

NASIG Digital Preservation Committee Update: Model Policies

Heather Staines and Abeni Wickham

Abstract

Awareness of the challenges surrounding the reliability of long-term digital preservation often leads to the question of who is responsible for tackling these issues. Librarians and publishers play crucial roles in ensuring digital preservation. The NASIG Digital Preservation Committee provides members and the wider community with knowledge and strategies to protect digital scholarly content for the future. This session allowed the Committee to engage with members to learn more about their concerns and how we can tackle them together. Apart from the need for resources and institutional support, members highlighted the necessity of providing clear information to vendors and other stakeholders on the importance of digital preservation. Together, these steps will allow us to preserve our digital heritage for future generations.

Keywords: digital preservation, policy, long-term preservation, e-resources

Digital preservation is the term used for the active planning and implementation of processes to maintain digital material over a long space of time. It encompasses a suite of services, ongoing processes, and organizational support. The NASIG Digital Preservation Committee (NASIG-DPC) began its work to create a model policy for digital preservation in 2018 when it distributed a survey to assess digital

preservation within the community. Following the survey, a series of steps were taken to listen, engage, and create a model policy for librarians and others to use.¹

Increased Media Attention on Digital Preservation

In 2024, media attention has increased awareness of the issues we face in maintaining digital records. Martin Eve's research article published by Iowa State University Digital Press, showed that 32.9 percent (n = 6982) of Crossref members may not have digital preservation in place according to the recommendations of the Digital Preservation Coalition, while only 0.96 percent of Crossref members (n = 204) preserve over 75 percent of their content.² The *Hollywood Reporter* described the possibility of the loss of films due to lack of active policies and implementation.³ The Pew Research Center report stating that 38 percent of webpages which were in existence in 2013 can no longer be accessed.⁴ These examples reached beyond the library community and may provide useful evidence as we request support from our institutions to make digital preservation a priority.

Resetting by Listening

During the NASIG 2024 conference in Spokane, Washington, the NASIG-DPC held a session to update the community on the digital preservation model policy and its benefits.⁵ The session provided valuable information about members' concerns with the policy and where our work on the digital preservation committee should extend. Though most of the session was a discussion format, we were able—by quick polling—to acquire audience feedback on a few key questions. Figure 1 presents a word cloud of the concerns the attendees reported when asked the question, "When you hear digital preservation what concerns come to mind?"

When you hear digital preservation what concerns come to mind?
24 responses



Figure 1. Word Cloud of Concerns That Come to Mind When Thinking of Digital Preservation.

The figure is adapted from the poll generated with Mentimeter.

The word cloud provides an overall impression of concerns around sustainability and resources needed for digital preservation, which could contribute to a widespread sense of loss of digital assets. Showing the word cloud at the beginning of the session helped guide the discussion on what tasks libraries can be responsible for, what they will need help with, and how NASIG-DPC can be of service moving forward.

Steps Forward

In order to fundamentally tackle concerns over what is digital preservation and the resources available to help, the NASIG-DPC revamped their NASIGuide: Digital Preservation 101 on April 24, 2024.⁶ It covers basic knowledge and insights on digital preservation and provides readers information on where and how to start. Apart from laying out the difference between digital preservation and backup copies, the guide also gives examples, services, and initiatives that actively support multiple organizations worldwide in their digital preservation implementations and sustainability.

In the next couple of months, the Committee will leverage the audience feedback and session discussion to create additional materials

librarians can use in conversations with vendors. The materials are intended to empower librarians to communicate what preservation means and what they expect to see as a paying customer. We will also look at how to help libraries engage with institutional researchers, who can greatly help in preservation if they know about the issues and steps within their institution to solve them.

Conclusion

The increased media attention stemming from research data on the gaps in content that is currently being digitally preserved allows for the awareness of problems and the ability for more people to engage by learning about the importance of digital preservation. However, with increased attention and engagement about the problem, it is important to follow with tangible steps forward to help support those who are now willing to take on the responsibility of ensuring our digital legacy for the long-term. The NASIG-DPC is working to provide these tangible steps forward, starting with the NASIGuide-Digital Preservation 101 and the second step, the NASIG Model Digital Preservation Policy. Moving forward, the more entities thinking about and actively looking at how to preserve their content, the better our digital legacies will be protected.

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Contributor Notes

Heather Staines is Senior Consultant, Delta Think, Trumbull, Connecticut, USA.

Abeni Wickham is CEO of SciFree AB, Stockholm, Sweden.

Notes

- 1 NASIG Digital Preservation Committee, "NASIG Model Digital Preservation Policy," NASIG, March 2022, accessed January 7, 2025, <https://nasig.org/NASIG-model-digital-preservation-policy>.
- 2 Martin Paul Eve, "Digital Scholarly Journals Are Poorly Preserved: A Study of 7 Million Articles," *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication* 12, no. 1 (2024): <https://doi.org/10.31274/jlsc.16288>.
- 3 Gary Baum and Carolyn Giardina, "'It's a Silent Fire': Decaying Digital Movie and TV Show Files Are a Hollywood Crisis," *The Hollywood Reporter*, March 15, 2024, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/business/digital/digital-preservation-film-tv-shows-archives-1235851957/>.
- 4 Athena Chapekis et al., "When Online Content Disappears," *Pew Research Center*, May 17, 2024, <https://www.pewresearch.org/data-labs/2024/05/17/when-online-content-disappears/>.
- 5 NASIG Digital Preservation Committee, "NASIG Model Digital Preservation Policy," NASIG, March 2022, accessed January 7, 2025, <https://nasig.org/NASIG-model-digital-preservation-policy>.
- 6 NASIG Digital Preservation Committee, "NASIGuide: Digital Preservation 101," NASIG, updated April 24, 2024, <https://nasig.org/Digital-Preservation-101>.