DPC Briefing Day

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What’s So Special About Personal Archives?

- They are a vital record of our culture:
  - The most immediate historical records.
  - Bring their subjects to life - we can all connect with an individual perspective.
  - Biography - most popular form of non-fiction writing.
- They have unique research value:
  - Recognised as important sources by researchers at all levels, from senior scholars to life-long learners.
  - Reveal aspects of the past that are not captured in other forms of data.
- Ubiquity of the problem:
  - Personal archives exist in almost all archival collections.
  - More and more personal archives are being created all around us.
  - Personal archives are of value to all subject domains.
Notes at Meetings of the Privy Council between Charles II. and the Earl of Clarendon

King Charles II: I would willingly make a visite to my sister at Tonbridge for a night or two at farthest, when do you thinke I can spa best spare that time?

Lord Chancellor: I know no reason why you may not for such a tyme, (2 nights) go the next weeke, about Wensday, or Thursday...

I suppose you will goe with a light trayne.

King Charles II: I intend to take nothing but my night bag.

Lord Chancellor: yes, you will not go without 40 or 50 horse?

King Charles II: I counte that parte of my night bag.
What is the Problem with Personal Digital Collections?

- Oxford and Manchester are among the UK’s most heavily used archival repositories.
  - Much of that use is within personal archives.
  - Both have major holdings of political (and other) archives.
- Such archives today are created in electronic (and other) forms:
  - Correspondence now done by email.
  - Drafts of speeches now made in word processing formats.
  - Communication with constituents is via blogs and web pages.
- To maintain this information for cultural, historical, intellectual and political reasons, we have to address the existence of personal digital collections and hybrid archives.
Why Paradigm?

- Conceived to devise means to handle the digital aspects of acquiring, managing, and making available personal archives in digital form.

- Oxford and Manchester working together with active, prominent politicians, to solve the problem.

- With support from JISC

- With input from potential researchers of personal digital archives.

- Tackle the problems of the present to maintain traditions formed 800 years ago.
What Paradigm Did - a Bird’s Eye View

Archival principles + Digital preservation principles
Archival standards + Digital standards
Archival workflows + Digital workflows
Archival tools + Digital curation tools

Digital archives lifecycle
Uniting Traditional Archival and Digital Curation Workflows

5. Preparation for Opening
- Prepare Dissemination Information Packages (DIPs)
- Provide DIPs
- Descriptive Cataloguing
- Publish DIPs
- EAD
- Privacy IPR defamation checks
- Presentation versions

4. Dark Archive
- Digital Preservation of AIPs
- Tech watch
- Preservation actions

3. Accessions Archive
- Prepare & Ingest Archival Information Package (AIPs)
- Appraisal & Disposal
- Add preservation metadata to METS AIP

2. In Transit
- Initial Processing, Ingest Submission Information Package (SIPs)
- Transfer to Archival Custody
- Encryption
- Zipped files

1. The Creator
- Record Creation
- Records Active Life
- Onsite Appraisal & Evaluation
- Visits & advice from digital archivist
- Records survey
- Deposit documentation
- Guidelines for creators

6. Open Archive: Reading Room Access
- Open Archive: Online Repository

Start
Working with Creators

- Characterising hybrid archives
  - Range of personal digital archives from legacy to future formats
- Characterising approaches to collection development
- Developing tools for survey and selection of archives
  - Records survey
  - Capturing screenshots & directory structures
  - Data extraction how-tos – email, web harvesting, files, digital forensics (with British Library)
- Developing template transfer & deposit agreements
- Developed guidance for creators
- Evaluation of technical, cultural and legal issues based on hands-on experience
Relevant Standards & Tools

- Exploration of METS, PREMIS, rights metadata and various object-specific metadata
  - High level content models produced
- Exploration of DSpace and Fedora
  - Comparison in personal archives context
  - How-tos for installation, ingest, repository security
  - Work with Fedora community
- Exploration of digital signatures
- Exploration of persistent identifiers for archives
- Working with third-party metadata registries and extraction tools
Preservation Strategies for Personal Digital Archives

- Explored how preservation strategies could be implemented for personal archives
  - Need for combined strategies
  - Impact of collection development approach
  - Dependence on community

- Preservation monitoring
  - Fedora for monitoring integrity
  - Potential of Fedora for obsolescence notification

- Timing of preservation actions
Dissemination Strategies for Personal Digital Archives

• Explored legal issues around dissemination
  • Rights, privacy, defamation, public records act
  • Lead to two-stage access: reading room and later publish to online repository

• Explored issues around access and use with academic advisory board – authenticity, navigation

• Looked at how hybrid archives might be presented to researchers and presented a metadata framework for this
**Workbook on Digital Private Papers**

The Workbook, originally written for online publication, is currently being made available in a hardcopy version. Please note that the content may be subject to change. Final versions of the online publication will be available in mid-2007.

1. Introduction
   - Introduction to the Workbook
   - Introduction to the OAIS model
   - Glossary
   - Key Digital Preservation Directories
   - Draft lifecycle for the long-term preservation of digital private papers

2. Collection development
   - General considerations when collecting digital private papers
   - Approaches to collection development
   - Regular snapshot accessions
   - Post-custodial approach
   - Combining snapshots & post-custodial approaches
   - The traditional approach
   - Transfer via retired media
   - Self-archiving
   - Conclusions

3. Working with record creators
   - Guidance for Creators of Private Papers
   - The Structure of Private Papers
   - Surveying Collections

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**Guidance for creators of personal papers**

Caring for your personal digital archive

Archivists often become involved with a personal archive after the creator, or even death, of the creator. A paper-based personal archive can be lost or destroyed, while digital personal archives can be lost over time. The same advice can be given to the increasing number of material that now exists today in digital format. As the long-term viability of digital materials is uncertain, and the efforts to keep material accessible in the future are not always possible, it is important to learn new ways of managing digital materials. This document aims to assist you in doing just that, by providing practical advice that can be implemented by anyone.

Why should I bother managing my digital materials?

Because their survival is far from assured.

Not so long ago, personal records documenting the early years of an individual’s life were collected in notebooks or in some cases in a box under the bed. The same documents were not included in personal archives, which often included photographs and other materials. The digital equivalent of these documents is far more likely to be lost over time. The digital materials may be lost because the creator has not considered what will happen to the digital materials after their death. This can be a problem for the creator, and it may be impossible to determine who will have created the digital materials.

Because your digital materials are important to you and your family.

Managing your digital materials will ensure that the digital materials are preserved. However, if the creator does not consider what will happen to the digital materials after their death, the materials may be lost. This can be a problem for the creator, and it may be impossible to determine who will have created the digital materials.

Because your digital materials are important to society.

You may not have thought of your digital files as part of a personal archive, or as a historical record, yet what we do today and how we do things today will matter to future generations. As archivists, when you think about your digital materials, you are thinking about how you will pass your personal digital archive on to future generations. This is a crucial task, and it is important to consider how you will pass your digital archive on to future generations. It is important to pass your digital archive on to future generations, and it is important to pass it on to future generations in a way that is meaningful to you and your family.

A practical approach to the preservation of personal digital archives

Susan Thomas
Eglishan Library
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v1.0
Outcomes of Paradigm

• Learned through doing

• Created a platform for future development
  • Developed institutional capacity
  • Identified areas where more work needed
  • Area of ingest taken forward in Cairo project

• Created a tool for other institutions

• Triggered change in organisational priorities
Questions?

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