

Computational Access: A beginner's guide for digital preservation practitioners

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Digital**Preservation**Coalition

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Why did we start working on this?

- DPC Members had expressed an interest in this topic at our unconference in June 2021:
 - Confusion about what it entails
 - No clear sense of where (and how) to start
- Leontien contacted us in October 2021 wanting to chat about her ideas for building capacity (and confidence) across the digital preservation community around this topic

Initial goals

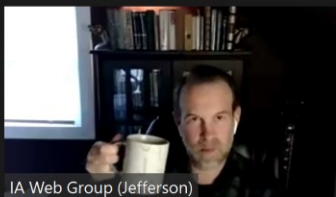
- We had an initial meeting with Leontien in November 2021 and established some goals:
 - To increase awareness of computational methods in archives
 - To agree some definitions for computational access and related terms
 - To bring together helpful resources for those who want to find out more
 - To reduce the barriers to engagement with this topic, providing guidance on where/how to start and examples of good practice

...but we couldn't do it alone

Zoom Meeting

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Recording Paused

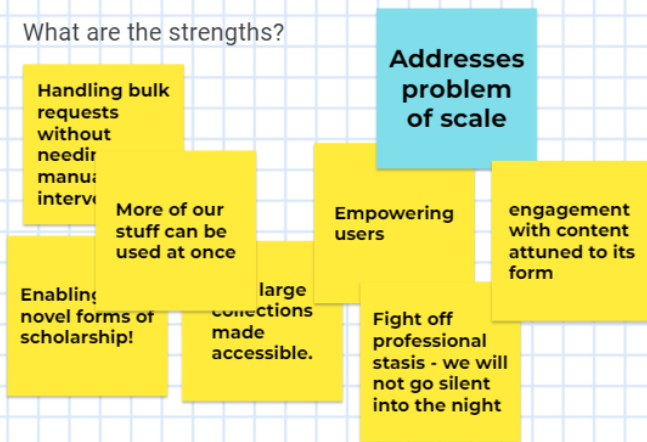


...we also
couldn't do it
without cookies!

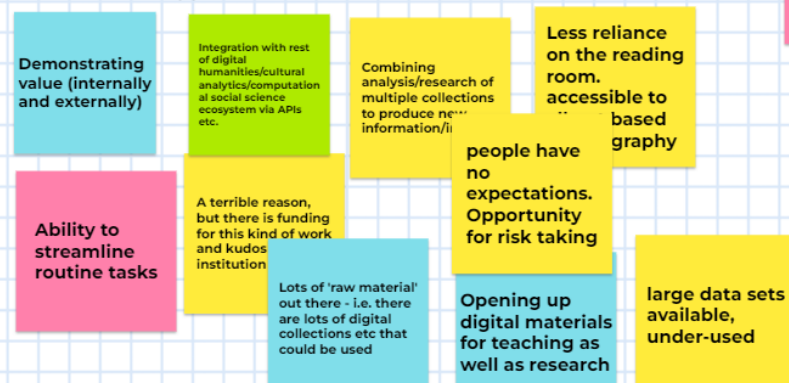
Collaborative workshop

Thinking about computational access techniques for digital archives...

What are the strengths?



What are the opportunities?



Loss of control.

Lack of confidence/knowledge e/IT support

Who is the DC of the comp access? (scope, aim of service provision)

Security

amplification of bias

Loss of connection to physical reality

Sustainability of tools

Unintended bias in the collection which is revealed by computational access

Third-party platforms like Colab are great but perhaps vulnerable to being discontinued

Rely on tools not created by the community, with our needs in mind

What are the risks?

Are there actually users out there?

Ethics and consent (or are these different issues)

Being insensitive to cultural issues

Sustainability of resources (i.e. downstream dependency breaks and your API is on fire)

Difficulty of knowing if you're doing it right! (i.e. lack of community, standards)

Erroneous aura of objectivity

Ever expanding remit getting ever larger - burn out and exhaustion

What are the barriers?

Licensing

Negotiation of rights for comp access (PII, privacy, data of retail value)

Lack of use cases/routes to gauge user requirements

Technology readiness, ie is ready for non-experts to use

Lack of researcher awareness

Skills shortage - people think this is new and scary and they don't have the skills

Unanticipated and unpredicted outcomes (for archive and data owner)

addressing the edge case and the core

assessing use - rationalizing continued investment

Sensitivity review of data at scale

fed up of new tech that's going to change the world

Lack of digital resources

The guide - scope

- The guide is aimed at **digital preservation practitioners** – not at researchers or users of the digital collections
 - ...but obviously we need to have users and use cases very much in mind when establishing these access methodologies
- The guide does not tell you everything you need to know, but does provide a helpful introduction and lots of signposts to further information and case studies

The guide



Introduction

This section defines the scope and purpose of the guide.



Definitions

This section provides clear definitions of key terms and the relationships between them.



Approaches to computational access

This section looks at the pros and cons of the different approaches and provides real-life examples of how they are being applied by different organizations.



Ethics of computational access

This section provides a summary of the key ethical considerations and signposts further sources of information.



Benefits and drawbacks

This section summarizes key benefits and articulates the problems and pitfalls to be aware of when considering using these methods.



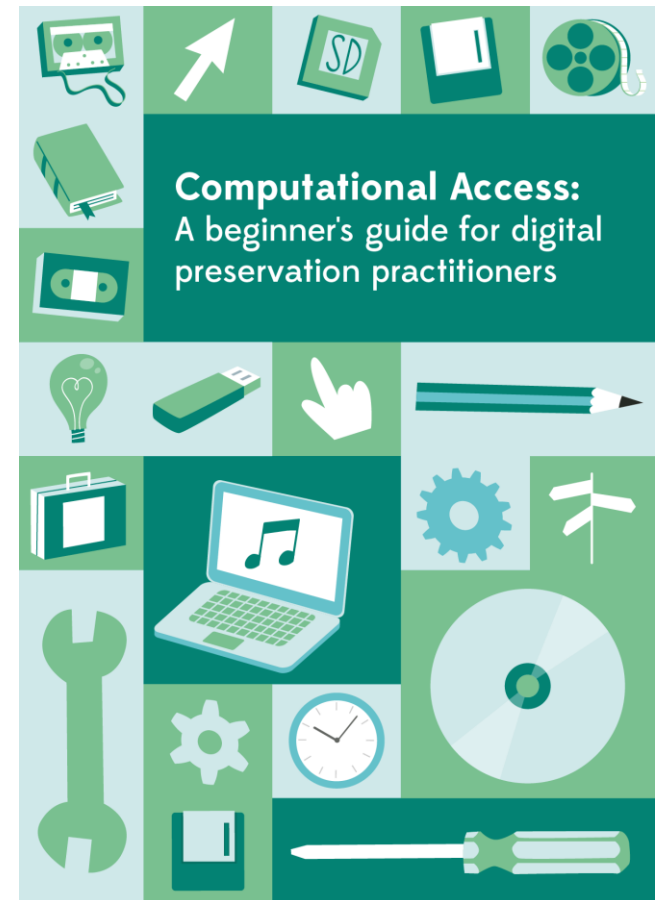
Practical steps to get started

This section offers practical tips to help digital preservation practitioners move forward as well as case studies demonstrating how others have tackled the challenge.



Further resources and case studies

This section highlights a number of useful resources and case studies that can be explored to find out more about this topic.



Thank you!

