Library of Congress Digital Preservation Newsletter

Broadcasting Loud and Clear

By Bill LeFurgy – After launching on May 31, "The Signal" had a strong first month. We published 27 posts and are pleased to have had over 60 comments during June. The blog appears to reach a broad audience, which is exactly what we hoped for.

I Walk in a Daze..., by addicted Eyes, on Flickr

Staff wrote about digital preservation outreach events, significant reports and publications, data forensics and economic sustainability, among other subjects. From the number of comments and other measures, two themes seemed especially popular. At the top of the list is web archiving. Eight years of Web Archiving One Week in The Hague and The First Decade of Web Archiving at the Library of Congress both drew quite a bit of attention.

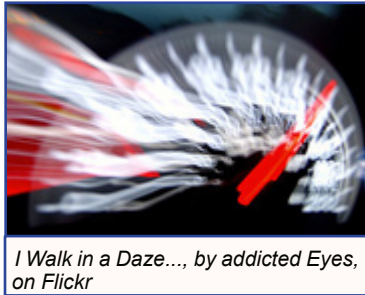The other hot topic was personal archiving. Confessions of an Imperfect Personal Digital Archivist, Personal Archiving in the Cloud and What Do Teenagers Know About Digital Preservation? Actually, More Than You Think… received lots of traffic.

Good evidence for the diversity of our readers is reflected in the solid attention that a couple of rather different posts received. Linked Open Data: A Beckoning Paradise was a hit, as was Steven Puglia, Connecting Digital Conversion with Digital Preservation.

This expansive interest is just great. Let us know if you have questions or suggestions—we would love to hear from you! •

Insights: Interview with David Rosenthal

By Trevor Owens – I'm excited to launch a new series, Insights. Insights will feature interviews and conversations between National Digital Stewardship Alliance Innovation working group members and individuals working on projects related to preservation, access and stewardship of digital information. We are thrilled to kick off this series with an interview I conducted with eminent computer scientist and engineer David Rosenthal.

Read the interview with Rosenthal. •

Putting Out a Daily Paper Was Never a Linear Process

By Carl Fleischhauer – Like many others, I have been fascinated to watch the production of newspapers–as depicted in the movies like The Front Page or All the President's Men. To be sure, these tales were enlivened by plot elements like exposing Watergate and the give and take between the reporter Hildy Johnson and the editor Walter Burns. But the dynamism of the stories depended upon and reflected the dynamism of the news production setting. Those movies, together with a few novels and television shows, blend in my memory, yielding a vision of active, independent-minded reporters gathering and writing, er, typing (!) their stories.

Linotype operators in the composing room of the New York Times newspaper, September 1942. Photograph by Marjory Collins.

What does the newspaper production operation look like today? We know that linotype operators disappeared with newspapers' adoption of offset printing technology in the 1950s and 1960s. And that the importance of newspaper classified ads (and the revenue from them) is much diminished in the era of Craigslist and eBay. Meanwhile, we may wonder if newspaper websites and iPhone apps have replaced the daily rhythm of edition deadlines with a steady-state routine of updating.

Well, all of the preceding changes are part of the newspaper scene today. But as I read the fascinating report from a team of news-production analysts at the Center for Research Libraries, I was struck by how much of the old multiplayer, multistream dynamic is still in play. Read more about the report.•

Digital Preservation Pioneer: Andrea Goethals

By Mike Ashenfelder – When Andrea Goethals wants to escape the demands of her software engineering work at Harvard University library, she heads to the mountains of Maine. But not for pampered leisure. She and her husband volunteer with the Appalachian Mountain Club, maintaining a trail they've both adopted. They purge debris, drain water and remove massive obstacles. On a recent weekend they cleared 16 fallen trees.

Even though Goethals' trail preservation work is as physically difficult as her digital preservation work is mentally difficult, her intention for both is the same: creating access and utility. It's a theme that threads through her career.

Goethals, digital preservation and repository services manager at the Harvard University library, studied architecture as an undergraduate. For a while, she worked in sustainable construction, planning for the long-term usefulness of buildings by considering their social, economic and environmental implications.

Read more about her interests and career. •

Recent Meetings

Check out news from recent meetings and conferences:

- Unified Digital Formats Registry Meeting. Washington, DC. Spring 2011.
- JPEG 2000 Summit. Washington, DC.
- Open Repositories 2011. Austin, Tx.
- IASSIST 2011. Vancouver, Canada.
- Aligning National Approaches in Digital Preservation. Tallin, Estonia.
- Digital Archaeology Exhibit @ Internet Week. New York, NY.
- Save Our African American Treasures. Dallas, Tx.

Digital Archaeology Exhibit. Credit: Abbie Grotke

Digital Forensics and Digital Preservation

By Leslie Johnston – Libraries, archives, and museums are acquiring increasing numbers of born-digital collections. I've been interested to see the increased use of digital forensics tools in the appraisal, processing and accessing of such collections. But there are challenges. Some of the software tools come from the realm of legal forensics, where chain of custody and recovery of maliciously destroyed or intentionally deleted files are among the key goals.

Archives are looking at vintage media, which often requires vintage hardware and software, or specialized hardware. Libraries are setting up forensics labs to deal with these new collections (Stanford, the Bodleian, among others). The collections at the Library's Packard Campus or at the Computer History Museum are something to behold, but I shudder at what it

Vintage Equipment at the Packard Campus.

will take to keep the equipment operational.

Read more about the need to document computing history in aid of digital preservation. •

Bringing Sunlight to State Government

By Butch Lazorchak – The Model Technological and Social Architecture for the Preservation of State Government Digital Information Project, headed by the Minnesota Historical Society, is exploring innovative methods to preserve and provide enhanced access to legislative digital records. They've developed a new online resource, OpenGovernment Minnesota, in partnership with the Sunlight Foundation and the Participatory Politics Foundation. The project is still in beta development but is available for public access.

Read more about the project. •

You can subscribe to this monthly newsletter or read past newsletters in the archive.