

SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

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THE FUTURE OF PRESERVATION IN ARL LIBRARIES

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The universal mission of preservation and conservation programs—to preserve access to recorded knowledge—presents research libraries and their advocates with a number of difficult questions. Among the questions most on the radar of the research library community are:

- What level of local support is appropriate, given the universal importance of such a mission, especially when faced with increasing pressure on dollars to acquire collections?
- What strategies should institutional preservation and conservation programs embrace to best protect evolving research collections?
- How can the organizations that advocate on behalf of research libraries most effectively work to benefit those institutions in their pursuit of the preservation and conservation of recorded knowledge?

Such challenging questions of strategy and support were the focus of a meeting convened by ARL's Task Force on the Future of Preservation in ARL Libraries. Meeting at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in September 2006, the task force asked the 30 invited participants to consider technical, operational, and service-related changes within librarianship. The participants explored how these changes might be reflected in both the direction of preservation programs and the role of ARL in relation to member libraries' preservation programs.

Driven in large part by the development of the 2005–09 ARL Strategic Plan,¹ the Task Force on the Future of Preservation in ARL Libraries sought to better define ARL's role as an advocate and supporter of efforts to preserve cultural resources in member institutions. In light of the new strategic plan, the challenge becomes integrating ARL's long-standing role as an advocate for preservation within the three strategic directions identified in ARL's strategic plan—becoming a leading advocate for new models of scholarly communication; staking a place as an influential voice in local and national information and other public policies; and expanding the roles of research libraries in research, teaching, and learning.

Discussions in Chapel Hill were provocative and far-ranging yet the group found it remarkably straightforward to coalesce around a handful of assumptions about the future of preservation in ARL libraries. Some of the key assumptions or messages that the task force members derived from the discussions at

the Chapel Hill meeting are summarized below, sorted to reflect ARL's three strategic directions.

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The greatest preservation challenge currently facing research libraries is the preservation of digital content. Several factors imperil digital content—the large quantity of content requiring management; inadequate infrastructure and financial resources; poorly defined management protocols; and rapid change in access mechanisms, encoding formats, and storage systems. These factors hold true for all digital content, whether produced by cultural heritage institutions or commercial vendors.

New and innovative systems of scholarly communication for creating and sharing digital content remain incomplete systems until the management requirements for preservation are more adequately defined and implemented. For centuries, others have looked to the research library community to fulfill the preservation function in the traditional print-based system of scholarly communication. These expectations continue to hold true, and are illustrated in the role that research libraries occupy in programs such as the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP) that embrace partnerships between for-profit and non-profit entities to develop and test strategies for preservation of digital assets. However, conducting research and operationalizing digital preservation schema are different activities. In the immediate future, developing and/or supporting digital preservation management programs will remain the responsibility of individual institutions.

Public Policies

Laws and judicial decisions governing the use of copyrighted materials provide direct support for the preservation and access of the wealth of resources held within our institutions. Provisions in the US Copyright Act, including fair use and related exemptions for libraries and educational institutions, allow libraries to achieve their mission of providing for the use and preservation of information in all formats. As research libraries increasingly integrate digital technologies within their collections and preservation programs, ARL's role in shaping discussions related to public policies such as copyright becomes even more important.

Of special note for preservation programs is the intersection in public policy between the distribution of reformatted content and the rights of copyright holders. While the relatively limited distribution of microfilm or facsimile copies did not raise red flags in the publishing industry, this is not the case with digital reformatting because of the relative ease by which digital content can be delivered. Clarifying how libraries may provide

access to digitally reformatted works is a priority public policy issue for preservation programs.

Library Roles in Research, Teaching, and Learning

Within research libraries, preservation and conservation programs play a crucial role in sustaining access to research collections. In reality, preserving the cultural record is as important to scholars as collecting and providing access to it. As research collections expand to embrace new media and formats, so too must preservation strategies expand.

In addition, many research institutions are turning to their libraries for help in addressing new institution-wide and discipline-focused preservation challenges. These challenges include developing institutional and subject-specific digital repositories where the intellectual content created by researchers, faculty, and students may be deposited and preserved, and advising on strategies to provide long-term access to large datasets that are the result of research projects conducted within and across disciplines.

Recommendations of the Task Force

As the Task Force on the Future of Preservation in ARL Libraries met to follow up on the discussion in Chapel Hill, it became apparent that ARL faces a set of decisions not unlike those decisions faced by preservation and conservation programs on a regular basis. In this case, the issue is not how to identify the collections that should receive attention, but how to identify the strategic actions that should be taken by ARL—and by its member libraries—in light of priority needs and limited financial resources. The task force grappled with this issue as it developed a set of recommendations, outlined below.

1. Affirm the Commitment to the Preservation Mission Expected of Research Libraries

As the foundation for all other efforts, ARL should reaffirm its May 2002 statement affirming the centrality of preservation to the mission of research libraries.² The re-issued statement should be revised and updated to further emphasize the necessity to understand and adopt methods for preserving digital content.

2. Define Recommended Minimum Levels of Preservation Activity in ARL Libraries

While recognizing the differing capacities and preservation program models adopted by member libraries, the task force believes that ARL should articulate shared expectations for preservation activities in member libraries. This articulation of expectations should be followed by the development of an instrument and process for libraries to use in assessing their preservation and conservation programs.

Given the membership's long-standing recognition of preservation as a core responsibility of the research library, adoption of a recognized minimum level of commitment is

appropriate and will be useful for informing local decisions and assessing programs. This becomes increasingly important as preservation programs embrace new collection formats, undertake new preservation approaches, seek to define new priorities, and approach third parties to support their efforts.

