

DPC Web Archiving & Preservation Webinar

# Outreach & Awareness Raising

March 5, 2020

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# Presentation goals

- Review common issues and approaches to small scale (human scale) web archiving
  - Examples to demonstrate successful use and help others envision good outcomes within similar scenarios
- All examples are from 2017-2019 using Webrecorder.io
- Outreach and awareness raising were key components to the Webrecorder project 2017-2019
  - Also contributed to general web archiving curricula

# The call is coming from inside the building!

Sometimes the collectors are among the anticipated users

- Internal organizational needs - self archiving
- Individuals who require continued access to own work
- People who rely on the live site (which will be disappearing soon)

# Planning to define value/expected outcomes

- Business case
  - Internal use
  - External use
- Sometimes individuals will clearly express their needs
- Collecting scope definition can be a selling point
- Communicating challenges in a non-discouraging way can be hard

# Where do people often start?

Archivist: 'I was just informed that an essential web resource is about to be taken down/deleted.

**Soon! Within weeks or next month.'**

- How do I save a functional copy for future use?
- Can I do this in time (within a month or so)?

# Advocacy within an organization

Administrator: 'What do you mean web based content isn't just saved [with full fidelity] automatically?

Doesn't the Internet Archive have a copy?'

- By all means check the Internet Archive but view captures critically
  - Does this capture accurately represent the original? Why/why not?
- Advocacy is hard but leverage training materials available. Again, explaining limits of web archiving capabilities in an encouraging way is difficult but necessary for expectation management

## Familiar scenario in universities

'A faculty member got a large grant for a web based project 5 years ago. They made a great website but no longer have time, interest and/or funds to maintain it. They want to sunset the site.

I'd like a one click solution to "archive" the project, please.

There's no funding for this activity.

Please mind the implications for tenure review.'

## Indianapolis Museum of Art → Newfields

- Rebranding → sudden need to collect website before taken offline
- Motivated archivist who figured out local deployment of Webrecorder
- Good collection made
- Grateful peers, e.g. because key forms and pdfs on the prior website were not lost and instead were easy to find in the web archive!



# Carnegie Hall

- Needed help asap - sunseting organizational website very soon
- Understanding benefits and complexity of web archiving was important to discussions with IT
  - e.g. why Wget capture was not enough
- Pilot partnership with Webrecorder team – mutual benefit
- Once started with web archiving saw needs that could be highlighted
  - Internal documentation and processes (i.e. how a search worked step by step)
  - Complex web projects (obsolete - being taken offline, sometimes replaced)

# Stanford University Press

Digital projects associate: 'Our complex publications are cutting edge and will have a limited lifespan most likely (lots of technical dependencies).

How can we make sure they are an enduring resource?

How do we explain challenges and benefits to administrators and funders?'

- Pilot partnership with Webrecorder team – mutual benefit
- Hands on work and dialog; custom development beta (Scalar)

# Pelican Bomb

Editors/founders: 'Our publication is closing. We did good work and want it to have continued impact. What do we do?'

- Time limited pilot partnership with Webrecorder team – mutual benefit
- Work plan formed but primary funder did not buy in so limited implementation
- Stakeholders: 'now that we know the benefits of web archiving we realize there are others in our communities need digital preservation help'
  - Outreach, including workshop at Common Ground Convening

# Enduring value of Pelican Bomb

- Events calendar
- Editorial work
- Community Supported Art program

# Mexico City workshop

Librarians/archivists: 'We have some extremely important web resources and work in a place with very limited financial resources.'

- Understanding tools and sample collections helps with advocacy
- Envisioning success is easier when there are demonstrations plus Q & A time (here facilitated in Spanish and English)
- Translated slides (thanks to Archivistas en Espanglish!)

# National Library of Colombia

Librarian/Archivist: 'There are some really important web resources we need to acquire but work in a place with very limited financial resources.'

There's more staff time for this than money: there's no money but the staff are determined to meet this challenge!'

- Hands on work with students/interns
- Leveraging resources to an awesome extent

# Artexxe

Librarians: 'We have some really important web content being produced by and about artists. There's more staff time for this than money: we are determined to meet this challenge including user training locally.'

- Training for librarians and users
  - Webinar
- Translated slides to French
- Ongoing small scale advocacy, working with users

# Journalists!

Journalist: 'There's some wild stuff online I will be referencing in my journalistic or academic writings.

I need to cite my sources to write a credible article.'

- Getting past screenshots
- What's the benefit of something more complex than screenshots?
- Ongoing credibility, evidence



# Parsons School of Design

Professor of Design: 'I am up for tenure and my students' work is frequently web based. Print outs of screenshots are not going to cut it!'

- Self motivated but good illustration for value of web archiving
  - For funding
  - For people spreading word to colleagues
- Students can benefit from web archiving themselves
  - Provided training to students in course presentation; highlighted potential uses:
    - Portfolio
    - Longer term

## Web archiving → community collecting

- Occupy Wall Street Archives Working Group – sending links to Internet Archive was a fine place operate in its day (2011-2012)
- Leveling playing field with Webrecorder
- Also see the excellent work of Documenting the Now (Doc Now)

# Ethics

- Ethical considerations - important points for discussion and these cases present some of them in concrete terms
- Social media collecting
  - Do no harm
  - Does certain phenomena warrant documentation?
    - For historical record
    - For contemporary analysis
- See Ethics & Archiving the Web site for recorded streams and more!
  - <https://eaw.rhizome.org/>

# Scaling back wide mandates

- In most cases it's literally impossible to “collect everything”
- Representative sample as a concept and a practice
  - Appraisal methods applied to analog materials can inform digital projects, too
- Something is better than nothing
- Reduce complexity & managing expectations

# Benefits of partnership to a project

- Demonstrating usage in real terms
- Testing help, invaluable insights for Webrecorder team
- Signal boosting
  - Expand understanding of the value of digital collecting and preservation (e.g. web archiving)
- Working inclusively to meet some really important needs
  - Enabling talented people to reap benefits from hard work

# Outreach & relationships

- Choosing close partnerships carefully
- Starting place: ignoring titles and seniority – ‘if you’re interested in web archives I’m interested in talking with you!’
  - This led to fruitful partnerships, the results of which included: translated slide decks (Spanish, French), quality assurance testing, user interviews and workshops
- Teaching skills + enthusiasm + demonstrable gain = buy in

# Takeaways & discussion

- Small but satisfying bites – sometimes a limited scale is fine
  - Time invested pays real dividends – often non-financial but demonstrating mission accomplishment!
- We need more and better tools
  - Sustainability
- Lots of potential demonstrated – now what?
- Looking forward to seeing more uses and users

# Thank you!

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