

Social Media Preservation in Times of Change: A Workflow and Policy Analysis Case-Study at Towson University's Archives

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Abstract

The archival profession is witnessing a concerted effort to preserve the web in the current political climate. The retirement of the Albert S. Cook Library's X account and move to Bluesky exposed an opportunity for Towson University's Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) to reassess our social media preservation procedures. SCUA currently utilizes Archive-It as its web-crawling tool; however, it has been inconsistent with social media capture. We are investigating other tools for crawling, direct content download, or consistent capture as a preservation practice. Our case study seeks to evaluate how our archives can best gauge its capacity for social media preservation and how we determine "good" sustainable practices amidst platform evolution, retirement, and migration.

The TU Digital Archivist and Associate for Digital Initiatives will present their work-in-progress reassessment of the social media preservation workflow and policy development. Their presentation will cover 1) the political context surrounding web archives and our library's response 2) our process for demoing web capture products 3) proposal for a social media preservation policy that accounts for the accessibility implications of such media and its relevance for a diverse group of researchers.

About the authors:

Jasmine S. Malone (she/her) began her role as Archivist for Digital Collections and Research at Towson University in 2025. Her primary focus in this new role is to develop a robust digital preservation program for TU's Albert S. Cook Library. She has published research on the university archives student experience and continues to educate herself on emerging practices and research including as an Advisory Board member for an IMLS funded research project on student engagement in the archives.

Emiel Brown (they/them) has worked in public libraries, museums, and university archives before taking on the role of Library Associate for Digital Initiatives at Towson University two years ago. At TU's Special Collections and University Archives, they work to digitize materials from the university's physical archives, as well as working with born-digital materials and faculty publications, to make these resources accessible to a wider audience through SCUA's digital collections website. They are interested in the potential of digital tools to make museum and archival materials more accessible to a wider audience and to reveal new connections between different collections.