

Personal Digital Archiving:

An Overview of Online Sources for You and Your Patrons

Heather Moulaison Sandy

Brandi Ivester

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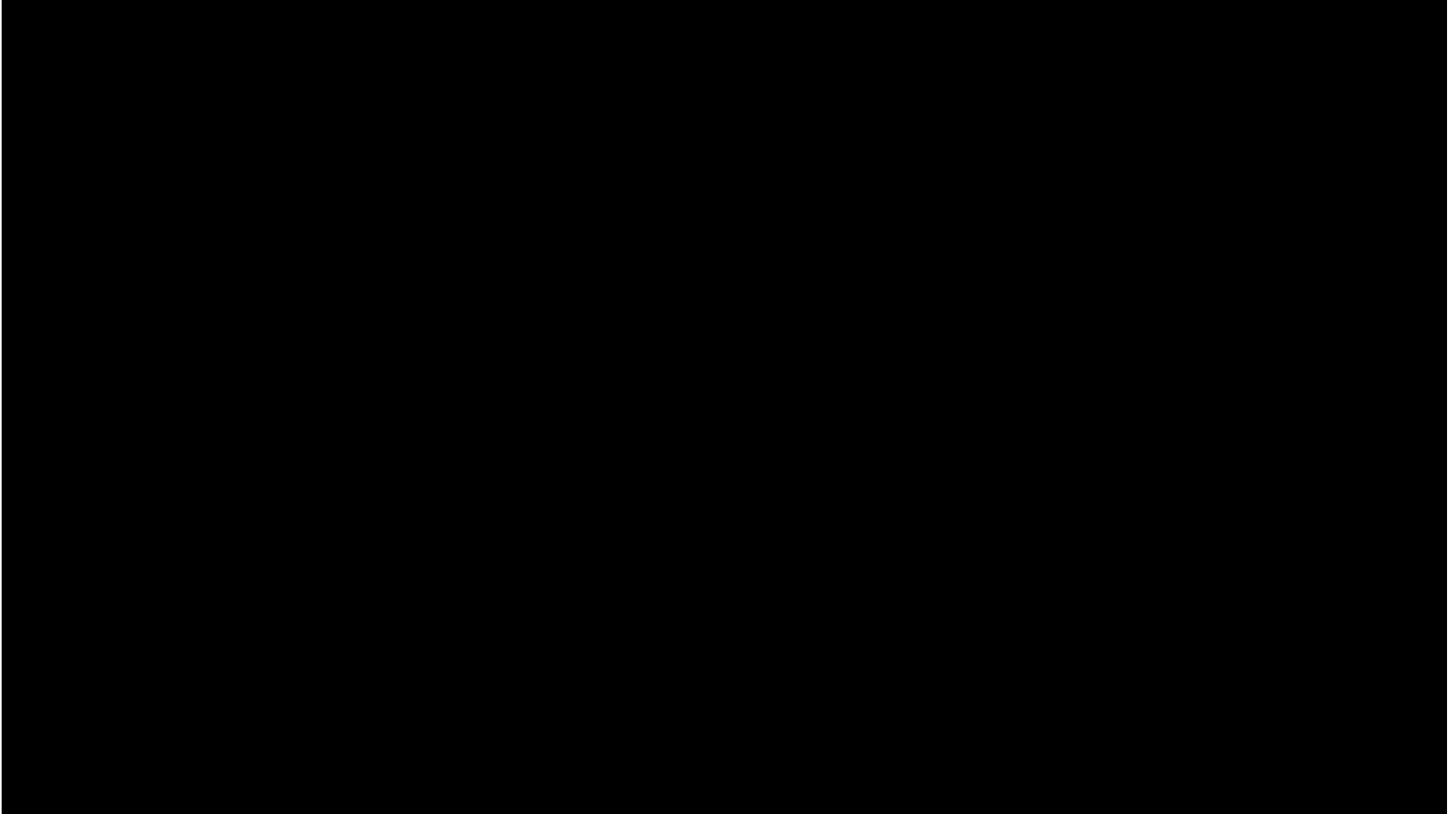
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The Physical and the Digital

- In 2003, researchers found that 92% percent of new information was created digitally, with the rest being on paper or analog film
 - (<http://www2.sims.berkeley.edu/research/projects/how-much-info-2003/>)
- Digital has been with us for quite a while...
 - The problem is that digital media is notoriously fragile
 - What does this mean?

Floppies?



