

PrePARE

Preservation: Promoting Awareness to Researchers

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End of project

July 31, 2012 by [PrePARE team](#) |

We have come to the end of the project. All [documentation](http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/prepare/documents.html) (<http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/prepare/documents.html>) and [outputs](http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/prepare/outputs.html) (<http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/prepare/outputs.html>) are listed on the [PrePARE project pages](http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/prepare/index.html) (<http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/prepare/index.html>). They are also made available through the University Library's [data management](http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/dataman/) (<http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/dataman/>) pages and [Jorum](http://resources.jorum.ac.uk/xmlui/handle/123456789/17127) (<http://resources.jorum.ac.uk/xmlui/handle/123456789/17127>).

There is also a [report](http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/university-library-project-helps-preserve-digital-legacies/) (<http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/university-library-project-helps-preserve-digital-legacies/>) about the project on the Cambridge University Research News website.

Thanks are due to the JISC Digital Infrastructure Programme Manager, Neil Grindley, for his support throughout the project. We would also like to thank Malcolm Raggett (from the DICE project at LSE) and Patricia Sleeman (from the SHARD project, with the Institute of Historical Research) for a fruitful collaboration on some parts of this project.

We are also very grateful for support received from our colleagues in Cambridge. We would like to thank staff from Cambridge University Library, CARET, CRASSH, the Graduate Development Programme and the Medical Library for providing feedback on drafts and resources. Particular thanks go to Emma Coonan, Research Skills & Development Librarian for allowing us to run our training modules within the course Research Skills Programme.

We would like to give special thanks to the researchers, students, and support service staff who contributed to the requirements gathering phase, provided feedback to materials that we created and who attended the training courses that we piloted.

Comments on this blog are now closed. If you have any questions, please contact the DSpace@Cambridge team: support@repository.cam.ac.uk (<mailto:support@repository.cam.ac.uk>).

Posted in [Reporting](#) | Tagged [digital preservation](#), [University Library](#) |

PrePARE checklists

July 17, 2012 by [PrePARE team](#) |

Our interviews showed that some researchers would like guidance in the following areas:

- IPR (particularly journal publishers' agreements and funders' requirements for deposit)
- Sharing data (particularly social media, personal and sensitive data)
- Selection of material for disposal or retention.

Some researchers said they have little time to attend training and would prefer brief written resources – including online. There is already a wealth of information on the Incremental project Data Management website, so the PrePARE project wanted to point to and increase use of this resource.

We have developed three new checklists to help with the areas listed above and to prompt readers to check the Data Management site for more information. Each checklist takes a slightly different approach:

- 'Is it yours?' (IPR) (http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/dataman/resources/PrePARE_IPR_checklist.pdf) features a table which shows the range of material for which copyright might need to be cleared and shows that permission must be obtained for each specific type of use
- 'Can we share and re-use personal or sensitive research data?' (http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/dataman/resources/PrePARE_sharing_checklist.pdf) links to Ethics policies and advice from the UK Data Archive on consent
- 'Selecting what to keep and what to bin' (http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/dataman/resources/PrePARE_selection_retention_checklist.pdf) has been divided into two sections, starting with things that should be kept for legal/research reasons. The second section raises issues which might prevent reuse – and therefore reduce the point of retaining material.

Advice has been sought from specialists at the University of Cambridge, including the Solicitor / Copyright Officer, Information Compliance Officer, Deputy Keeper of the University Archives and the Research Skills Librarian. The drafts have also been evaluated by a small number of researchers and revised in line with their comments. We are very grateful to everyone for their very useful suggestions – and positive comments.

Posted in [Resources](#) | Tagged [checklists](#), [consent](#), [copyright](#), [IPR](#), [retention](#), [selection](#), [sharing](#) |

PrePARE training modules

June 25, 2012 by [PrePARE team](#) |

In the PrePARE project, we were particularly interested in how members of the research community would like to receive additional information and training. Many interviewees said they were not likely to attend training courses on digital preservation. However, many digital

preservation issues fit in well with areas where training courses do exist, such as Information Management, Reference Management or Project Management. In discussion with other projects in the same JISC funding strand, it was proposed that rather than producing a single training course we would produce short training modules which can be slotted into other related courses which are run at the University. We selected four key areas of digital preservation:

- Storage ('Store It Safely')
- Documentation and metadata ('Explain It')
- Data sharing and re-use ('Share It')
- Planning ('Start Early')

For each module, we prepared slides, and detailed explanatory notes that could be used as a script, which provide more examples and context. While the intention was that each module should last around 5 minutes, they run closer to 10 minutes. Each module is designed so that it can be used independently of the others. A further module ('What is data?') provides a brief introduction to data to give some additional context.

