



Access in the Future Tense

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About the Authors

Daniel Greenstein is University of California university librarian for systemwide library planning and scholarly information and executive director of the California Digital Library. Before joining UC, he was director of the Digital Library Federation and founding director of two networked information services working on behalf of universities and colleges in the United Kingdom. He holds degrees from the Universities of Pennsylvania and Oxford and began his career as a senior lecturer in history at the University of Glasgow.

Bill Ivey is the Harvie Branscomb Distinguished Visiting Scholar at Vanderbilt University and Director of the Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy at Vanderbilt. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Center for Arts & Culture, a Washington, D.C. think tank. Bill serves as Facilitator for Leadership Music, a music industry professional development program, and chairs the board of the National Recording Preservation Foundation, a federally-chartered foundation affiliated with the Library of Congress. From 1998 to 2001, he was Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. Prior to government service, he was director of the Country Music Foundation in Nashville, Tennessee. He was twice National Chairman of the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (NARAS), and is a four-time Grammy nominee. His book about America's endangered twentieth century cultural heritage will be published by the University of California

Press in the fall of 2004.

Anne R. Kenney is the associate university librarian for instruction, research, and information services at Cornell University Library. She is responsible for public services, preservation, the library annex, the Asia special collections, instruction and learning, research, and the Africana, Fine Arts, and Music libraries. Anne has written extensively on digital imaging and preservation. She is the co-author of three award-winning monographs and more than 50 articles and reports. She is the past president and a fellow of the Society of American Archivists and currently serves on the Joint Committee on Cuban Libraries and Archives.

Brian Lavoie is a Research Scientist in the Office of Research at OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc. Since joining OCLC in 1996, he has worked on projects in many areas, including bibliographic control, harvesting and analysis of Web-accessible resources, and digital preservation. Brian's current research interests include the economics of digital preservation, metadata requirements for the long-term retention of digital materials, and e-books. Brian holds a master's degree in economics and is completing his doctorate. He has published and given talks in both the library/information science and economics communities.

Abby Smith is the director of programs at the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) in Washington, D.C. She joined CLIR in 1997 to develop and manage collaborative work with library and archival institutions to ensure long-term access to our cultural and intellectual heritage. Before that, she worked at the Library of Congress, first as a consultant to the special collections research divisions, then coordinating several cultural and academic programs. She holds degrees in history and literature from Harvard University and has taught at Harvard and Johns Hopkins Universities. Her recent publications include: *Strategies for Building Digitized Collections*; *The Evidence in Hand: Report of the Task Force on the Artifact in Library Collections*; and *Authenticity in the Digital Environment*.

Introduction

As we move into the twenty-first century, libraries, archives, and other collecting institutions—our primary stewards of information resources for education and research—are facing unprecedented challenges to collect, describe, and serve materials. A primary challenge is posed by the growth of information and the diversity of its formats. A second challenge—of equal, if not greater, concern—is how to preserve the expanding number of

increasingly fragile resources to which users demand quick and convenient access. Twentieth-century recording media, from film to sound to digital file, are able to hold greater amounts of information than the print-on-paper resources libraries have been designed to collect and serve. These new media make more information readily accessible, but they pose serious challenges to its long-term use.

The ways in which we have defined the problems of preservation in the print-on-paper domain, and the solutions we have designed to address those problems, are largely irrelevant to other media and formats. Print-preservation strategies are based on fixing information to a stable medium and on having ownership as well as physical possession of the materials. Other media—moving image, recorded sound, digital simulations, and so forth—are simply not amenable to these strategies.

Libraries and archives are grappling with these complexities in a rapidly changing environment characterized by new distribution mechanisms, expanding copyright monopolies, ever-greater technology dependencies, and changing user expectations. It is therefore not surprising that a recent survey report by Anne Kenney and Deirdre Stam¹ concludes that library preservation programs are not keeping pace with these changes and may even be losing ground.

To gain a better understanding of how this situation has come about and what can be done to reverse it, the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) organized an invitational conference in May 2003. The purpose of the conference was to examine the key factors shaping the information environment in which libraries operate and how these factors will affect stewardship of the cultural and intellectual resources vital to education and research. Scholars, library directors, university administrators, publishers, collectors, and representatives from the legal and preservation communities came together to explore the challenges posed by the shifting information landscape and to propose directions that can be taken by all in research and education who have an interest in the well-being of research and cultural heritage collections.

To frame the discussion, CLIR asked four experts to address key features of the changing landscape. Their papers are presented here, prefaced by a brief overview of the information landscape and followed by a concluding essay on the implications of their findings.

Daniel Greenstein of the California Digital Library looks at the changing behaviors and preferences of users, especially users of print collections within the University of California system, and proposes changes necessary for maintaining responsible stewardship of those collections. Anne Kenney

of Cornell University Libraries examines the pressures that new information technologies are placing on organizations traditionally charged with stewardship. She suggests how organizations and their staffs should retool their strategic approaches to preservation. Bill Ivey of the Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy at Vanderbilt University addresses the incorporation of nonprint materials into libraries and archives and argues for a series of changes in the policy environment that will encourage good stewardship on the part of both copyright owners and institutions with a preservation mission. Finally, Brian Lavoie of OCLC examines through the lens of an economist the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholder communities concerned with long-term access. His analysis of the costs of archiving and of who bears these costs underscores just how fragile is the business model that preservation institutions have relied on for years.

Each speaker was rejoined by a respondent, and the valuable insights of Wendy Lougee (University of Minnesota), Paula Kaufman (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Annette Melville (National Film Preservation Foundation), and Winston Tabb (Johns Hopkins University) are incorporated into the concluding essay. While most of the discussions initially focused on libraries and special collecting organizations attached to research and teaching institutions, the implications of the trends being discussed for museums, historical societies, and, above all, archives were frequently identified.

Before we can identify and promote practical solutions to any serious challenge, we must thoroughly understand its nature. The ultimate value of the conference discussions was, therefore, in some sense diagnostic. For example, discussions at the conference made it clear that the pressures on preservationists extend far beyond those associated with the physical preservation of media. The primary obstacles are economic and legal; they are not limited to the overwhelming scale of information production, challenging as that alone might be.

Discussions of preservation are seldom wholly separated from those of access, but it is remarkable the extent to which people who are not professionally involved in preservation or conservation talk about preservation exclusively in terms of access. This meeting was no exception. Whenever the subject of institutional commitment to the preservation mission arose, the word *preservation* was used infrequently. That may be quite understandable in the digital context, but it was also true when reference was made to artifactual collections, at least those that are not rare or unique. What will happen to the preservation mission of libraries or archives when they will not have to preserve materials in order to provide access? How do we prevent preservation from being further marginalized within these institutions?

Drawing on the discussions and the questions they raised, the concluding essay is a sober attempt to identify all factors that determine the abilities of libraries to ensure long-term access, both internal to the library and external.

By publishing this report, CLIR hopes to broaden understanding of how creators, publishers, distributors, and information seekers can work more actively with libraries and archives to ensure the usability and accessibility of recorded information into the future. As one presenter after another exhorted us to redefine preservation as an integral part of access, the terms of the debate shifted. The strategic integration of preservation into all phases of information management, from creation to use and reuse, results in "extending the useful life of information," as Anne Kenney phrased it, and requires striking a new balance between the demands of allegiance to the past, access in the present, and accountability to the future.

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The State of Preservation Programs in American College and Research Libraries: Building a Common Understanding and Action Agenda. December 2002. Washington, D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources.

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