

[As] Long [as possible] Term Access: Archiving and Accessibility for Personal Image Collections

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Abstract: Faculty, researchers, and staff within academic and research communities have amassed large quantities of images, in both analog and digital formats, that document a range potentially significant research, field work, and documentation of institutional activities. Most of these collections have been managed by these individuals and have not been part of an institution's curation programs. As retirements, deaths, and departures loom, creators and institutions face a daunting task of determining the content to keep and the level and duration of appropriate access.

Observation and experience has suggested that this content may be unexplored secondary value and yet there has been no institutional means for managing and sharing these assets. In many cases, these assets would overwhelm the resources of archives and yet archivists can assist with developing solutions for this problem.

This poster will pose questions and suggest a framework to investigate the issues related to long-term access to personal image collections from the perspective of creators and possible archival inheritors by testing the application of proven archival appraisal methods to this image content. What might the role of the archives be in this scenario? The poster session will provide an opportunity to discuss these ideas, frame the questions and refine the methodology for the project. The goal of this research project is to inform decision-making at institutions that are faced with this impending wave of images and for assisting creators in ensuring the longevity of their work.

About the author:

Kari Smith is responsible for oversight, management, and supervision of the Visual Resources Collections and Media Services for the Art History department at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. After joining the department in 2007, she managed the successful transformation of the collections in support of faculty shifting from teaching with analog slides to primarily digital images. She serves on the LSA College Dean's Instructional Support Services Council and is engaged with the LSA Collections Management initiative to provide institutional support for collections that fall outside of the curatorial responsibilities of archives, libraries, and museums. Kari's work and research interests center on digital object management and access, particularly with cultural materials. She is an instructor with the Digital Preservation Management Workshops as well as the workshop series Project Manager. She has been a consultant for faculty-created digital and analog image collections, records management and archives issues to wineries and vineyards in New York and Michigan, and for digital library systems implementation in Guatemala. She is an avid mystery reader, loves to sing, and travels as often as she can.