We piloted the modules during the *Managing your Information* workshop at the University Library in June 2012. The workshop consists of two 2-hour sessions. Attendees came from a range of disciplinary backgrounds, including Arts, Social Sciences and Sciences. For the pilot, our aims were:

1. To test the concept of having distinct modules embedded into an existing course, from both delivery and participant perspectives.
2. To gather feedback on the content of the modules from participants.

Overall, the modules integrated well with the main workshop, and the feedback on the modules was positive.

The modules will be deposited in [Jorum \(http://www.jorum.ac.uk/\)](http://www.jorum.ac.uk/) and are currently available on Slideshare:

- [What is data? \(http://www.slideshare.net/dspace_cam/what-is-data-13381732\)](http://www.slideshare.net/dspace_cam/what-is-data-13381732)
- [Explain It \(http://www.slideshare.net/dspace_cam/prepare-explain-it\)](http://www.slideshare.net/dspace_cam/prepare-explain-it)
- [Store It Safely \(http://preparecambridge.wordpress.com/2012/03/26/knowledge-exchange-event/\)](http://preparecambridge.wordpress.com/2012/03/26/knowledge-exchange-event/)
- [Share It \(http://www.slideshare.net/dspace_cam/prepare-share-it\)](http://www.slideshare.net/dspace_cam/prepare-share-it)
- [Start Early \(http://www.slideshare.net/dspace_cam/prepare-start-early\)](http://www.slideshare.net/dspace_cam/prepare-start-early)

PrePARE: What is 'data'? (http://www.slideshare.net/dspace_cam/what-is-data-13381732)

WHAT IS DATA?

(And why you should care)

View more PowerPoint (<http://www.slideshare.net/thecroaker/death-by-powerpoint>) from [dspace_cam](http://www.slideshare.net/dspace_cam) (http://www.slideshare.net/dspace_cam)

These modules complement a leaflet ‘Sending your Research into the Future’ produced in collaboration with the LSE and University of London, coming soon!

Posted in [Reporting](#) | Tagged [digital preservation](#), [Managing Your Information](#), [modules](#), [slideshare](#), [training](#), [University Library](#) |

Saving it for the future – the first PrePARE seminar

June 25, 2012 by [PrePARE team](#) |

[Saving it for the future – The first PrePARE seminar \(http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/2032\)](http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/2032) was held



last week on 13 June 2012 in CRASSH’s new premises (Alison Richard Building). We chose the topic of “Personal Digital Archiving” because we thought it might have a broad appeal. This seemed to be right – we had 30 or so attendees from a range of disciplines including Engineering, the Judge Business School, as well as the Humanities and Social Sciences. The speakers were chosen to approach the subject from two differing perspectives – [Professor Alan Macfarlane \(http://www.alanmacfarlane.com/\)](http://www.alanmacfarlane.com/) is an emeritus Professor of Anthropological Science and Life Fellow of Kings College, recently retired from the University of Cambridge who through his lifetime has been interested in

what role digital media can play in his discipline and life. He described the creator’s perspective, outlining his experience of managing and looking after his digital legacy tracking back to the early 1970s (when he had to wait for one year to store his 71MB project until the Computing Service had bought more memory). What made his talk particularly relevant to the audience was that he composed it around the reasons “why not to do it” – the lack of incentive to produce digital outputs, the lack of recognition (when they are produced), the fear of abuse or work being used out of context, cultural possessiveness over a researcher’s data (seeing intellectual assets as private property). All of these resonated with us but seeing the amazing work that he has created throughout his life and seeing that he has successfully saved it for the future, I think, has shown that it might be worth to overcome these obstacles. You can see an expansion of his talk on [youtube \(http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5E100A9F400C1973&feature=view_all\)](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5E100A9F400C1973&feature=view_all). (<http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/2032>)

