



The American Archivist Reviews

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Digitalpreservation.gov

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The “Digital Preservation” website at digitalpreservation.gov is the public face of the Library of Congress’s (LOC) various digital preservation programs. These programs include the National Digital Stewardship Alliance (NDSA), Digital Preservation Outreach and Education (DPOE), and the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP). The many pages on this site contain a great deal of content written by different individuals, but all is vetted and supported by the LOC. All of the site pages are .gov, and the main site does not link out to any non-government domain. The content is not cutting edge or new research, but rather provides an overview and introduction to digital preservation, best practices and standards, and the activities of the LOC in its promotion of digital preservation.

The general public and archivists with no digital knowledge will find basic steps and direction on the “[Personal Archiving](#)” page under the “Preserving Your Digital Memories” section. Instruction is given for handling digital photographs, audio and video, email, personal records, and websites. The information is provided in small, easy to digest chunks, and with the options of viewing material on the webpage, in PDF format, or in video clips. Slightly more advanced information is provided on the [DPOE](#) pages. Because the DPOE curriculum is very scalable, the concepts can be applied to personal archives and large archives equally. This flexibility is reflected on the website itself: the Personal Archiving steps are based on the DPOE steps, and the DPOE page expands upon this curriculum and points to more advanced training and events.

For active digital archives practitioners, perhaps the most useful section is the “Resources” list found on the home page, on the left-hand sidebar. Included are [Digital Formats Sustainability](#), [Federal Agencies Digitization Guidelines Initiative](#) (FADGI) (for digitization guidelines), [Preservation and Conservation at the LOC](#), [Section 108 Study Group](#) (for copyright issues), [Standards at the LOC](#), and [Web Archiving at the LOC](#). “The Resources” section is a short but comprehensive list of documents that have been adopted or created by the LOC. This section does not attempt to explain all of the theory, case studies, and history of digital preservation, but points to useful tools for those practitioners who already have some fluency in this area. I would include the “[Tools Showcase](#)” section in this list of indispensable resources. The list is a handy short cut to the most current and useful tools in the digital preservationist's arsenal.

The materials on hosting a [Personal Digital Archiving Day](#), found on the [Personal Archiving](#) page, offer resources for professionals who wish to do outreach and education on digital preservation. The materials include everything from posters to planning to curriculum and worksheets; everything needed to put on a Personal Digital Archiving Day program at within an institution or community. Interestingly, this information could also be applied to any content creator of personal archives, such as donors of manuscript or community archives.

The site is very well documented. One can find administrative information for all of the working groups and initiatives, including mission and current work, past documents and meeting minutes, and activities. For example, the [National Digital Stewardship Residency](#) and the [National Digital Stewardship Alliance](#) pages include all of this information, plus an "About" page and an FAQ. Interested parties can keep up to date with the activities of the LOC while also assessing the accountability of this government agency.

Among the vast amount of information and instruction on the site, there are a few items that stand out. "[The Signal](#)" blog is updated nearly every day by various authors, and is a fantastic way to begin to learn about the field. The posts are fairly short, and comments are few enough to read. The [DPOE calendar](#) offers a quick look at what training and workshops are available, when, where, and at what cost. A fun item is the two links to past incarnations of the website, listed under Digital Preservation Web Archive. These links show the [Library of Congress Web Archives](#) for the site and on the [Internet Archive Wayback Machine](#).

With all of this information comes housekeeping issues. The site is not very cohesive. For example, the link to NDIP resolves back to digitalpreservation.gov. The sidebars match some, but not all, of the front-page headings. And, some of the information about DPOE is out of date (for example, the participants' contact information). However, this may be a side effect of the constant updates and growth of the site. The non-linear display of information reflects the changing landscape of digital preservation, and of digital preservation at the LOC. As new initiatives and their activities are recorded on the website, the layout and content necessarily changes organically. This slight messiness is a small price to pay for the vast amount of information available on the site.

The LOC has done a great job of providing information across various aspects of the field of digital preservation, including digitization and born digital preservation. The site also appeals to professionals of all backgrounds and expertise, with beginning information and introduction as well as advanced information and pointers to instruction in the various areas and aspects of the field. Plus, the site has a 'fun' feel to it, with the blog, Facebook and twitter feeds, and the Wayback Machine link. This is a strong site, and corralling the field of digital preservation into one site is really quite a feat! It may take a few visits to get a feel for the digitalpreservation.gov site, and to discover what information it has to offer that is applicable to you, but overall it will be well worth the effort.