Word processing, ca. 1991



Benign Neglect

- If we don't actively curate and preserve digital content, we can talk of benign neglect.
- In LIS, *benign neglect* means setting aside and not actively maintaining resources for a certain period of time.
 - Paper is generally fine, though this isn't an ideal policy...
 - Digital objects will almost certainly be lost

Personal Archives

personal archives

- A category of collecting archives devoted to preserving the private papers and memorabilia of one or more persons or of a family or group of families. In the United States, the presidential libraries function as archives for the personal papers of the presidents. (ODLIS, http://www.abc-clio.com/ODLIS/odlis_p.aspx)
- These archives are generally formally overseen as part of a library's or archive's work.
 - *But what about the time before the content is donated?* These materials are left to the hands of the producers.
 - *And what about when that content is digital, not paper?* We have to worry about benign neglect.
 - *And what about when there's no librarian or information professional to help with this task?* The onus falls onto the individual, who may be ill-prepared to carry out this work on her own.

What is Personal Digital Archiving?

- The Society of American Archivists (SAA) defines *personal digital archiving* (PDA) as “the practice of preserving one’s own digital records of continuing value.”
(<http://us3.campaign-archive1.com/?u=56c4cfbec1ee5b2a284e7e9d6&id=37a5a30d73&e=403f96b236>)
- “The term ‘personal digital archiving’ refers to how individuals manage or keep track of their digital files, where they store them, and how these files are described and organized” (Redwine, 2015, p. 2).
- Brown states that “Personal digital archiving consists of saving and archiving digital materials and managing them so they will be available for future use” (2015, para. 1).

Personal Archives' Importance

- “People keep personal archives for reasons that may be simultaneously sentimental, practical, and even accidental” (Redwine, 2015, p. 2)

But when it comes to the **digital**:

- “While institutional archiving efforts are making great strides forward, consumers are unintentionally flirting with digital brinkmanship” (Marshall, 2008, para. 5).

Threats to PDA

- ageing hardware and software
- lack of secure storage and backup
- natural and manmade disasters
- neglect
- loss of cloud-based host or service provider
- lack of planning
- death of an individual

(Redwine, 2016, p. 10)

Areas Related to PDA

The care and feeding of digital files has been a focus of study of a number of researchers, particularly in:

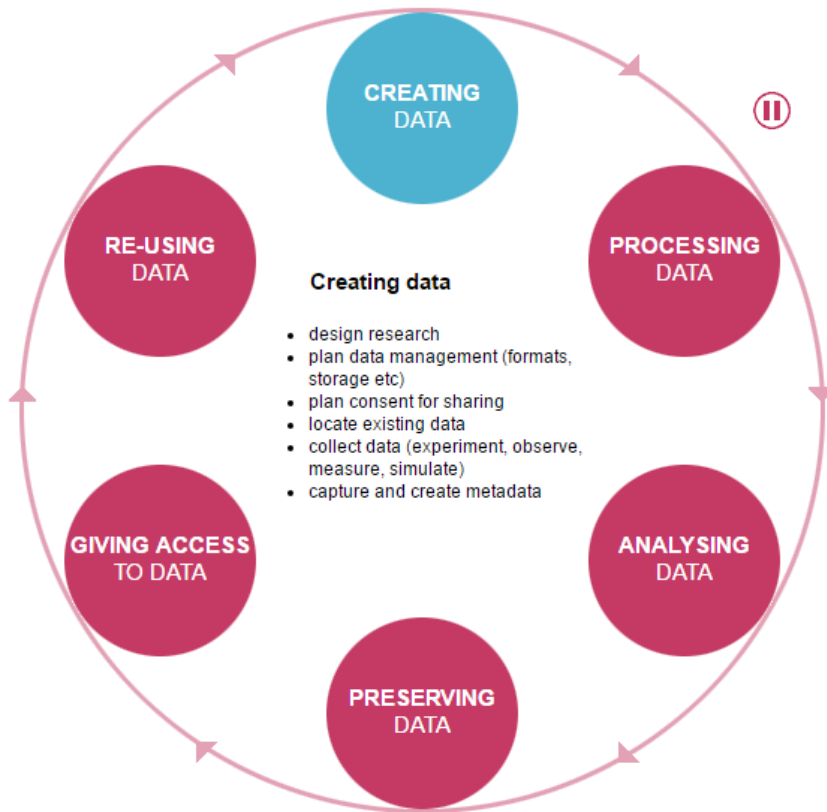
- Digital curation/lifecycle management
- Digital preservation
- Personal information management
- Research data management

