LONGEVITY OF ELECTRONIC/DIGITAL RECORDS
An Annotated Bibliography

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Abstract
Current resources, publications, web sites and projects on the longevity and preservation of electronic/digital records are provided, along with brief comments about sites and publications of particular relevance and interest.

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RESEARCH, CURRENT AND ONGOING

  http://www.leeds.ac.uk/cedars/DigPres.htm

  This project's web page contains a great deal of useful information. I particularly recommend their FAQ pages “Frequently Asked Questions about Digital Preservation” (http://www.leeds.ac.uk/cedars/documents/MGW03.htm), and "Digital Preservation and Further Information” (http://www.leeds.ac.uk/cedars/DigPres.htm)

- “Information Longevity” Compiled by Howard Besser. (http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Longevity/)

  Besser is an Associate Professor at UCLA’s School of Education and Information Studies, and This site is his compilation of the latest research, thinking, and writing on digital longevity. Contains many links to sources not included in this page. Highly recommended.


  “InterPARES is a major international research initiative in which archival scholars, computer engineeringscholars, national archival institutions and private industry representatives are collaborating to develop the theoretical and methodological knowledge required for the permanent preservation of authentic records created in electronic systems.”

  From the InterPARES web-site


METHODS AND PROCEDURES

- Arts and Humanities Data Service.  
  (http://ahds.ac.uk/manage/framework.htm)

  "Data creators who attach little or no value to the long-term preservation of the data resources they create are unlikely to adopt standards and practices, which will facilitate their preservation. This is particularly true where those standards and practices are different from or more costly to implement than those which promise the cost-effective development of a data resource capable of
fulfilling its intended use. Accordingly, ... awareness-raising...needs to be addressed toward data creators in a manner which appeals to their interests."

AHDS 1.2


Presents specific recommendations to facilitate the long-term management of image collections.


Excellent summary of issues. Highly recommended.


COSTS


“Consider it this way. Suppose that the media for storage of digital information can last ten years but that in order to be safe, you choose to migrate the information after only five years. During the first five years after you begin capturing information digitally, you have no migration burden. But the sixth year, in addition to continuing the capture of original information, you would be forced to migrate onto new media information captured during year one. The seventh year you must migrate the information from the second year, the eighth year from the third year, the ninth year from the fourth, and the tenth year from the fifth. By the time you reach the eleventh year, you must migrate not only the information from the sixth year, but also again from the first year and so on. And thus it goes, with the migration burden increasing incrementally with each half decade that passes. The burden imposed by such migration could easily consume vast resources that might otherwise be dedicated to the capturing of original information...

*In order to prevent this scenario from occurring, we have elected to continue the use of microfilm technology until such time as the underlying media for storing digital information achieve archival shelf life, meaning that they can last for decades or centuries, just as microfilm does today."

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