Dr Jeremy Leighton John, Curator of eMSS (electronic manuscripts) at the British Library and Principal Investigator for the Digital Lives Research Project, took the curator’s perspective describing what happens to personal digital archives when they reach the British Library. He explained how material can be looked at and worked on by curators without leaving a trace using digital forensics and how privacy can be ensured when the material is being viewed by third parties, for example, when readers in the British Library reading room can roam through the ghosted version of someone’s personal computer (a facility, we are told, that will be available soon). It was very interesting, I thought, that he reported that increasingly depositors of literary archives started discussing their deposits during their life giving them better control over what material can and should be made accessible in future and allowing the curator to understand the material in more detail. For more information on his work see [Digital Lives - an initial Synthesis. \(http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/files/digital-lives-synthesis02-1.pdf\)](http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/files/digital-lives-synthesis02-1.pdf)

The lengthy discussion at the end showed that there were many more questions to debate and I hope we will!

“A very interesting seminar. I found out about things I had long wondered about – and more” (anonymous). It certainly got us all thinking about digital preservation.

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [CRASSH](#), [curation](#), [digital forensics](#), [digital preservation](#), [pda](#), [personal digital archives](#), [seminar](#) |

June is for Digital Preservation!

June 1, 2012 by [PrePARE team](#) |

Throughout June, the PrePARE project team at DSpace@Cambridge will be tweeting digital information and preservation tips. There will be one a day for the whole month (including Bank Holidays). Please get in touch through twitter or leave a comment on this blog if you'd like more information on any of the issues that we cover. We're looking forward to hearing from you!

[Follow DSpace@Cambridge on twitter! \(https://twitter.com/#!/dspace_cam\)](https://twitter.com/#!/dspace_cam)

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | Tagged [digital preservation](#) |

The interviews

May 8, 2012 by [PrePARE team](#) |

Between December 2011 and March 2012 we conducted interviews with 20 academics from PhD students to Professors across 10 departments of the University. We are very grateful to all the interviewees for their time and constructive input to the project.

The key areas we wanted to focus on were:

- What do people know about digital preservation?
- Are people already preserving digital material?
- Would they like more help and if so, in what format?

Early in the project we decided to carry out face-to-face interviews rather than using an online questionnaire. Although interviews would make analysis more complex, we felt they would give context and help gauge the interviewees' level of knowledge more accurately than relying on self-assessment.

All interviewees were happy to be audio-recorded and the interviews (which varied in length from 22 to 72 minutes) were transcribed by an audio typist.

A key feature of this research was that the team was as interested in gaps in interviewees' answers as much as in their stated preferences. So an interviewee may say that they have everything sorted and do not need any training or support – while the same person's response to the questions on digital preservation may have revealed some lack of understanding.

However, the main lack of understanding was this particular interviewer's – of the work the interviewees are engaged in – and in the geography of Cambridge... I learned a huge amount and am extremely grateful to everyone for their patience.

Posted in [Interviews](#) | Tagged [interviews](#) |

Survey summary and findings

April 3, 2012 by [PrePARE team](#) |

We have now completed our survey of digital preservation practices among the academic community of the University of Cambridge. Here is the summary of our findings.

The project team surveyed a small subsection of the academic community interviewing 20 researchers (3 PhDs, 7 Research Associates, 6 Readers/Lecturers, 4 Professors) from a variety of departments covering four of the six Cambridge Schools.

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way with an interview questionnaire used as a guideline. We will blog about the interview process later.

Finding 1: Digital preservation actions are not currently part of researchers' workflows.

There is a general lack of awareness of data management and digital preservation issues. The most common understanding of digital preservation was "long term back-up". Most interviewees did not appraise their material but kept everything.

Finding 2: Back-up procedures outweigh preservation issues.

A general lack of description and organisation of research material meant that access to data was often restricted to the data owner and/or creator. Without active management of issues around format and obsolescence, there are concerns about long term access.

Most of the researchers interviewed did not think there was significant demand for their material to be re-used, and in some cases did not think that re-use was possible without the risk of it being misinterpreted.

Finding 3: Whilst this lack of digital preservation skills is commonly acknowledged, improvement is not a priority.

