Student Digital Preservation Day

So you want to go digital...?

January 24, 2013

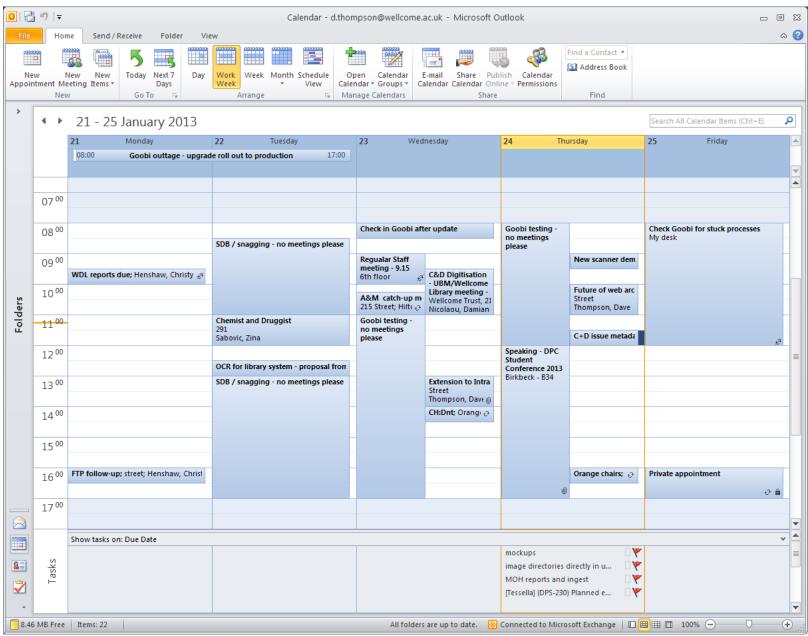
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So, how do I spend my day...?

- 1. It's not all glamour, metadata & preservation events.
- 2. I'm responsible for 2 systems; #Goobi & Safety Deposit Box (#sdb) for responsible read 'Snagging'.
- 3. Planning. Planning. Meetings. Meetings. Meetings.
- Project management. Deadlines. Budgets. Objectives. Reporting.
- 5. Process management & planning, how we do stuff, how can we do it better.
- 6. Tiny, tiny, tiny part of my time spent on stuff like format, migration, preservation events.





Quick career round up

- 1. Neither an archivist or librarian.
- 2. Degree in history, masters in Library & Information Studies. (MLIS)
- 3. Career in information in the UK & New Zealand. Working with information systems.
- 4. Developed information systems/processes for government.
- 5. National Library of New Zealand, web archiving, systems replacement, policy on born digital material.
- 6. Wellcome Trust since 2004. Born digital archives & digitisation.



Is an information career fun...?

- 1. Introduced to 3 Prime Ministers.
- 2. Worked with Chief Executives & Cabinet Ministers.
- 3. Represented my country on UN project.
- 4. Wrote some of the first websites for government departments.
- 5. Independent consultant.
- 6. Published, spoken at conferences, reviewed peers work, invited onto external committees.
- 7. Is it fun...?





So, I can think of five lessons, in no particular order...

1. Nothing without imagination

- 1. The power of digital preservation can only be revealed if we can imagine the uses the data can be put to.
- 2. Digital preservation is not an exercise in technology for its own sake.
- 3. There is nothing that cannot be achieved, but it takes more than kit, tools, computers, software.
- 4. Digital preservation is about engaging with creators & consumers, with the data & with the future.



2. No such thing as digital preservation

- Only point of digital preservation is reuse of data.
 Nothing else
- 2. It's not the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff.
- 3. It's not about format migration & obsolete kit.
- 4. It's the little things that we do every day; backup, planning, IT infrastructure maintenance, policy, virus checking, integrity checking, working with creators, working with users, adding value to data.



3. Lets see how hard we can make this...

- 1. We say digital preservation is hard. We choose to do this.
- 2. Much is under our control or within our gift.
- 3. Unless we can make preservation an easy & sustainable activity it's not preservation.
- 4. We have to work in the real world.
- 5. Why choose to make it hard?



4. It is a quest for world domination

- 1. I wish I'd been told that one day archivists will rule the world.
- 2. Archivists have all the training to make decisions about selection, appraisal, arrangement, context, description & preservation.
- 3. They understand preservation, copyright, access, privacy. Stuff that matters.
- 4. If the amount of personal data that Google holds scares you then the power of archivists to manage that data should scare you even more.



Apologies to the archivists, you can of course trust them completely. Without question. Totally.

5. Its not a technical problem...

- 1. I wish I'd known that digital preservation is not a technical problem; it's a social problem.
- 2. Many technical issues already have solutions, e.g. PLANETS\PLATO addresses many of the issues of migration.
- 3. The challenge is to move digital data into the future not just intact but in context & retaining its significance as research material.
- 4. This makes it a social problem.



So, what gets me out of bed on a frosty morning?

This does...



So my lessons are that...

- 1. It's an opportunity to be creative & to use my imagination, but also to be challenged.
- 2. It's an opportunity to build something that has value & worth.
- 3. It's an opportunity to engage with some astonishing people & even more astonishing material.
- 4. It's an opportunity to make history.



'Doesn't matter if you are Hitler, Nero or Napoleon, because archivists, librarians and historians will have the final word on your life.'

Twitter, HistoryNeedsYou (RT by DavidUnderdown 20 Jan 2013.)



Thank you

Questions now, questions later...?

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