Library of Congress
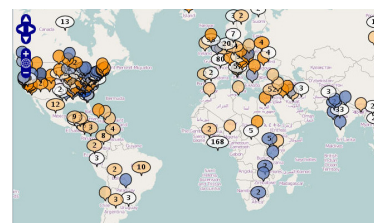# Digital Preservation Newsletter

May 2012

A Collection of Collections

If you are a frequent visitor to digitalpreservation.gov you may have come across our Collections section.

In it we list the digital collections that have been selected for preservation by our NDIIPP partners. We are using Viewshare to make the list more interactive and to help us learn more about this collection of collections.

We've just revised the view to include digital collections preserved by NDSA partners, upping the number to 1406, and we've included additional views that reveal some broad characteristics of this group of digital collections.

Key outcomes of the NDIIPP program are to identify priorities for born digital collections and engage organizations committed to preserving digital content. Viewshare helps us do that. Our goal for the view is to showcase the collections, to understand what has been preserved and what makes born digital collections unique. Read more about how we are doing this.

Viewshare also helps users outside of the NDIIPP network create interesting views. For example, Jennifer Brancato digital archivist at East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University, created a fascinating view of a set of funeral records which is now directly embedded in the collection landing page. Read about her conversation discussing the view.

Floppy Disks are Dead, Long Live Floppy Disks

They lie in wait, silent sentinels from the era when personal computing first burst into our lives. Their secrets are inscrutable to the human eye. Often they have lived for years–decades even–under rough conditions that challenge their fundamentally delicate constitutions.

Floppy disks are both a bane and a blessing to digital preservationists. The blessing part centers on their potential for providing digital details from the past, especially from the period before widespread use of the Internet to disseminate information. Depending on who used them for what they might contain significant literary manuscripts, rare data sets, revealing presentations or perhaps important family information.

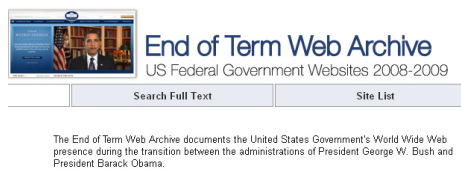Bane comes into the picture for just about everything else. Disks may not, for example, have labels or any other clear way to identify their origin or their content. A box of unidentified disks is about as human understandable as a box of rocks. Determining what is on the disks requires very specific computer hardware that likely went obsolete years ago.

Read more about the challenges of extracting information from floppy disks.

U.S. Government, Elections, and Web Archiving

End of Term Web Archive
US Federal Government Websites 2008-2009

| Search Full Text | Site List |

The End of Term Web Archive documents the United States Government's World Wide Web presence during the transition between the administrations of President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama.

With web archiving particularly, because this field is still relatively new in the big scheme of things, and the web is so very large, we often work together to accomplish projects that could otherwise not be done by just one institution. Each partner brings to the table different skills that benefit us all.

The CNI Spring meeting in Baltimore, Maryland

showcased some exciting projects and activities, Abbie Grotke gave a status report on the End of Term Government Web Archive. The slides from this presentation are here.

The project is titled "Classification of the End-of-Term Archive: Extending Collection Development to Web Archives." At CNI, the talk focused on their classification of the EOT Archive, involving both structural analysis and human analysis. The work is further described on their project website.

Read more about this collaborating web archiving project.

Preservation of and Access to Federally Funded Scientific Data

Research data produced by federally funded scientific projects should be freely available to the wider research community and the public

That simple statement should not be controversial, especially as federal research funding agencies increasingly require data management plans – including details on how research data will be shared – with all grant proposals. Public data should be a public resource, and data sharing supports core scientific values like openness, transparency, and replication. But lack of resources for curating scientific data and a lingering tradition of data hoarding create resistance to

open access to research data.

As director of the world's largest repository of social

science data, the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research housed at the University of Michigan, George Alter applauds the attention being drawn to the issue.

Read more about his thoughts.

Help Launch a Digital Preservation Q & A Site

Commit to launching a digital preservation question and answer site using Stack Exchange.

In order for a Stack Exchange site to launch, at least 200 users must "commit" to using it once it is established. So far, 170 users have committed.

There is a catch: at least 100 of the committed users must have at least 200 "reputation points" on one of the other, already established Stack Exchange sites.

How can users gain reputation points?

By posting and answering questions to other Stack Exchange sites, you can gain valuable reputation points. Check out how Stack Exchange works and how you can gain reputation points.

Be a part of this growing effort. Check out the site and contribute.

Recent Reports

States of Sustainability: A Review of State Projects funded by (NDIIPP) (PDF)

Preserving State Government Digital Information Minnesota Historical Society Final Report (PDF)

Digital Preservation Resources

Podcast: Mike Wash, CIO NARA

Webinar: Preserving Your Personal Digital Photographs

Conversation Corner

Insights Interview: Bram van der Werf, Executive Director of the Open Planets Foundation

Insights Interview: Lori Phillips, Wikipedian in Residence at The Children's Museum of Indianapolis

Digital Preservation Pioneer: Anne Van Camp

Ellysa Stern Cahoy talks about teaching personal archiving.

This is the newsletter of the National Digital Stewardship Alliance, the Digital Preservation Outreach and Education initiative and the National Digital Information Infrastructure Program.