



## *ARL Bimonthly Report 236* **October 2004**

### **ARL Endorses Digitization as an Acceptable Preservation Reformatting Option**

In June, ARL released a statement endorsing digitization as an acceptable preservation reformatting option for a range of materials. The Association is encouraging its members and others already engaged in digital reformatting and those interested in initiating these activities to make organizational and economic commitments to adhere to accepted standards and best practices in digital reformatting. ARL is also urging libraries to establish institutional policies for the long-term maintenance of digital products. At the same time, the Association recognizes that the choice to use digitization, or any reformatting option, for preservation is not prescriptive--it remains a local decision. Many approaches are possible and digital reformatting should now be considered a valid choice among the various methods for preserving paper-based materials.

ARL's endorsement comes from several years of work undertaken by the ARL Preservation Committee, now chaired by William A. Gosling, University Librarian at the University of Michigan. The committee concluded that the emerging consensus around best practices for the creation and long-term maintenance of digital files, coupled with the overwhelming advantages of digitization for access, argue for support of digitization as a viable preservation reformatting strategy.

As a first step in building community support and facilitating the development and implementation of policies, standards, guidelines, and best practices where they do not currently exist, ARL released "Recognizing Digitization as a Preservation Reformatting Method," [http://www.arl.org/preserv/digit\\_final.html](http://www.arl.org/preserv/digit_final.html). The paper was prepared by Kathleen Arthur, University of Chicago; Sherry Byrne, University of Chicago; Elisabeth Long, University of Chicago; Carla Q. Montori, University of Michigan; and Judith Nadler, University of Chicago. It benefited from the comments of a number of additional preservation staff and funding agencies' staff as well as from many ARL directors. Since its release, the paper has been endorsed by the Center for Research Libraries, the Coalition for Networked Information, the Council on Library and Information Resources, OCLC, and the Research Libraries Group.

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<<http://www.arl.org/newsltr/236/digpres.html>>.

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