, 14% other
- Participants held 9-11 different formats
- 50% of attendees had developed policies; 30% had implemented policies
- CD/DVD principle storage medium (90%), online 85%, 75% tape
- 59% of the institutions had staff charged with digital preservation responsibilities
- 38% of institutions were funding programs with institutional funds

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## 2005 NEDCC Survey Results

- 33.1% – academic libraries; 14.5% archives; 9% art museums; 7.8% public libraries; 24.7% other
- Who's responsible – 66% institutions had no one responsible for digital preservation activities
- Continuing education – 84% supported CE activities for digital preservation
- Preservation solutions –
  - **78% networked hard drives;**
  - **65% removable magnetic media;**
  - **data is stored in-house**
- Cause for concern: 30% have been backed up one time or not at all

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## On-site Visit Findings

- Issue of digital preservation is just now coming to the forefront of discussion and action
- Many institutions still at “Digital Project” vs. “Digital Program” stage
- Written policies and documented digital preservation practices are lacking
- Preservation/Conservation Staff are generally not directly involved in many of the digital initiatives

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## Key Findings - Digital Preservation

- Few have coordinated institutional approach to their digital initiative, especially in the areas of:
  - Standards (Imaging, Metadata)
  - Quality Control
  - Access
  - Promotion
  - Digital Preservation
- Lack of understanding of when institution has a 'born-digital object' and then what strategy must be implemented to maintain those objects
- DAM: Some projects see DAM as solution to digital preservation issues.

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## Findings (cont'd.)

- CD/DVD major storage media; moving to networked servers
- Refreshing data on CD/DVD with lengthy periods between refreshing
- Quality control of master images – inconsistent at best
- Backing up is viewed as digital preservation
- Education is important before institutions start “doing” digital preservation
- Ability to advocate for digital preservation is lacking at many institutions
- Funding primarily through local funds and grants

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## Policies

11. Does your institution have a **WRITTEN** policy or procedure document that addresses digital holdings in each of the following areas? (List the URL if a copy is on the Web; otherwise, please attach a copy.)

- Mission and goals	yes	no	being developed	URL
- Collection development	yes	no	being developed	URL
- Emergency prep'ness	yes	no	being developed	URL
- Exhibitions	yes	no	being developed	URL
- Preservation	yes	no	being developed	URL
- Strategic planning	yes	no	being developed	URL
- Public services	yes	no	being developed	URL
- Rights and licensing	yes	no	being developed	URL

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## Outsourced Repository Question

68. Does the Repository have: Yes No Don't know  
 A publicly available Preservation Plan?  
 - Have you reviewed the Preservation Plan?  
 Contingency plans in case of emergency?  
 - Are you aware of what these plans are?  
 Escrow arrangements for software?  
 - If they do, do you have access to it?  
 Off-site backup of the database?  
 Separate professional staff supporting the digital repository?  
 Authentication/authorization?  
 Customer documentation?  
 Customer administrative module?  
 Usability testing?  
 Migration strategy? (may be part of preservation plan)

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## Survey Questions

69. How does the repository demonstrate that they are a financially viable organization?  
 - Publicly available audit  
 - Audit available upon request  
 - Financial statement available upon request  
 - Other, please specify

Are the repository's business plans and practices transparent, and compliant with generally accepted accounting practices and auditable?  
 Do you have a contract or formal agreement?

73. What components does the contract cover?  
 - Who has access to the digital objects and at what frequency?  
 - Delivery options  
 - Preservation rights  
 - Copyright

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## Type of Recommendations

- Improved documentation – continuity planning, workflow processes, etc.
- Review digital preservation activities, including refreshing schedules, quality control, etc.
- Review system back-up procedures and implement off-site storage
- Review optical media utilization, including storage retrieval and duplication
- Incorporate preservation information into metadata
- 53% of the recommendations were discussed and 48% of the recommendations were acted upon

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## So what does all this mean?

- Focus of long-term preservation has been on technology and standards, certification, etc., to build the infrastructure
- To make it reality we now need to
  - Expand advocates for long-term preservation
  - Expand the knowledge base of professionals and practitioners
  - Move from digital project to digital program
  - Integrate preservation into all aspects of digital lifecycle
  - Develop best practices
  - Make policy examples available

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## Digital Curation Curriculum

- Education needs to be:
  - National programs are nice, but we need to move to the state and regional level
  - Professional and CE
- Needs to focus on:
  - Technology, standards, and best practices
  - Policies, tactical strategies (development and implementation)
  - Workflow and documentation – How to do it
  - Business planning – and all that it involves, such as market research, financial analysis, and planning
  - Continued emphasis on collaboration – particularly beyond the library or museum or campus

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## Conclusion

- Progress is being made on digital preservation, particularly in technology and standards
- Increased awareness of importance
- Most institutions that are doing digitization, however, aren't doing the most basic of digital preservation readiness activities.
- We can lay the foundation for long-term preservation by establishing policies, creating documentation, advocating for digital preservation, even if we don't have the funds to implement long-term preservation solutions.
- Must be done as a collaborative effort; all but largest institutions don't have the resources to go it alone

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