

Update from the Blue Ribbon Task Force on
Sustainable Digital Preservation and Access
(BRTF-SPDA)

Preservation and Archiving
Special Interest Group
(PASIG)

November 19, 2008

Blue Ribbon Task Force on Sustainable Digital Preservation and Access (BRTF-SPDA)

- Multi-disciplinary group with funding from US National Science Foundation and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
- UK Joint Information Systems Committee nominated two representatives
- In-kind or staff support from Library of Congress, Council on Library and Information Resources, US National Archives and Records Administration, and NITRD
- Two year program of activities that began in January 2008 with kick-off meeting in Washington DC

Task Force Participants

Blue Ribbon Task Force:

- Paul Ayris, University College London
- Fran Berman, SDSC/UCSD
- Bob Chaddock, NARA Liaison
- Sayeed Choudhury, Johns Hopkins University
- Elizabeth Cohen, AMPAS/Stanford
- Paul Courant, University of Michigan
- Lee Dirks, Microsoft
- Amy Friedlander, CLIR
- Chris Greer, NITRD Liaison
- Vijay Gurbaxani, UC Irvine
- Anita Jones, University of Virginia
- Ann Kerr, Consultant
- Brian Lavoie, OCLC
- Cliff Lynch, CNI
- Dan Rubinfeld, UC Berkeley
- Chris Rusbridge, DCC
- Roger Schonfeld, Ithaka
- Abby Smith, Consultant
- Anne Van Camp, Smithsonian

Sponsoring Agencies/Institutions:

- National Science Foundation
- Mellon Foundation
- Library of Congress
- National Archives and Records Administration
- CLIR
- NITRD
- JISC
- Member institutions

Specific Responsibilities

- Fran Berman / co-Chair
- Amy Friedlander / First Report Editor
- Ann Kerr / Panel Rapporteur
- Brian Lavoie / co-Chair
- Susan Rathbun / Task Force Support
- Abby Smith / Second Report Editor
- Jan Zverina / Communications Lead
- Lucy Nowell / NSF Program Officer
- Don Waters / Mellon Program Officer
- Laura Campbell, March Anderson / LC representative

Charge to the Task Force

1. To conduct a **comprehensive analysis of previous and current efforts** to develop and/or implement models for sustainable digital information preservation
2. To **identify and evaluate best practice** regarding sustainable digital preservation among existing collections, repositories, and analogous enterprises
3. To **make specific recommendations for actions** that will catalyze the development of sustainable resource strategies for the reliable preservation of digital information
4. Provide a **research agenda** to organize and motivate future work

Deliverables

- **First Year Report (positive, “what is”):**
 - Describe past and current models (case studies, etc.);
 - Identify points of convergence/divergence; “lessons learned”;
 - What we know so far, and what our key knowledge gaps are.
- **Second Year Report (normative, “what should be”):**
 - General cost framework: key cost categories of digital preservation
 - Set of economic models/“scenarios”: alternate ways of organizing digital preservation activities, within the context of the cost framework
 - Describe each model: features, pros, cons, trade-offs, etc.
 - List real world conditions for which each model is best suited.
 - “If your digital preservation context is X, we recommend you consider using model Y to organize your activities in a sustainable way.”

TF Outreach:

- Community web resource and bibliography
- Articles designed to enlighten and broaden the community of stakeholders

DRAFT Initial Report

- Please keep in mind that the report is still in DRAFT format and the Task Force is still finalizing the document

- Definition of Economic Sustainability:

The set of business, social, technological, and policy mechanisms that encourage the gathering of important information assets into digital preservation systems, and support the indefinite persistence of digital preservation systems, enabling access to and use of the information assets into the long-term future.

Economic Sustainability (continued)

Economically sustainable digital preservation requires:

- Recognition of the benefits of preservation on the part of key decision-makers;
- Incentives for decision-makers to act in the public interest;
- A process for selecting digital materials for long term retention;
- Mechanisms to secure an ongoing, efficient allocation of resources to digital preservation activities;
- Appropriate organization and governance of digital preservation activities.

Key Themes

- Definition of economic sustainability is meant to be sufficiently detailed enough to scope the work, yet also general enough to be applicable in most contexts
- The report focuses on sustainable economic models for digital materials for which there is a clear public interest
- Several concepts that should be considered over entire life-cycle of content including stakeholders, (both start-up and ongoing) costs, value, incentives, and organizational frameworks

Literature Review

- Focus on economic dimensions of digital preservation (not a complete review of all digital preservation literature)
- While there are other studies, reports, etc., seven major studies are examined in greater depth:
 1. Roquade Project
 2. Harvard Depository and OCLC, Inc. Digital Archive
 3. Sweden's Riksarkivet/National Archives
 4. Digital Preservation Testbed, Nationaal Archief of the Netherlands
 5. Digital Motion Pictures (Science Technology Council of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences)
 6. LIFE Project
 7. Beagrie-Chruszcz-Lavoie (BCL) Cost Model

Report (DRAFT!) Observations

- Difficult to compare and contrast different studies given diverse definitions of costs, units of measurement, scope or accounting methods
- Most recent studies such as LIFE or BCL cost model attempt to account for entire life-cycle of costs and also inter-temporal considerations (e.g., inflation/deflation, interest rates)
- Important to acknowledge costs associated with human dimensions (e.g., management) and infrastructure elements of storage (e.g., power and cooling)
- “Format matters; scale matters”

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- <http://brtf.sdsc.edu>