3. Support the Library Community's Ability to Provide Stewardship for Their Collections

"Community" is the key word in this recommendation.

Although all preservation requires concerted local investment, it is evident that significant work can be accomplished only through coordinated activity, e.g., development of shared collections, support for centers of expertise and shared preservation services that offer economies of scale, and opportunities for preservation staff to develop new skills. In all of its efforts to support preservation programs in member libraries, ARL should promote taking a community-wide perspective.

4. Promote Public Policy That Enables and Enhances Preservation Efforts

The intersection of copyright law and preservation programming becomes increasingly problematic as preservation decisions include digital reformatting and born-digital content. Policies that restrict access to digitally reformatted content inhibit cultural resource institutions from making necessary preservation decisions and negatively impact us all. ARL is encouraged to continue its efforts to promote public policies that enable and enhance traditional and developing preservation efforts. This includes those efforts recently directed toward orphan works and a review of Section 108 of the US Copyright Act.

5. Engage in Emerging Issues around the Preservation of Electronic Resources

The task force finds that preservation of materials existing in digital formats is the greatest preservation challenge currently facing research libraries. Since effective responses to this challenge remain a work-in-progress, the task force recommends that ARL retain a leadership role in the preservation of electronic resources if only to serve as a catalyst for further discussion and collaboration among member institutions. For example, ARL should look for ways to encourage member libraries and publishers to invest in strategies for preserving electronic journals, as recommended in a recent study by the Council on Library and Information Resources.³ With its partners, ARL should continue to promote development of digital repositories that include effective preservation strategies. Also, ARL should keep member libraries aware of the state of the art in the arena of digital preservation, such as reporting on the experience of the projects funded through NDIIPP.⁴

As the task force was formed by ARL, our recommendations are directed to actions that the Association is best positioned to pursue but with the hope

and expectation that the agenda will be pursued in partnership with other organizations that also serve as advocates of preservation and conservation programs.

Conclusion

Beginning as early as 1972 with the publication of Warren Haas's report entitled *Preparation of Detailed Specifications for a National System for the Preservation of Library Materials*, ARL assumed a leading role in advocating for the preservation of library materials. Over the last 30 years, ARL provided leadership and guidance through development of the Preservation Planning Program; by development of metrics to inform preservation decision making; and by documentation of early practices and procedures for collections conservation, commercial binding, and program management.

In recent years, ARL's preservation activities investigated the inclusion of scholars in the preservation of research collections, the preservation needs of audio-visual collections, and the increasing use of digital technology as a preservation reformatting option. Throughout its history, ARL has been a strong advocate for federal policies and programs that enhance research library preservation programs, including the National Endowment for the Humanities Preservation and Access Program and the preservation research and development programs at the Library of Congress.

Further discussion of the recommendations of the Task Force on the Future of Preservation in ARL Libraries will take place in 2007. As ARL pursues the directions outlined in its strategic plan, research libraries face a challenge as difficult as the one they faced when Warren Haas first investigated specifications for a national preservation program for library materials. The challenge facing ARL and its member libraries is that of redefining their roles in the context of the changing nature of library collections without abdicating their fundamental role in maintaining access to the collections they have so painstakingly developed.

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- ¹ "ARL Strategic Plan 2005–2009," <http://www.arl.org/arl/governance/stratplan.shtml>.
- ² "The Responsibility of Research Libraries for Preservation," May 22, 2002, http://www.arl.org/preserv/presresources/responsibility_preservation.shtml.
- ³ Anne R. Kenney, Richard Entlich, Peter B. Hirtle, Nancy Y. McGovern, and Ellie L. Buckley, "E-Journal Archiving Metes and Bounds: A Survey of the Landscape" (Washington, DC: Council on Library and Information Resources, 2006). ARL endorsed the recommendations of this report in February 2007; see <http://www.arl.org/news/pr/arlendorsesclirrpt.shtml>.
- ⁴ National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program, <http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/>.

KNOW YOUR COPY RIGHTS™ INITIATIVE LAUNCHED WITH BROCHURE AIMED AT FACULTY

ARL has launched a copyright education initiative called Know Your Copy Rights™. The initiative is the result of a year-long process of securing input from ARL members, campus legal counsel, and copyright experts. The strategy of the initiative is to develop educational resources that convey positive messages about copyright and the public domain and are targeted at users in US not-for-profit higher education institutions. Through the Canadian Association of Research Libraries, ARL is exploring how Canadian libraries could adapt initiative materials for use in the Canadian copyright environment.

The initiative's inaugural product is a brochure, "Know Your Copy Rights™—What You Can Do," that gives faculty and teaching assistants in higher education a concise guide to when and how they can legally use copyrighted works in their teaching, often without requesting permission or paying fees. The brochure accentuates the positive by telling faculty what *can* be done under the law.

Among the topics covered in the brochure are: fair use, the advantage of linking to instead of copying works, and special provisions for displaying or performing works in classes. The brochure also includes a one-page chart that highlights 24 situations in which various categories of works can be used.

The brochure was developed by ARL staff and by attorney Peggy Hoon, a well-regarded copyright specialist at North Carolina State University. Ms. Hoon also serves as ARL Visiting Scholar for Campus Copyright and Intellectual Property. A number of university legal counsel and copyright educators also contributed to development of the brochure.

How to Obtain the Faculty Brochure

The brochure is available in various forms for free download as PDF files on the Know Your Copy Rights™ Web site.

A colorful six-panel version of the brochure is available for sale from ARL in bundles of 100 copies for \$75 (\$50 for ARL member libraries) plus shipping and handling. For ordering information, see <http://www.knowyourcopyrights.org/>.

