Supporting grassroots communities with web archiving

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The problem

- PhD research at UCL exploring methods for documenting and archiving DIY music spaces
- Cluster of issues around digital information including
  - Lack of knowledge/skills to preserve web content
  - Information becoming inaccessible at a rapid pace
  - Use of digital platforms for organising and community building
  - Social media platforms deleting information through moderation processes
The response

- To coordinate a series of online workshops designed to disseminate skills and knowledge gained in previous professional practice
- Workshops delivered on a sliding scale donation basis (from £0-10)
- Delivered via Zoom and marketed online via social media and listservs
- Pitched as a basic introduction who did not need any experience in archiving
The format

• Emphasis on accessible language (no jargon)
• Space to ask questions and build connections through discussion exercises
• Workshop included:
  • A brief introduction to web archiving
  • Signposting existing schemes (e.g. nominating a site to UKWA)
  • A demo of an open source tool (Conifer)
• Resources and recordings provided afterwards
The result

- Workshops attended by over 140 attendees over seven iterations which almost entirely sold out
- Attendees from activist groups across the world
- Attendees also included information sector workers who attended due to lack of affordable training in web archiving
Future directions

• Build this into a staged programme which introduced more tools, workflows

• Development of more free/low cost online events targeted specifically at grassroots communities

Recording It Ourselves: A Day Event about DIY Cultures, Information, Archives and Histories

Talks, skills sharing and network building

20th March, virtual event (delivered on Zoom)
09:30-17:45

recordingitourselves.wordpress.com
Conclusions

• Archive workers need to build this skill set urgently
• Existing training is not affordable for professionals, let alone community groups
• This affects our ability to support community/grassroots heritage initiatives as a sector
• Using online formats reduces costs (e.g. space hire)
• Marketing free/low cost training outside of professional networks will engage a more diverse group of attendees