

<sup>2</sup> Safiya Umoja Noble, *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism* (New York: New York University Press, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Noble, *Algorithms of Oppression*, 138.

---

## Partners for Preservation: Advancing Digital Preservation through Cross-Community Collaboration

Edited by Jeanne Kramer-Smyth. London: Facet Publishing, 2019. 240 pp.  
Softcover and EPUB. \$93.99US, £69.95UK. Softcover ISBN 978-1-78330-347-2;  
EPUB ISBN 978-1-78330-349-6.

While cultural heritage and memory institutions traditionally responsible for saving materials are leading digital preservation efforts, the challenges of digital preservation require the involvement of new stakeholders. These new stakeholders include many organizations and individuals with diverse needs and priorities, including rights holders, lawyers and lawmakers, data scientists, architects, and hardware and software developers. Collaboration with these stakeholders is required to make digital preservation activities effective and to allow programs to mature. The complexities of digital preservation activities and the higher stakes in digital preservation are creating a stimulus for an interdisciplinary approach to digital preservation. *Partners for Preservation: Advancing Digital Preservation through Cross-Community Collaboration* seeks to build bridges between archivists and stakeholders in other professions outside the GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives, and museums) fields to address common issues and struggles inherent in digital preservation. From digital inheritance rights to data visualization, this book builds a compelling case that “Archivists cannot navigate the flood of technology and changes alone” (p. xxii) and should seek mutually beneficial partnerships with other professions to traverse the digital landscape. Archivists must look beyond their profession and identify those in other domains who may also have a stake in building mature and sustainable digital preservation practices and programs.

*Partners for Preservation* is edited by Jeanne Kramer-Smyth, who, after a twenty-year career as a software developer, graduated with an MLS from the University of Maryland College of Information Studies and is currently an electronic records archivist with the World Bank Group Archives. Kramer-Smyth expertly weaves together a multifaceted discussion of digital preservation challenges through the lens of ten subject matter experts whose backgrounds span legal studies, journalism, architecture and design, information security, statistics, and data visualization.

The edited volume consists of ten chapters organized into three sections based on subject matter, each selected by the editor to highlight ten different digital challenges that scholars and practitioners in other professions face. Part 1, “Memory, Privacy and Transparency,” explores the challenges of format-shifting content and the intersection of privacy, access, and the law. Over the course of the first four chapters, authors Edina Harbinja, Paulan Korenhof, Brant Houston, and Ellie Margolis cover such topics as digital inheritance rights and privacy of digital media after death; implications related to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and an individual’s “right to be forgotten”; the history and future of computer-assisted reporting and data analysis; and the precarious nature of persistent present-day legal writing due to link rot and reference rot.

The second section, “The Physical World: Objects, Art and Architecture,” explores the ever-increasing blurred boundaries between the physical and digital worlds. Éireann Leverett opens the section with a chapter surveying the Internet of Things (IoT) and its related issues of privacy, security, proprietary technology, and the accruing risks and benefits associated with “ubiquitous computing.” Abhijit Sarkar, a color scientist, discusses the evolution, challenge, and importance of accurate color reproduction and representation on digital displays. The final chapter in part 2, written by Ju Hyun Lee and Ning Gu, addresses the sharing, preservation, and reuse of historical architectural design data.

The third and final section, “Data and Programming,” relates to nearly all areas of digital preservation, but focuses primarily on privacy considerations related to statistical data, visualizations, and software development, with a strong emphasis on the importance of standards, communication, and careful planning. Chapter 8, “Preparing and Releasing Official Statistical Data,” written by Natalie Shlomo, discusses statistical disclosure limitations (SDL) models used by statistical agencies and official data custodians to ensure the protection and confidentiality of data subjects. In the following chapter, Vetrica Byrd examines the challenges of sharing research data and the ways in which data standards can increase the opportunities for creating and sharing data visualizations. The final chapter in part 3 shifts the lens to open-source software development. Here, Ildikó Vancsa stresses the centrality of communication and coordination required to address the challenges associated with open-source software development, version control, long-term sustainability of open-source software projects, and the central role communication and coordination play to address these challenges.

Overall, the chapters are well written and include a substantial list of references. Relatively jargon free (with a few exceptions), the authors clearly and thoughtfully articulate and convey the risks to digital content and its ultimate preservation that they encounter in their professional domains, while proposing

possible solutions to mitigate the risks presented. Readers who are unfamiliar with a particular topic will not get lost in the narrative, nor will they become experts. They will, however, gain a cursory understanding of a particular topic, allowing them to become conversant. This is important for practitioners responsible for digital preservation activities, because digital preservationists need to be generalists.

The intentional flexibility of the book's design allows chapters to be read individually, by section, in both linear and nonlinear fashions. I appreciate this approach to the volume's structure because it allows readers to peruse the chapter or chapters that interest them without losing the overall theme of the book. Kramer-Smyth seamlessly lends to the book's thematic consistency while engaging with scholars' and practitioners' voices alike. Another strength of the book lies in its subject diversity. The scope of the authors' scholarly contributions provides professionals and practitioners with an abundance of thought-provoking ideas that are both interesting and immediately relevant to archival practice. For example, Harbinja's opening chapter in part 1, "Inheritance of Digital Media," is one of the strongest essays in the book and one of the most thought-provoking for archivists. Harbinja's investigation into how digital assets hosted online by service providers such as Google, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter may be inherited after the death of the creator raises some important questions for archivists to consider. To what extent are archives able to accept digital assets postmortem? Do heirs and estates have legal authority to donate these records? What legal protections exist to ensure postmortem privacy? Archivists will learn from this chapter that it all depends on the legal jurisdiction and platform.

Let there be no mistake, *Partners in Preservation* is not intended to be read as a "how to" guide or to present a one-size-fits-all solution to digital preservation challenges, a message that the editor stresses in her introduction. Instead, Kramer-Smyth's intent for the book is to highlight how "computers and technology affect our ability to preserve information for the future" (p. xxii) and serve as an inspiration to archivists to seek out new collaborative and mutually beneficial partnerships to solve problems, develop tools, and establish best practices that can be used across disciplines and across the world.

Archivists and those responsible for digital preservation will find *Partners for Preservation* useful in that it presents solutions to familiar and relevant challenges, and it emphasizes the importance of cross-domain collaboration. Collaboration is central to an archivist's work, and it has become increasingly more important in preserving digital content. Because digital preservation is expensive, resources are scarce, and digital content is growing in complexity and scale, sharing expertise, ideas, and resources through collaborative partnerships is essential to the success and sustainability of digital preservation. While

leveraging collaborative partnerships to achieve shared outcomes is not a novel concept for archivists, *Partners for Preservation* pushes the concept a little farther and is notable because it stresses the need for a shared community of practice—communication and partnership with others working in and outside of the GLAM fields—to enable the establishment of best practices, tool development, and solutions to challenges that have clear relevance and value throughout the digital community now and in the future.

In answer to the question of whether collaboration should occur between archivists and specialists outside of the GLAM fields, Kramer-Smyth has brought together the voices of many expert contributors to this volume, skillfully weaving a thoughtful and insightful collection in just over 200 pages. *Partners for Preservation* emphasizes digital preservation as a collaborative endeavor and asks archivists to consider how we can partner with scholars and practitioners in other disciplines to solve complicated digital preservation challenges.

© **Krista M. Oldham**  
Clemson University