The MLA Archive

MUSEUMS LIBRARIES ARCHIVES
YORKSHIRE

A Case Study

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Collections Manager

West Yorkshire Archive Service
West Yorkshire Joint Services
WYAS Digital Archives Working Group, 2006 - ongoing

- Digital Archives Policy
  available at http://www.archives.wyjs.org.uk/Policy.htm
  - fostering awareness and support
  - creating a framework for practical work

- Practical Digital Archives Work
  - Software testing, using sample objects
  - Survey of digital records already held by the Service (first documented digital accession received 1999)
  - Digital deposit form and guidelines
  - A digital media recognition guide for staff
  - Advocacy and training

- Small, non-specialist, staff working group
  - 3 archivists, plus records manager
  - Flexible, but limited, support from West Yorkshire Joint Services’ IT department
MLA Yorkshire: Background

- Regional Museums, Libraries and Archives partnership organisation for Yorkshire
- Wound up December 2008
- Developed out of the Yorkshire Museums Council (YMC), with a continuous history back to 1963
- 1.4 m³ paper, 1963-2008
- 80GB+ digital, c2002-2008
A Case Study - In Progress

- Negotiating a hybrid deposit
- Collecting digital content
- Processing digital content
- Appraisal
- Options for:
  - Website
  - E-Bulletins
- Storage & Access
Negotiating a Hybrid Deposit

- Very short timescale – no time to try out software tools before transfer
- Depositor had not considered digital records to be ‘archives’
- Remember that digital content may not be held locally (website, e-bulletins)
- ‘Self curation’ of electronic records by staff - closer to personal archive than organisational
- Confidentiality: some folders/accounts password protected
- Conflicting interests:
  - Server sold as an asset
  - Interests of MLA Council
- Positives:
  - No obsolete hardware
  - Predominantly current office file formats
  - Helpful IT support
  - £4000 dowry funded participation in InterPares project (http://www.interpares.org/)
Collecting Digital Content

- New digital deposit documentation
- ‘Grab & Run’ copying - no time to complete appraisal prior to transfer
- Capture ‘original order’ & generate checksums
- Problems encountered:
  - Long file paths/file names
  - Need all users to be logged out of corporate network
  - Don’t underestimate the time needed to transfer large amounts of data
Ingest – Processing Digital Content

- Transfer to Ingest PC
- Authenticity verified using checksums
- Virus check – twice – using AVG Anti-Virus (Kaspersky on corporate network)
- Use spreadsheets to analyse file listings / check for duplicates
- Appraisal
Appraisal in the Digital World

- Pre-accession appraisal - Karen’s Directory Printer (http://www.karenware.com/powertools/ptdirprn.asp)
- Post-accession appraisal - FTK file listings
- Overlapping circles
  - 2 phases of network storage (“Archived Folders”)
  - Staff personal files (H drive) & Company Shared Folder (G drive)
  - Staff movements – record duplication
Appraisal in a Digital World
Website

Archive-It - http://www.archive-it.org/
Website
E-Bulletins

MLA Yorkshire Cultural Olympiad Update
Mar 08

Arts Council England, Yorkshire Culture, MLA Yorkshire and Screen Yorkshire invite you to:

"YORKSHIRE’S CULTURAL OLYMPIAD - AN EMERGING FRAMEWORK"

A briefing for the region’s cultural organisations on the national framework for the UK Cultural Olympiad for London 2012, progress and opportunities in the region.

The briefing will be led by Tessa Gordzieko, Creative Programmer (Yorkshire) for London 2012 and include speakers from the key partner agencies. The agenda will cover:

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Storage & Access

- Deal with IT department on preservation storage:
  - IT have use of ‘electronic records room’ in WYAS outstore for mirrored corporate network: IT benefit from enhanced fire & security provisions
  - In return for dedicated SAN volume for archive preservation storage: WYAS benefit from built-in redundancy, IT support & backup

- Access to preservation SAN storage restricted to small number of WYAS staff

- Public access via copies made available on searchroom PCs?

- Enhanced network security provisions under Government Connect programme may affect both ingest and access workflow
Case Study Lessons

- Give it a go! Real digital archives, real experience
- Building sustainable, but pragmatic, foundation for handling digital archives
  - Practical knowledge of available tools and services
  - Opportunity to think through practical and technical issues, and devise solutions that are ‘good enough’
- Processing a hybrid archive is particularly instructive:
  - Highlights (dis-)continuities between steps required to process digital archives and traditional archival workflows
  - Adapting current procedures and creating new documentation (e.g., digital deposit forms; guide to using FTK Imager for digital archive collection)
  - Helps to re-assert the importance of the cultural factors/interpersonal skills in archival preservation (e.g., depositor liaison, privacy concerns) versus technical/technological proficiencies
- Still lots of decisions to be made:
  - Work to date has maintained access for the present – now need to consider preservation for the future
  - Migration – On obsolescence? On request? Mostly contemporary office formats, so can afford to delay intervention?
Any Questions?

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