Lessons Learned During the Implementation of a Digital Preservation Project

Experiences from Europe, USA and Asia

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**Abstract – Before starting a digital preservation project (an OAIS-aligned long-term preservation of a digital repository), many things are taken for granted that are discovered during the implementation of the project.**

**Each implementation of a digital preservation project has its own peculiarities and characteristics, but also many similarities. Generally, preparation processes take much longer than expected, multiple teams within the organization need to be coordinated, and many project details need to be very well planned.**

**In this panel, representatives of institutions from different GLAM sectors from different countries (and even continents), will speak from their own experience about the lessons learned during the implementation of their digital preservation project.**

**Keywords – Digital Preservation, Implementation, Lessons learned, Digital Repositories.**

**Conference Topics – Community; Exchange.**

# Introduction

Tackling a long-term digital preservation project is not an easy task for any organization. Projects can vary in scope, from the complexity of implementing a digital preservation repository or as “simple” as a specific format-migration; regardless of their scope, all projects benefit from proper planning and resource allocations. There are some manuals such as the DPC Digital Preservation Handbook [1] that provides an internationally authoritative and practical guide to the subject of managing digital resources over time and the issues of maintaining access to them, which are helpful to practitioners when approaching a digital preservation project. However, facing a real project involves much more planning and organization than anticipated. The work begins long before the selection of the system to be used, regardless of what particular DPS is to be chosen, identifying all the parties involved, the collections to be worked on, the current volume of collections and their scalability for the future, establishing the level of preservation (NDSA LoP [2]) to aim for, and many other things that are only identified once a real digital preservation project is implemented.

In this panel, people from the following institutions *U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum*, and *Penn State University*, from USA; *The Royal Horticultural Society* and *The University of Amsterdam* from Europe; and *Temasek Polytechnic* from Asia, will exchange their experiences implementing a preservation project in different kinds of libraries and archives (a museum, a university, a herbarium), by sharing with the digital preservation community the lessons learned during the preparation and execution of the project, what works and what does not, and some useful insights for anyone in the same situation.

LIBNOVA is the common denominator among the different organizations, and its role will be to serve only as a moderator of the panel session. Presentations will not dwell on LIBNOVA-specific details but instead focus on project management and lessons learned.

# Panel Discussion Topics

The panel will discuss the following topics and questions:

* Key considerations when planning a digital preservation project, including overarching long-term aspects, such as scalability, funding, sustainability, etc.
* Who should be part of the preservation project and what should their role be? Identify the preservation team and the coordination between the different areas involved.
* The methodology used to select what to preserve and what not.
* Peculiarities of each type of content to be considered.
* General insights and future plans envisioned based on lessons learned.

# Panellist Profiles

**Jessica Knight** is Senior Advisor for Digital Ecosystem, Preservation and Discovery, at United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). She manages the Museum’s digital preservation project with a team of IT, INFOSEC, and digital access and preservation specialists. The Museum began its deployment of LIBSAFE in 2017 to house over 90 million digital files, close to a PB, of Holocaust-related records including born-digital and digitized oral testimony, film, documents, photographs, publications, and historical sound.

**Nathan Tallman** is Penn State University Libraries first digital preservation librarian, seeking to establish a robust digital preservation program, current efforts have been underway for about five years; LIBNOVA Advanced is Penn State’s first digital preservation repository. Penn State currently manages about 250 TB of data that includes born-analog and born-digital personal papers and organizational records, general collections (monographs, serials, audio/visual), research data, software, and library publications. Penn State is configuring LIBSAFE Advanced in a flexible implementation based on Levels of Digital Preservation Commitment rather than formats.

As project manager at the Library of the University of Amsterdam, **Driek Heesakkers** led the Digital Depot project. This project ran the European tender for a preservation grade depot for digital collections, suitable for both library, archive and museum collections, and subsequently the implementation of LIBSAFE from LIBNOVA. The digital depot was taken into production in May 2022, with links to the existing ArchivesSpace and image bank front-ends and Goobi digitization workflow system. In the next two years, the rare collections department of the library, known as ‘Allard Pierson’, will ingest around 250TB of digital objects currently stored in various media from previous digitization projects and a small but growing number of digital-born personal and institutional archives.

**Mui Huay** participated in two digital preservation project implementations and lived to tell the tale. As a cross-functional project team member, she was knee-deep from the get-go: from specifying system requirements and executing a preservation plan for each type of content to promoting the value of the project to stakeholders. Mui Huay heads the Archives and Reference division of the Temasek Polytechnic Library, and has been an active member of the implementation of the LIBSAFE platform and the migration from older technologies.

**Mark Hobbs** is Library Digital Collections Manager at the Royal Horticultural Society’s Lindley Library in London, UK. The Lindley Library contains one of the world’s most important collections of books on horticultural history, botanical artworks and the historic archives of the RHS and key figures in British horticulture. Mark coordinates the Library’s ongoing digitisation programme, and plays a key role in ensuring the preservation of nearly 20 years of digitisation at the Lindley Library, through the implementation of LIBNOVA’s LIBSAFE platform. These digitisation and preservation projects form part of a wider project to share the RHS’s Library and Herbarium collections on LIBNOVA's open access platform in 2023.

**Teo Redondo** is the CTO and Head of Research & Development at LIBNOVA, where he leads several innovation projects about Digital Preservation solutions for Libraries, Archives and Museums, and Research institutions, and also leads LIBNOVA Research Labs for the areas of future functionalities, most around implementing Artificial Intelligence techniques for better handling of research data and content. In this panel, Teo will act only as facilitator of the session.

# REFERENCES

1. Digital Preservation Handbook, 2nd Edition, https://www.dpconline.org/handbook, Digital Preservation Coalition © 2015.
2. Levels of Preservation Revisions Working Group, “Levels of Digital Preservation Matrix V2.0,” October2019, ​https://osf.io/2mkwx/​.