Library of Congress
Digital Preservation

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Digital Preservation Workshops in Canada and Italy

Staff from the Office of Strategic Initiatives, the service unit of the Library of Congress that oversees the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program, are actively participating in digital preservation meetings, conferences and other events that further the progress of digital preservation initiatives worldwide.

Babak Hamidzadeh, manager for technical development, has attended digital preservation workshops in Vancouver, British Columbia, and Syracuse, Italy.

One workshop was held Feb. 21-24, 2005, as part of InterPARES, the International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems project. [InterPARES (external link)](#) is a multinational, multidisciplinary project that focuses on the preservation of authentic digital content from artistic, scientific and governmental communities.

"The management team of the project, of which I am a member," said Hamidzadeh, "oversees case studies in preservation in different domains. The management team developed methodologies for analysis of the case study results and reviewed status of case studies during this workshop."

A working group comprising archivists and technologists met to develop functional and other software engineering and business process models for management of digital documents. Hamidzadeh and other members began the extensive work necessary to create a model that specifies the scope of preservation activities and their interrelationships.

Another team in the workshop investigated and developed metadata schema for digital preservation. "I participated in joint meetings between the modeling group and the metadata group. The two groups were able to identify commonalities among their projects," he said.

In December 2004, Hamidzadeh was in Italy, also for InterPARES. "This is one of very few efforts that bring together theoreticians and practitioners in digital preservation. It is doing great work in analyzing problems that exist in practice and in providing solutions to the practitioners," he commented. This project is now in its [second phase (external link)](#).

The project addresses three areas of activities in digital archives, namely:

- creation (what some refer to as "produce" in the life-cycle model),
- authenticity, reliability and accuracy of content in digital archives and
- appraisal and preservation.

In addition to the specific committees for each of those activities, there are committees whose work applies to all areas of activity and content types. These "cross-domain teams" include:

- Terminology, a group that creates and maintains dictionaries and a glossary of terms,
- Policy, which answers questions regarding policies and best practices that lead to better and more effective digital preservation strategies,
- Modeling, which develops activity and data models for digital preservation through the life cycle of digital materials, and
- Description, which analyzes existing metadata standards and specifies metadata schema that are necessary for digital preservation.

A case study is the preferred method for investigating digital preservation questions. Researchers, from various archival institutions and disciplines, propose case studies to address the project research questions within a narrow scope of their own activities in their respective institutions. The InterPARES management team then evaluates case-study proposals and accepts or rejects them.

Management team members will collect and analyze the results of the case studies upon their conclusion. Answers to overall project research questions will then be composed, based on results of case studies, and will be reported to the research community.

The Ministry of Culture of Italy is one of the sponsors of the workshop and holds an annual meeting on this project. This workshop was primarily for the management team to review the current status, provide direction and develop plans for the remainder of the project.

Midwinter Meeting of the American Library Association

In January, **Guy Lamolinara**, special assistant for communications, attended the Midwinter Meeting of the American Library Association in Boston. The conference draws approximately 12,000 attendees from across the country and around the world. The Library of Congress for many years has had an exhibit booth during these conferences. There, in the booth's theater space, Library staff make presentations on a variety of topics. Lamolinara spoke about the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program – its history, milestones achieved and where the program is heading.

"The ALA meetings are an excellent opportunity for us to reach a diverse cross section of information professionals from both near and far," said Lamolinara. "The people who attend our presentations run the gamut – from being very familiar with NDIIPP to not having heard of the program itself but being intensely interested in the subject of digital preservation."

International Archiving Web Resources Conference

In November 2004, **Elizabeth Dulabahn**, senior adviser for integration management, and **Martha Anderson**, digital projects manager, traveled to Canberra, Australia, for the International Archiving Web Resources Conference (external link).

Dulabahn's presentation, "The National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program: Future Directions and Relevance to Other Countries," (PPT, 466KB) provided conference attendees with a history of NDIIPP, its activities and the strategy for developing a digital preservation infrastructure. She also spoke of recent achievements, such as the Archive Ingest and Handling Test, the Library of Congress partnership with

the National Science Foundation (NSF) to establish the first [research grants program](#) to specifically address digital preservation and the $14 million [cooperative agreements](#) with eight institutions and their partners to begin building a nationwide digital preservation network.

"I also met with a subgroup of the [International Internet Preservation Consortium (external link)](#) to discuss a user survey to be posted on the [Internet Archive](#) Web site to elicit information about the needs of its users," Dulabahn said. "In addition, I was able to gather excellent information on the Web harvesting work being done in other countries. This will help inform NDIIPP in its Web-harvesting activities."

During that same conference Anderson spoke on ["Thematic Collection of Web Resources"](#) (PDF, 1482KB)." According to Anderson, "The characteristics of high risk of loss and the vastness of the Web challenge organizations seeking to collect cultural heritage content from the Web. Thematic Web archiving was developed as a way to focus on a body of time-sensitive at-risk Web content. The primary advantages of this approach are economies of scale as well as fidelity to some of the essential characteristics of the content as it is presented on the Web.

"The Library of Congress," she continued, "began event-based collections with the U.S. national elections in 2000. Recently, the Library began exploring approaches to building topic-based collections focused on larger public policy themes such as health care and terrorism. There are lessons to be learned from traditional collection policies when considering the best approaches to large-scale Web archiving. New tools are becoming available that promise to aid the difficult task of identifying and selecting sites within a theme."

Joint Information Systems Committee

Finally, **Stephen Griffin**, program director for the Division of Information and Intelligent Systems at the National Science Foundation, traveled to Pittsburgh for discussions regarding collaboration between the Library of Congress and the [Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) (external link)](#). JISC "works with further and higher education by providing strategic guidance, advice and opportunities to use information and communications technology to support teaching, learning, research and administration." Griffin, who is on temporary assignment to the Library of Congress, met with Malcolm Read, secretary of JISC; Norman Wiseman, head of JISC international outreach; Ron Larsen, dean of the School of Information Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh; and Howard Wactlar, vice provost for Research Computing at Carnegie Mellon University. "We discussed a wide range of topics related to United States-United Kingdom global information infrastructure funding and future opportunities for U.S.-U.K. collaboration. JISC is very open and indeed eager to work with the Library of Congress in complementary areas," Griffin said.

Griffin also delivered the inaugural talk for the new University of Pittsburgh-Carnegie Mellon University [Digital Libraries Colloquium Series (external link)](#). It was well attended by faculty and graduate students from both institutions.

"My talk covered a broad range of issues and perspectives on the emergence of the Internet, Web, distributed repositories and digital libraries, emphasizing the historic context and key developments in computing and communications technologies and infrastructure."

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