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Title:

Missing links: The digital news preservation discontinuity

Abstract:

Over the past four decades the transition from analog to digital systems in news media has transformed the way journalistic content is produced and accessed. Like other creators of “born digital” content, news media have employed a series of evolving file formats and technical infrastructures, many of which are now – or may soon be – obsolete. All born-digital content has proven to be fragile: susceptible to bit rot, media failures and human-caused and natural disasters.

There are a number of challenges in this area: the enormity of the amount of content, or data, that is being generated, the disparate nature of news content formats, numerous barriers to acquisition, the need for better discovery systems and a general lack of understanding about the urgent need to save this content. These and other challenges place a large percentage of the world’s news content at significant risk.

In April 2011, the Newspaper Archive Summit, held at the Reynolds Journalism Institute in Columbia, Missouri, convened a diverse group of stakeholders with the purpose of having a conversation about how to ensure the preservation of newspaper content for future generations. In late 2014 or early 2015, we will convene a follow-up conference, “Dodging the Memory Hole: Saving Born-Digital News Content” narrowing the focus on born digital news. The goal is to produce an actionable plan to manage this irreplaceable content.

In an effort to inform this group’s work, we plan to learn more about how producers of born digital news manage content in today’s new media landscape. To accomplish this, we are conducting a research study of both legacy and online only news organizations, asking them:

- About the content they create: types and formats
- Whether their digital content is stored, backed up and accessible
- Who, in their organization, makes preservation decisions
- If they transfer digital content to memory institutions
- What risk factors threaten digital content loss
- What barriers to digital preservation they face and
- If they already have or plan to create digital preservation policies

The results of the survey, which we will share at the IFLA Newspaper Section satellite meeting, should assist in informing our conversations at the “Memory Hole” conference and provide opportunities for collaboration and pathways to action.

Biographies:

Frederick Zarndt has worked with historic and contemporary newspaper, journal, magazine, book, and records digitisation since computer speeds, software, technology, storage, and costs first made it practical. He worked with the Library of Congress on its pilot implementation of the NDNP National Digital Newspaper Program (2003), with the University of Utah since the beginning of its newspaper digitisation program (2002), with the New Zealand National Library on its Papers Past and Parliamentary Papers digitisation projects (2006), with Singapore National Library Board on its historic and born digital newspapers conversion projects (2006), with the National Library of Australia and with the State Library of Victoria on the Australian Newspapers Digitisation Program (2008), and with many other institutions both small and large. Frederick has experience in every aspect of digitisation projects including project requirements development, project management, conversion operations (both in-house and outsourced), acceptance testing, and software development for production and delivery of digital data.

Frederick is current secretary of the IFLA Newspapers Section. He presently works as technical, business development, and sales consultant for Digital Divide Data (since 2008), Content Conversion Specialists (since 2005), and DL Consulting (since 2001). Previously he was President of Planman Consulting North America, a subsidiary company to Planman Technologies. Until 2005 he was Chief Technology Officer and one of the co-founders of iArchives / Footnote. While CTO at iArchives, his engineering team created a custom genealogical records data entry application for FamilySearch.org, which is today used by over 780,000 "crowdsourced" volunteers worldwide. Frederick has 25+ years experience in software development and is a member of ACM and IEEE and a Certified Software Development Professional (CSDP). He is also a member of ALA, IFLA, and SLA. Frederick has Master's Degrees in Computer Science and Physics.

Dorothy Carner has been seeking digital news preservation solutions since becoming the head of the Journalism libraries at the University of Missouri, home of the world's first and highly ranked school of journalism. Tasked with leadership in the redesign of a traditional library space into a collaborative space for digital media creation, she provides resource, collection and instructional support for the teaching and research needs of the Journalism School's faculty and students. She also oversees the staff and work of the newspaper library.

Shortly before joining MU Libraries, the Columbia Missourian newspaper library (the other library in journalism libraries collective) experienced a server crash resulting in a major loss of digital archival content. Carner was asked to create a plan to manage this plus the analog and digital content created by the Missouri School of Journalism, its media outlets, and the Reynolds Journalism Institute. It was this issue that prompted the cross-disciplinary work of faculty on the Mizzou Advantage Dark Archives Networking Project, one of the sponsors of the first Newspaper Archive Summit, held at the Reynolds Journalism Institute (2011). With so many newspapers failing

or going out of business, this group was concerned about the loss of communities' cultural records if newspapers, both analog and digital, failed to maintain accessible archives. As P.I. on the project, Carner worked to create a network of diverse and influential stakeholders (news producers, scholars, vendors, historical memory/stewardship organizations, genealogists, and digital curators) interested in this issue. Conference participants represented 3 countries, 18 states and 34 cities. Carner's global interest in journalism, news content, digital humanities, archives, and open access repositories, has taken her to university libraries and journalism programs in Belgium (Brussels, Liege and Ghent in 2010), Dublin (Trinity College, 2011), and the 2012 IFLA Satellite Meeting in Mikkeli, Finland, where she presented a paper. In 2013, Carner successfully lobbied the Missouri School of Journalism and MU Libraries to establish a new Digital Curator for Journalism position to expand on the previous efforts to build a global collaborative network interested in digital news preservation. Edward McCain, who is actively working on Summit II and plans for a journalism digital news archive (J-DNA), recently joined MU in this position.

Before coming to MU, Carner was the Business Librarian at the University of Texas at Austin. She has been a member of ALA, SLA (Business & Finance and News Divisions) and with MU Libraries is a new member of the NDSA Content Working Group. She holds a BS and MS in Biology and Education from Missouri State University and an MLIS from the University of Texas at Austin.

Edward McCain As Digital Curator of Journalism at the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri, Edward McCain directs the Journalism Digital News Archive (JDNA) initiative. JDNA is responding to the disruptions in the journalistic ecosystem caused by the transition to digital creation, content management and distribution. Based on the BUILD Initiative, JDNA is designed to advance solutions to preserving born-digital news content through the lens of a systems change model. McCain works with faculty and students at the Missouri School of Journalism to test and refine the practical application of the ideas developed in JDNA. Current projects include testing open source software in the Columbia Missourian newsroom and developing new models for access to and preservation of born-digital news content. Prior to his position at RJJ/MU, McCain worked at the Center for Creative Photography to facilitate the implementation of a new Collection Management System and to synchronize embedded image metadata with the new CMS. He also optimized workflow activities in the imaging department and helped align imaging output with FADGI guidelines.

An experienced photojournalist and entrepreneur, McCain has expertise in project management, software development, digital preservation, photography, digital asset management and digital/photochemical imaging. He holds a Bachelor of Journalism degree from the Missouri School of Journalism and a Master of Arts degree in Information Resources and Library Science as well as a Certificate in Digital Information Management from the University of Arizona.