

DIRECTOR'S BRIEF

PERSONAL DIGITAL ARCHIVING

Christine Caldwell | INFO 287: Hyperlinked Library Fall 2020

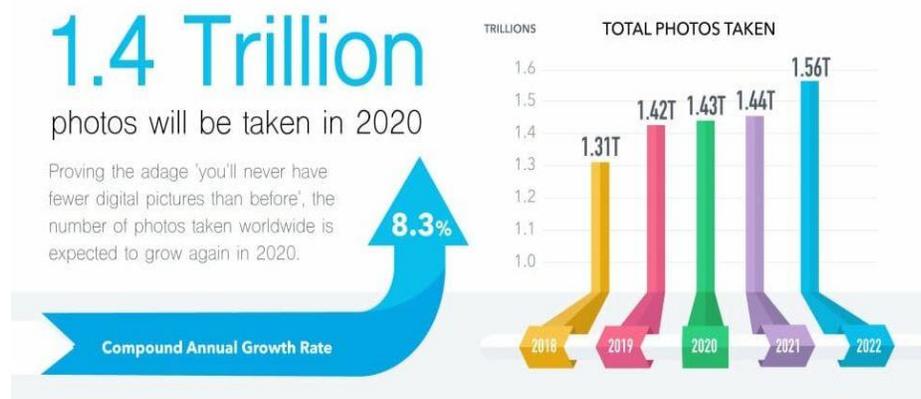


OBJECTIVE

To create a 'getting started' program for teens, adults and senior library patrons about the importance of personal digital archiving [PDA]. The emphasis will center around common digital born data created, threats, basic workflow ideas, and personal/community uses. If initial pilot program is popular, considerations will be made for repeating the event as well as expanding upon different topics associated with for more intermediate and advanced level patrons. Possible future expansion can focus on the oral histories with the aid of the StoryCorps mobile app and be included to local archives. Examples of existing PDA programs will be provided as well.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

'Personal digital archiving consists of saving and archiving digital materials and managing them so they will be available for future use.' (Brown, 2015) Since the turn the of the century a call to arms was raised about the threats and preservation of digital materials. The public is creating personal digital content at an alarming rate. Keypoint Intelligence reports that humanity will take 1,436,300,000,000 photographs in 2020 and estimate that number will rise 8.3% for 2021. (Mylio & Keypoint Intelligence/InfoTrends, 2020) The Library of Congress [LC] has long recognized this issue and has created vast resources to aid the public in this endeavor to promote and educate PDA. Public libraries teach literacy skills and PDA should be a staple of digital literacy skills at every public library. It's not enough to just offer the basics of PDA but a deeper dive into intermediate level material of PDA is needed as well throughout the year. Possibly multiple events should coincide with the American Library Association's [ALA] Preservation Week April 25 – May 1, 2021 as well as throughout the year. 2020 ALA preservation week focused on the popular theme of oral histories.



[Mylio](#)



INTRODUCTION

Most public libraries have developed many opportunities for their patrons that promote curiosity, creativity and lifelong learning as well as being a community hub for knowledge and information. The Library of Congress [LC] has laid the groundwork by providing a vast amount of helpful resources available for the public's PDA needs. The LC realizes their limitations of their geographic location, confusing technical information and online engagement can only do so much. Through past multiple outreach sessions with the public they realized face to face interaction is a missing valuable component for educating the public and this gap can be facilitated by local libraries throughout the country.



A NATIONAL APPROACH TO DIGITAL PRESERVATION

Congress appropriated \$100 million dollars for the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program [NDIIPP] which is led by the LC in 2000. This program was the development of national approach to digital preservation led by the LC and other federal agencies to service multiple stakeholders.

The NDIIPP strategy was three pronged: supporting and funding projects and programs that built a network of committed partners, establishing an infrastructure that would be modular and flexible for a variety of digital preservation steward organizations, and identifying and preserving at-risk born-digital content of value to the Nation. NDIIPP led the formation and seeding of a digital preservation network by investing \$30 million in grants and partnerships into over 320 institutions across the United States, managed a number of Programs focused on community building and education and training, along with facilitating information and knowledge exchange among thought-leaders, practitioners and learners in digital preservation. This work was carried out through a variety of initiatives. While NDIIPP is no longer an active program at the Library of Congress, its success is evident in the diverse and mature digital preservation community that

is now thriving in the United States. The Library of Congress, through NDIIPP, managed three programs that are now hosted and administered at other institutions. These include the National Digital Stewardship Alliance (NDSA), Digital Preservation Outreach and Education (DPOE), and the National Digital Stewardship Residency (NDSR).’ (Library of Congress, 2020) In 2018, LC has passed the DPOE program over to Pratt University and NYU Tisch School of the Arts to oversee. ‘The program advances the practice of digital preservation by fostering collaborative professional development opportunities that empower individuals with hands-on experience in the field and provides institutions with a stream of fresh digital talent.’ (Pratt, 2018)