Digital curation

- “*Digital curation* involves maintaining, preserving and adding value to digital research *data* [i.e., ‘any information in binary digital form’] throughout its lifecycle”
 - Digital Curation Centre
 - What is digital curation? (DCC): <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/digital-curation/what-digital-curation>
 - DCC Curation Lifecycle Model: <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/curation-lifecycle-model>
- There is a sense that the *digital curation* process involves a number of steps, and depending on the source, those steps can begin before a digital item is even created.
 - Hence the interest in oversight throughout the *lifecycle* – or birth to death

UK Data Archive's Research Data Lifecycle

- Creating Data
- Processing Data
- Analysing Data
- Preserving Data
- Giving Access to Data
- Re-Using Data



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Digital Preservation

- “*Digital preservation* is the active management of digital content over time to ensure ongoing access”
 - Library of Congress
- About. Digital preservation. (<http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/about/>)
- Digital preservation and digital curation, therefore, are closely linked
 - For some, especially in the United States, digital preservation is synonymous with European notions of digital curation since the active management required for digital preservation can start at the beginning of the object’s lifecycle, along with its curation.
 - I tend to call this active process **digital preservation**

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Personal Information Management (PIM)

- Undertaken by anyone organizing information for personal use
- There is generally a connotation that PIM takes place in a professional context (Jones, 2010).
 - Since professional contexts increasingly rely on digital communications and the creation of digital artifacts, much of the PIM research is in the digital.
- Asks “questions such as how to best utilize the information, manage the information, and maintain the information” (Cushing, 2016, p. 81) on a **personal scale**.

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Research Data Management (RDM)

- RDM is undertaken by researchers, potentially with the help of information professionals, and can focus on the whole of the research lifecycle and the ability for the researcher to work effectively in teams or share work
 - Can belike PIM, but involves shared data, for example
 - Sharing data or code may be required by external funding agencies and can support reproducibility

PDA: Individuals in Charge

- Catherine C. Marshall focuses her discussion of personal digital archiving on “everyday personal digital belongings” (Marshall, 2008, para. 1).
- She also clarifies the problem with getting started: “Individuals rarely view their own stuff as requiring curation: curation is for objects in museums” (Marshall, 2008, sect. 2; para. 1).
 - This in turn leads back to a de facto personal policy of *benign neglect* and the need to understand curation as a necessary activity.

Categories of Digital Content

- email and letters
- websites and blogs
- diaries, recipes, and other writings
- drawings and other art
- photographs (from digital cameras, smart phones) and photo albums
- music, video, and voice recordings
- social media output
- Internet search histories
- text messages, instant messages
- contact lists and calendars
- spreadsheets, presentations, and databases
- personal records created online or received digitally (bank statements, bills, taxes, home inspection reports, deeds)
- medical records
- mementos (digitized versions of physical items)
- unexpected items – anything is possible!”

(Redwine, 2015, p. 8)

Steps to Protect Personal Digital Materials

1. figure out what your archive contains so that you can prioritize certain files over others and focus your efforts.
2. develop a file naming convention that makes sense to you (and others), and apply it consistently.
3. back up your files periodically to multiple storage devices kept in different locations from the primary files.
4. choose high-quality storage media if storing your files locally; if using cloud-based storage, research the different options carefully before deciding which services best meet your needs.
5. periodically refresh the media on which your files are stored.
6. make sure that your back-up files are up to date across all storage media and services.

(Redwine, 2016, p. 29)

Goals of This Project

- Identify free resources relevant to PDA that empower users (and librarians) to care for their personal digital archival materials
- Group these resources in a way that is meaningful and helpful
 - Become a resource for library patrons, but also for librarians
 - Separate out content that is basic, intermediate, and advanced in terms of PDA and computing
 - Annotate resources to facilitate consumption; focus on different tasks

Who is This Project for?: Personas

- As is common in interaction design, we have devised a short series of personas (or personae) – fictional, representative users (Cooper, 2004) of the bibliography who help make sure that this product is of use to the people we want to help.

Persona #1

- Name: Helen Schmidt
- Employment: retired
- Interest in PDA: photos, emails, etc.
- Technological prowess: basic