Most senior researchers felt that they were not in a position to prioritise training in this area over other activities. Some, particularly supervisors on behalf of PhD students and students themselves, agreed that a better understanding of information management and digital preservation issues at the beginning of one's research career would be beneficial.

With respect to the method of delivering support, no single approach suited all of our target audiences. By and large, students preferred face-to-face training. More experienced researchers did not feel that they had time to attend training sessions and preferred online support.

Recommendations

Within the project scope we suggest we respond to the project findings in four ways:

1. Creating and delivering training modules on digital preservation to graduates and early career researchers. These will supplement our existing training programme on data management.
2. Expanding on our online guidance for all members of the University. This will include FAQs to give answers to specific questions.

3. Promoting the new and existing resources.
4. Organising a cross-departmental lunchtime seminar series.

Our findings and recommendations were approved by the Advisory panel in our meeting on 29 March 2012.

Posted in [Findings](#) | Tagged [interviews](#), [project findings](#) |

Knowledge Exchange Event

March 26, 2012 by [PrePARE team](#) |

On Thursday 22nd March, a beautiful spring day, three members of the PrePARE team headed to London for a knowledge exchange event with other projects in the Digital Preservation stand. The event was kindly hosted by folk at the LSE library (never knowingly undercatered it seems!) who work on the [DICE](http://lседice.wordpress.com/) (<http://lседice.wordpress.com/>) project and there were also representatives from the [SHARD](http://shard-jisc.blogspot.co.uk/) (<http://shard-jisc.blogspot.co.uk/>) and [DataSafe](http://datasafe.blogs.ilrt.org/) (<http://datasafe.blogs.ilrt.org/>) projects.

We started off by outlining what progress we'd made in each of the projects, and it was immediately clear that, although we had used different evidence-gathering methods, we were coming up with similar findings. What's good about this is that any training materials each project produces should find potential for re-use at other institutions, and even with different target audiences (the DataSafe project focuses on working with admin staff rather than academic researchers, but many of the fundamental issues remained the same). So there was a lot of useful discussions around the whys and wherefores, including the ever-important subject of choosing appropriate language to talk about digital preservation of research data (tip: don't use 'data'. Or 'digital preservation').

We also talked about potential ways to work together to produce meaningful training outputs, so we will stay in contact with each other to continue our discussions on that.

Following on from this meeting the other projects have been added to our blogroll, as there are a lot of interesting findings to read about.

Posted in [Knowledge Exchange](#) | Tagged [digital preservation](#), [IHR](#), [LSE](#), [meeting](#), [project findings](#), [University of Bristol](#), [University of London](#) | Comments Off

March update

March 15, 2012 by [PrePARE team](#) |

We have now interviewed twenty researchers which concludes our fieldwork. We will blog on the interview process shortly.

Currently we are busy writing up our findings and debating the outcomes. We are looking forward to the Knowledge Exchange Event next week (22nd March at LSE). Our advisory group will review our recommendations on the 29th March after which we will circulate what tools and resources we have decided to develop.

Posted in [Monthly Update](#) | Tagged [interviews](#) | [Comments Off](#)

Literature Review summary

March 8, 2012 by [PrePARE team](#) |

I've [already blogged](http://preparecambridge.wordpress.com/2012/02/02/preparing-to-write-a-literature-review/) about how I started work on the project's literature review. Here, I'd like to highlight some of the areas covered by the review.

The way we think about what digital preservation – what it involves and who it is done by – will influence the information we are likely to find about it. Particularly, if I were a researcher interested in digital preservation searching for how to go about doing it on my own research data, I might very easily think that actually it wasn't anything to do with me and that 'digital preservation' was something done by information professionals. This makes me wonder if over time, we'll come to use a range of terms more widely used to reflect the different aspects of preservation and the roles of different practitioners (researchers, archivists, repository managers etc). If you have any ideas on this, please let us know in the comments!

I was very interested in finding out more about Personal Digital Archiving (PDArc), as this was an area that had much more practical advice for the novice. I think there's a lot that can be repurposed for providing advice on research data preservation. Another benefit that I think may be worth exploring is whether using PDArc in training/guidance materials can help avoid a lot of the issues with making discipline-specific materials. Almost everyone will have reasonably extensive personal digital material in a range of data types (documents, images, videos, audio, spreadsheets, etc) and many of those also form part of research data. Of course, such an approach will not be suitable for everyone, but it may provide a helpful starting point which can then be built upon in relation to more disciplinary-specific or individual needs. I also wonder if it will be easier to get people's attention on this area and so it might actually help dissemination.