Important for you and everyone



‘The Society of American Archivist (SAA) defines personal digital archiving as the practice of preserving one’s own digital records of continuing value.’ (Sandy & Ivester, 2016) Our physical personal artifacts and mementos we want to pass down like a shoe box of old letters and photographs are more durable than our digital artifacts that are created today. They do not require hardware and software to view, share or save them. The LC identifies the most common digital possessions as audio, video, photographs, documents and websites. This digital content is made up of a binary language that can only be accessed through software and hardware unless in some cases a physical object is printed out. It is vulnerable and needs special care to keep it accessible for your family or possibly the community. If left alone, that shoebox scenario could outlast neglected digital content. Common threats could be the hardware where the digital content resides is lost, damaged, deleted, overuse or becomes obsolete. Obsolescence is a huge problem where the digital material can be trapped because of an unreadable medium due to an older format. The company who is housing the digital content could have an equipment failure, security breach, devastating event, or go out of business. The inaction by the digital creator saying I will do it later is another issue to contend with. That is why we need to make the public understand these threats to their digital content and how public libraries can guide them in starting their own PDA.



Developing a PDA Workshop

There are numerous articles, books, webinars, websites and conference proceedings to help with this preparation. The library staff need to determine some initial information about who their audience is to begin workshop design. This will help structure the workshop as to

what information will need to be covered and keep the information target focused as to not overwhelm or bore the audience. It is also helpful to anticipate what questions the audience might ask as well as how people currently store their digital content. Think about their motives for maintaining a PDA as well as the barriers. Money and time are the most common challenges for a PDA. Public libraries can usually provide access to computers to work on PDA projects. However external hard drives for backing up and managing digital content can be expensive for some patrons and may hinder their progress.



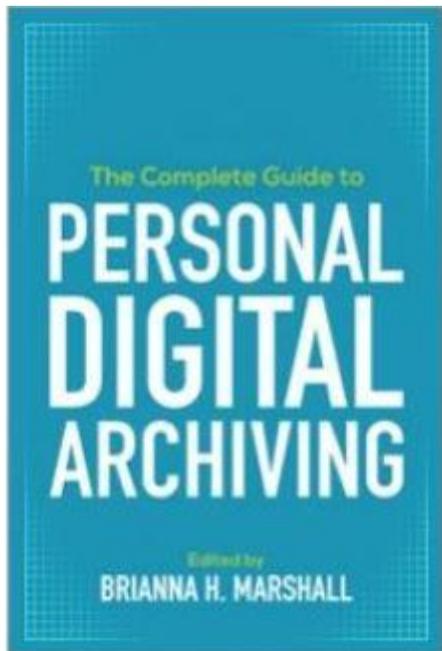
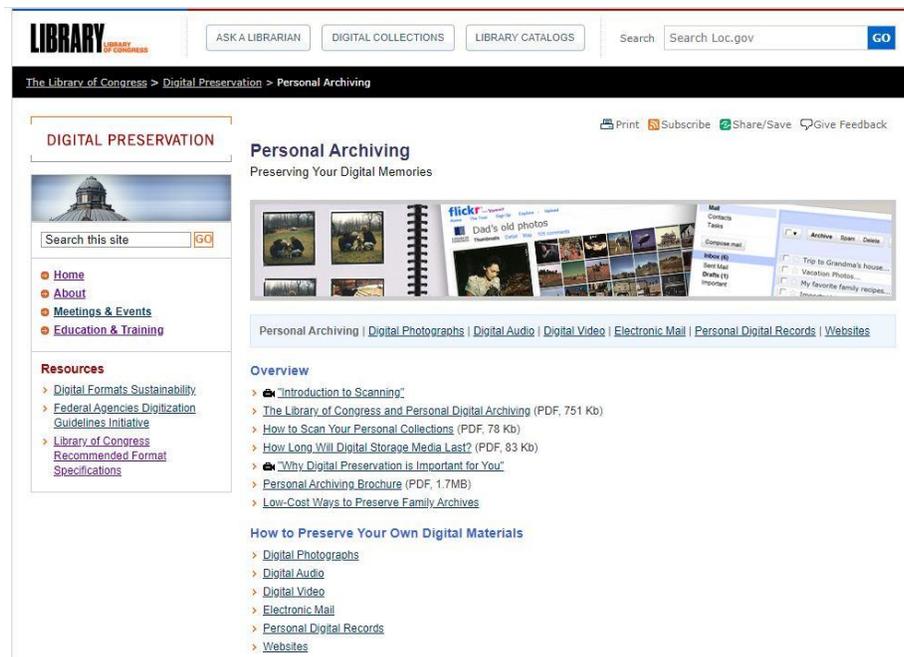
Simple Steps of PDA

