

Preservation Newsletter—December 2019

From the Shelby White & Leon Levy Archival Processing Lab, Kat Fanning kfanning@cjh.org



What exactly is digital preservation?

So far we've briefly introduced the concept of digital preservation and covered a little bit about how to *do* digital preservation. This newsletter is meant to continue the introduction to digital preservation and is not meant to be comprehensive. If you would like more in-depth tutorials or coursework, please contact us directly.

So what is Digital Preservation and [Why Digital Preservation is Important for Everyone?](#)

It is generally thought of as a concerted and “formal endeavor to ensure that digital information of continuing value remains accessible and usable.”¹ As we continue forward into the twenty first century, the materials we all use and work with on a daily basis will exponentially move and transition from physical to digital. Offices move to paperless and paper-less workspaces. We use collaborative and third-party software for organizing and collecting information. As an institution that *should* be keeping and maintaining records, how do we do it when we don't physically have them?

During the digital boom, it seemed that the way of the future was digital and that digital would last forever. Unfortunately, this isn't true. Every day, websites and digital content are lost forever with the strike of a delete key.

You may be thinking, “This all sounds a lot like archiving, institutional archives, and records management.” Yes, it does! Because it is all interconnected. Electronic Records Management is “the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including the process for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.”²

Taking care of your electronic records now and planning for the future is (in my opinion) the biggest contribution to digital preservation.

Here are some fun videos that cover digital preservation basics:

[Digital Preservation and Nuclear Disaster: An Animation](#) covers topics like bit rot, digital disaster, data and file corruption, long term storage, trusted digital repositories, refreshing media, and metadata.

[Team Digital Preservation and the Arctic Mountain Adventure](#) covers preservation planning.

[Team Digital Preservation and the Planets Testbed](#) covers the scientific method of digital preservation.

In last couple newsletters we'll be covering topics like digital preservation lifecycle and some basic ways to do your part to ensure long term preservation (you may already even be helping without being aware of it!)