A Rough Guide to Digital Preservation:
the challenges posed by an increasingly digital world

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The LAARC: facts & figures

- **1993**: setting up of first independent archaeological archive and publication of *Standards for Deposition*
- **2002**: expansion and re-opening of the archaeological archive as the LAARC
- **2005**: appointment of first Digital Records Officer and development of a migration-based digital preservation system built upon the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) model
- **10**: kilometres of shelving in the LAARC
- **6,000**: number of archives stored in the LAARC
- **200+**: number of new archives received in 2011
- **372GB**: digital data held by the LAARC
The evolution of archaeological records
The challenges of an increasingly digital world

- Training issues
- Ingest difficulties
- Access challenges
- Storage demands
- Obsolescence
- Monitoring of standards
- Organisational challenges
- Metadata
7 Practical Steps

• Develop different skill sets
• There is no one solution for everyone
• Doing something is (usually) better than doing nothing
• Develop good relations with your I.T. dept
• ABA – always be advocating
• Collaboration is good
• Take time to smell the digital flowers!
The Digital Preservation Skills Cloud
• No one solution for everyone: different organisations will have different needs/priorities/user groups/resources.

• Standards and best practice should be used as guides, but may not reflect actual conditions and may be impractical to implement.
• Doing something is better than nothing:
don’t get overawed by jargon and best practice if it is beyond current resources
document your procedures, keep original bit stream of record
• Develop good relations with your I.T. department
• to gain access to online tools and resources
• plan and maintain online dissemination
• manage storage requirements
• ABA – always be advocating
• make sure digital is always on the agenda and not forgotten
• ensure that preservation costs are factored in to any project
• Collaboration is extremely useful:
  lots of people dealing with same issues

Digital Preservation Coalition
Open Planets Foundation
JISCMail
The Digital Flowers!

• Can be easy to focus on immediate workload – but it is important to take time out of your work schedule to:
  • read project reports/findings
  • test tools and resources
  • attend conferences
What you can do now

• Get involved – your thoughts and opinions matter
• Ask questions, try things out, comment and feedback on tools, processes, resources
• If a tool doesn’t return the results you expected – feedback to the developers (that’s the only way they will get better)
Final thought

• Digital preservation is still a relatively new area – there are still answers and solutions waiting to be found – which make its an exciting and rewarding area to work in.
Useful sources

- http://www.dpconline.org/
- http://www.openplanetsfoundation.org/
- http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/
- http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/PRONOM/
- http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/Collections-Research/LAARC/