The LC has developed a proven institutional model for preservation that can be applied to personal digital archiving. The basic principles correlate with all common digital procession listed above and the steps and terminology have been simplified for better digestion. First: one must locate everything that needs to be saved. There may be files on old disks, laptops, phones, camera cards, etc. Second: prioritize and decide what needs to be kept. Weed through for the keepers and delete unnecessary files. Third: organize the files to make them findable later with descriptive names and file folders. Any system of organization with a little consistency or predictability would suffice. Fourth: Save copies in different places and manage the collection. 3/2/1 system is suggested. This involves making THREE copies of the original, on TWO different types of storage devices and save ONE in a different location. Fifth: keep actively managing your collection by test opening files and migrating your archive to different media every 5-7 years.



Trusted Resources: To Get Started

The LC has pages of information on their website such as an overview, how to pdf's/videos, PDA archiving day kits, visual aids, events, blogs, and podcasts. As well as individual PDA topics such as digital photographs, digital audio, digital video, electronic mail, personal digital records and websites.



ALA Resources & ALCTS Webinars

- [Personal Digital Archiving Webinar](#)
- [Hosting a Personal Digital Archiving Day Event Webinar](#)

Preservation Week 2020 webinars

<http://www.ala.org/alcts/preservationweek/webinars>

- [Using Oral History to Tell Your Family Stories](#)
- [Community Archiving Strategies for Oral History](#)

ALA Preservation Week (website)

<http://www.ala.org/alcts/preservationweek>



Free Technological Teaching Tools

According to the LC, the most popular digital materials that the public wants to save are digital photos. Cost is a common obstacle for PDA. A possible temporary solution is free online cloud-based applications like Mylio and Google photos. They are a good file management tool for patrons who lack funds for an external hard drive. This is a temporary solution and they may encounter fees after a certain file amount is achieved. For example, Mylio is free up to 25,000 images. Users will be able to access their images from any computer or device.



[Tour Mylio App](#)



[StoryCorps Mobile App](#)

'...Oral histories allow us to tell the story of the powerless and the marginalized—those who are all too often left out.' (Shaffer, 2016) Librarian Anji Brenner spoke about live storytelling events at the Mill Valley Public library as '...the voice of the living, breathing people in a particular place, in a particular time.' (Stephens, 2019) Oral histories are gaining popularity and was the ALA theme for 2020 Preservation Week. Patrons interested in preserving family memories in the form of digital audio files may want to try the StoryCorps app. 'StoryCorps mission is to preserve and share humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world. (StoryCorps, 2020) These oral histories are permanently preserved at the LC. This great teaching tool gets the user thinking about the end-product by preparing them for the interview. The easy to use recording app allows you to enter names of the participants, set an estimated time limit, choose from prewritten questions to help guide the interview as well as capture and connect a photo to the interview. (Shaffer, 2016)

Established Programs and Community Archive Examples

[Memory Lab DC Public Library](#) – DIY lab that provides equipment for digitizing home movies and scanning photographs and slides.

[Memory Lab Los Angeles Public Library](#) – Provides tools, workshops and resources to preserve the unique community history through DIY memory lab and mobile memory lab program. Oral histories and photo archive project - Shades of LA: A search for Visual Ethnic History



[LAPL: Shades of LA](#)



[Migration Is Beautiful Project](#)



Iowa Women's Archives – [Mujeres Latinas Project](#) to preserve the history of the Iowa Latinas, their families and their communities. Includes: digitized artifacts, photos and oral histories

[Brooklyn Public Library](#) – Our street our stories [oral histories collection of the local members of the community]

[Library.witness.org](#) – A library of free resources for video activist, trainers and their allies

[Flickr #Black Lives Matter Group](#) – Photo sharing group that promotes the BLM activist movement through photography.

[Berkelycopwatch.org](#) – Eye-witness accounts and videos made by ordinary citizens who created a people database for police accountability by documenting interactions with local police



Conclusion:

Librarians need continue the work of the LC and help the public with their first steps into PDA. This report has defined PDA, identified risks, simplified the basic procedures, provided background, presented challenges/barriers, suggested technological teaching tools, established programs/ community archive examples and multiple resources to get a PDA program started at your local library. ALA's Preservation Week April 25- May 1, 2021 which is right around the corner. It's never too late to start planning for next year.



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