

Personal Digital Archiving: How Can the Cultural Heritage Community Help Individuals Curate Their Own Materials?

Maurizio Lunghi
Arca Memorie non profit association
Florence, Italy, 50100
www.arcamemorie.net
+39 3351396371
mauriziolunghi66@gmail.com

Helen Tibbo
School of Information and Library
Science, University of North Carolina
at Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3360
+1 919 962 8063
Tibbo@ils.unc.edu

Natascha Schumann
GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the
Social Sciences
50667 Cologne, Germany
+49-(0)221-47694-423
natascha.schumann@gesis.org

WORKSHOP DURATION

One-half day. This will include presentations from 6 (or more) speakers plus time for questions and audience discussion.

ABSTRACT

Personal Digital Archiving (PDA) is a relatively recent topic in the landscape of digital preservation and new questions/challenges arise as devices, tools, and apps to capture and share information seem to appear every day. Individuals and community organizations can be overwhelmed with photos, email messages, texts, letters, and a wide array of other materials. This workshop seeks to discuss ways in which cultural heritage institutions such as libraries, archives, and museums, along with university researchers, and software and systems developers in this domain, can help individuals and groups come to grips with their digital collections and preserve content that is important to their lives, organizations, communities, and heritage in trustworthy, long-term ways. Very few initiatives are on-going worldwide on this topic, one of the most relevant, the PDA conference in the US, is presented to bring the discussion to Europe.

Cultural heritage organizations that are building trustworthy digital repositories along with tool builders and software/system developers have much to offer in this arena but roles and responsibilities as well as incentives and resources must be established. At the most fundamental stage, awareness needs to be raised among all stakeholders and guidelines to help individuals and organizations need to be developed, maintained, and disseminated. Of prime concern at this juncture is how public institutions such as libraries and archives can help community organizations and individuals?

Keywords

Personal Digital Archiving; Cultural Heritage; Selection Criteria; Preservation Planning.

1. WORKSHOP ORGANISERS

- Maurizio Lunghi, Arca Memorie non-profit association
- Helen Tibbo, School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Cal Lee, School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Natascha Schumann, GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences

- Achim Osswald, TH Köln / Technology, Arts, Sciences, Institut fuer Informationswissenschaft
- Martin Iordanidis, Gruppe Publikationssysteme, Hochschulbibliothekszentrum des Landes NRW (hbz)

2. WORKSHOP TARGET AUDIENCE

- Community organizations focused on gathering oral histories or other local collections;
- Representatives of cultural heritage institutions who are interested in helping individuals preserve their personal digital contents as well as oral history and other local collections;
- University scholars, researchers, and students working in areas related to Personal Digital Archiving including archival science, information systems, oral history, privacy and other legal area, and other related fields;
- Private companies or associations interested in offering/facilitating technical solutions and infrastructures suitable for a long-term archival services for individuals and community and local collections;
- Information professionals including archivists, librarians, and curators; and
- Those preserving family material, activist groups, and hobbyists.

3. WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Personal Digital Archiving (PDA) is a relatively recent topic in the landscape of digital preservation and new questions/challenges arise as devices, tools, and apps to capture and share information seem to appear every day. Individuals and community organizations can be overwhelmed with photos, email messages, texts, letters, and a wide array of other materials. This workshop seeks to discuss ways in which cultural heritage institutions such as libraries, archives, and museums, along with university researchers, and software and systems developers in this domain, can help individuals and groups come to grips with their digital collections and preserve content that is important to their lives, organizations, communities, and heritage in trustworthy, long-term ways.

This workshop will explore the domain of Personal Digital Archiving by defining potential actors and roles, and discussing key topics such as resources, outreach, privacy, legal issues, and technical options available for individuals and organizations to preserve their digital content. Presently, few institutions around the globe are mounting concerted efforts to help individuals curate their own materials, however, there has been a PDA conference in the US each year since 2010. It is our goal in this workshop to bring this discussion to iPRES2016 and to Europe. Because of the newness of PDA efforts it is important to be inclusive and bring as many voices to the conversation as possible.

For many artists, writers, politicians and other well-known figures, archives and other public institutions have preserved their personal papers and other artifacts. However, these institutions have saved very little material from average citizens. While families may have had success preserving their own paper-based content from generation to generation, digital media present an entirely new and often confounding range of problems for those who wish to preserve items such as wedding videos, Facebook pages, or even email messages. Few individuals or community organizations today understand the fragility of digital media or have any knowledge as to how to preserve files or migrate content to future formats.

Many open questions must be addressed before most small organizations and individuals will have secure preservation services for their content. Cultural heritage organizations that are building trustworthy digital repositories along with tool builders and software/system developers have much to offer in this arena but roles and responsibilities as well as incentives and resources must be established. At the most fundamental stage, awareness needs to be raised among all stakeholders and guidelines to help individuals and organizations need to be developed, maintained, and disseminated. Of prime concern at this juncture is how public institutions such as libraries and archives can help community organizations and individuals? Recent discussions concerning a public-private collaboration among cultural heritage institutions and systems builders to deliver a sort of “subsidiary service” for preserving individuals’ digital memories is one example of possible paths toward realizing PDA for the public.

One of these new services is proposed by the Arca Memorie, a non-profit association www.arcamemorie.net designed to help individuals preserve their digital memories, where the members can use a repository service with a guarantee of long-term preservation of their digital content. The key points of the service are the ownership of the digital objects, the aspects related to long term preservation including digital formats, contextual metadata, persistent identifiers, authenticity, and provenance. A field trial has been launched in April 2016 and is still open.

In order to customize the workshop for participants, the organisers will collect information through an online questionnaire before the event concerning participants’ general understanding of personal archiving, what they see as their roles in PDA, what they (or their users) want to preserve and why, the possible goals of such preservation activity, user expectations or requirements, the legal or economic constraints, and so on. The collected data will be used to stimulate the discussion at the workshop and the participants will be invited to contribute forward. The workshop is expected to be a first step of a long path toward clarification of the PDA topics and possible solutions.