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dhinakaran/8799214939/>

Persona #2

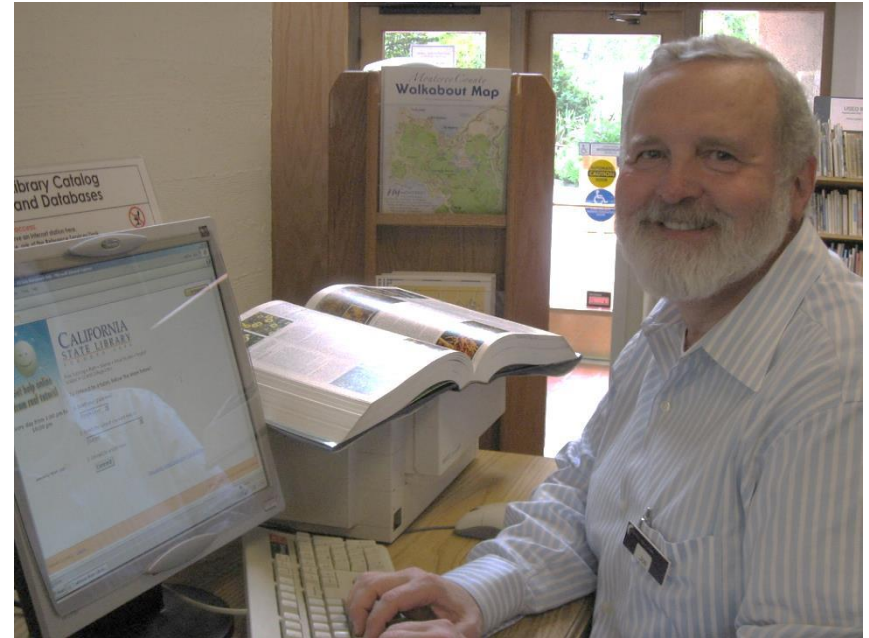
- Name: Edward Martin
- Employment: insurance adjuster
- Interest in PDA: photos, documents, social media related to genealogy
- Technological prowess: Intermediate



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/telafree/61917583/>

Persona #3

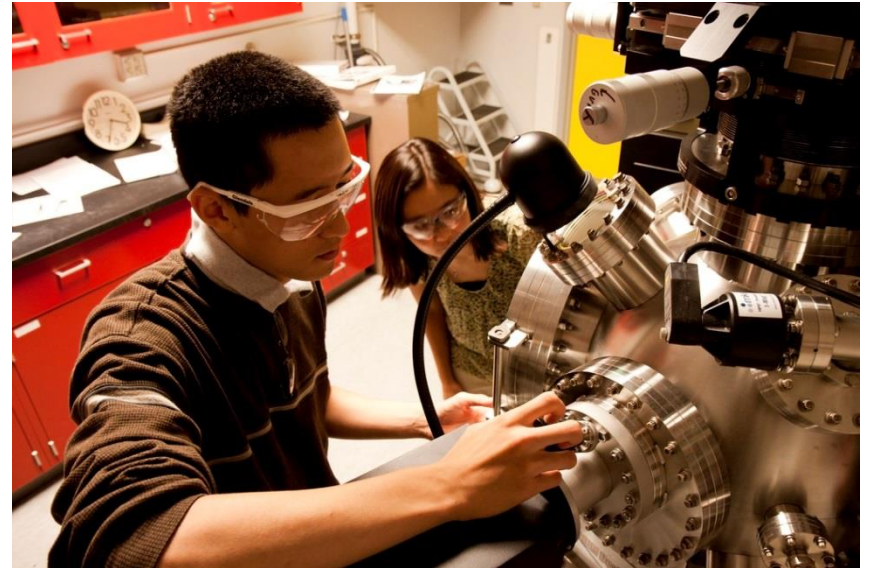
- Name: William Adams
- Employment: public librarian
- Interest in PDA: assist patrons with their PDA via workshops
- Technological prowess: power user, but works with patrons of varying abilities



<https://flic.kr/p/FuspP>

Persona #4

- Name: Andrew Lee
- Employment: engineering student
- Interest in PDA: preservation of field notes
- Technological prowess: advanced user



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ucdaviscoe/6050750882/>

Persona #5

- Name: Sherry Daniels
- Employment: academic librarian
- Interest in PDA: social media, assist students with preserving research and papers
- Technological prowess: experienced user



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/xnmeme/5855914670/>

Specifics about the Website

- Our website, slowly but surely, is taking shape
 - SISLT has generously offered to host it on the missouri.edu domain
 - <http://pda.missouri.edu/>
 - Using WordPress to create **pages**
 - Problems with creating “posts” for each entry
 - At first one post per resource seemed ideal, but with its blogging roots, WordPress didn’t allow for alphabetical representation of posts, and forced dates created to play in.
 - Have downloaded an implemented a widget that allows us to tag pages so that resources can be grouped by tags too.
 - Implemented Google Analytics
 - Put in a Contact us form. Feel free to give it a try!

Big Reveal

- What is PDA
- About Us
- Web Resources by Level
 - Basic
 - Intermediate
 - Advanced
- Scholarly Resources
 - For Librarians
 - Etc.

Thank you!



References

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