It's all important of course, but…

A bloodless ~~fight~~ discussion about what is the **most** important aspect of digital preservation

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**Abstract – a panel to shine a light on how different aspects of digital preservation are important to different practitioners and to provide an insight as to why those aspects are important to them.**

**Keywords – Sustainability, Cost, Value, Risk, Data loss.**

**Conference Topics – Resilience, Exchange.**

# Introduction

We all agree that digital preservation is "a good thing". We wouldn't be attending iPRES if we didn't. It is also probably a given that, should a room of digital preservationists be presented with a list of policies / features / characteristics / components / problems relating to digital curation, the consensus would be that they're ALL important…

And then someone would say "but"…

The truth is we (and by "we" I mean all those involved in digital preservation in one way or another) all have strong opinions about how those policies / features / characteristics / components / problems could and indeed should be ranked. Opinions shaped by our background and experiences.

*"Preservation file formats are the most important". "Policy trumps everything". "Costs and values are obviously at the top of the list". "Without preservation systems you can't do anything"*

We are an inclusive community and pride ourselves on listening to and learning from others. But were rarely have the opportunity to discuss these features / characteristics / components / problems in an open forum where we get the opportunity to "get inside the heads" of other practitioners and understand why they feel (so strongly) the way they do.

# The Panel

The proposed panel will bring together a small number of respected practitioners who are known to have strong (and potentially contrasting) opinions on core aspects of digital preservation policies / features / characteristics / components, along with some practitioners from historically overlooked or under represented communities, to present short provocations about what aspect of digital preservation is most important to them, and why. After the provocations there will be questions from the floor and an open discussion.

The panel will provide an opportunity to understand what drives colleagues. What their interests are and what they see as the primary problems in the field of digital preservation.

The panel has been designed to represent as diverse a range of viewpoints and communities as possible. At the time of writing, the following people attending iPres 2022 (either in-person or virtually) have agreed to take part:

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| **Name** | **Role** |
| Elizabeth Thurlow | Digital Preservation and Access Manager at University of the Arts London |
| Alina Karlos | Assistant ArchivistILRCUniversity of Namibia |
| Niklas Zimmer | Manager: Digital Library ServicesUniversity of Cape Town |
| George McGregor | Institutional Repository ManagerIS Scholarly Research CommunicationsUniversity of Strathclyde |
| Caylin smith | Head of Digital Preservation at Cambridge University Library |
| Kirsty Lingstadt | Director of Library, Archives and Learning ServicesStudent and Academic ServicesUniversity of York |
| Donna McRostie | Deputy Director, Research and Collection StewardshipUniversity of Melbourne |

The lead author, Paul Stokes—Product Manager (Preservation) at Jisc— will chair the session and also contribute.

Emerging themes for the most important aspect of digital preservation raised by the panel to date include:

* It’s all about the money
* Advocacy trumps everything
* Designated communities are unimportant
* Designated communities ARE important
* Significant properties are unimportant

This session won't provide the definitive answer to the question relating to what is THE most important as pect of Digital Preservation, but it will engender wider understanding of digital preservation issues.