It was also important to consider archiving digital records. UK HEIs seem to produce more guidance on this area than on preserving digital research materials, but it also seems that some institutions include research data in their definition of digital records; this might not be an obvious link for researchers seeking information on long-term storage of their research data.

I was very conscious that most of the resources were available online, and realised that there were three main reasons for this. One was the ease: I literally did not have to leave my desk. A second was that this helped me find resources outside Cambridge University, and so gave a better idea of what was available to other academics, both in the UK and internationally. But the third, and probably best, reason was that I wanted the most up-to-date information on what was available, and however recent a print publication, it is likely to refer to many sources that are several years old.

The literature review is available at the PrePARE project website:
<http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/prepare/litreview.html>
(<http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/prepare/litreview.html>).

Posted in [Literature Review](#) | Tagged [desk research](#), [digital preservation](#), [literature review](#), [personal digital archives](#) | [1 Comment](#) »

PrePARing to write a literature review

February 2, 2012 by [PrePARE team](#) |

The literature review for the project has three main areas of interest:

1. Identify and review relevant existing preservation literature;
2. Research and assess current engagement practices;
3. Look into the existing training provision available in Cambridge.

The starting point was the [literature review \(http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/epic/litreview.html\)](http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/epic/litreview.html) from the EPIC project. Although that was focussed on preservation planning, it contained references to sources on preservation in general and some information on available training provision.

Because of my follow-up work based on the Incremental project, I know that ‘[language matters \(http://incrementalproject.wordpress.com/2010/07/14/vocabularyjargonterminology-synonyms-and-specialist-language/\)](http://incrementalproject.wordpress.com/2010/07/14/vocabularyjargonterminology-synonyms-and-specialist-language/)’ and so it would be important to define ‘digital preservation’, not just to be able to communicate effectively with our target audience of academic researchers but also to help us define the scope of the project. I was particularly interested in the concept of ‘[sheer curation \(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_curation#Sheer_curation\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_curation#Sheer_curation)’ which seemed to me to be particularly suitable approach for active researchers.

As we also expect that a lot of researchers would use the internet to find relevant information, it seemed sensible to see what sort of resources I could find using generic search terms (such as ‘digital preservation’ and ‘digital archiving’) in Google.

Other University Library projects provided inspiration; the recent opening of the [Cambridge University Digital Library \(http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/\)](http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/) brought the importance of personal archives to the fore, and also raised a lot of questions. What resources were out there for the management and preservation of personal digital resources and outputs? What can we re-use or learn from? Is personal digital archiving ultimately a good approach to take in order to produce guidance that is applicable to everyone without being generic? I also decided to look into support and guidance on preserving digital records to see if there were useful resources that we could build on.

So a big part of getting started on this literature review has been thinking about the scope of digital preservation and what different communities understand by the term.

Posted in [Literature Review](#) | Tagged [curation](#), [digital library](#), [digital preservation](#), [digital records](#), [literature review](#), [personal digital archives](#), [research data](#) | [Comments Off](#)

January Update

February 1, 2012 by [PrePARE team](#) |

January has been a busy month for the PrePARE project team. We've welcomed our new Project Officer Fiona, who has been busy setting up interviews, and she and Barbara attended the project kick-off meeting in London. Meanwhile Anna's been working on the desk research and looking into existing support on digital preservation.

Together the team has also had several meetings to discuss the [interview questionnaire](#) (<http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/prepare/documents.html>). Because the interviews are semi-structured we don't want to be too rigid, and so our discussions focused on making sure that our questions were open, not leading and would cover our main areas of interest: what people know about digital preservation and where they want to go to get more guidance. As we've carried out a few interviews, we've also been able to make some assessment about which questions work and refine questions which maybe don't work so well.

Posted in [Monthly Update](#) | Tagged [desk research](#), [digital preservation](#), [interviews](#), [new staff](#) | Comments Off

December update

December 15, 2011 by [PrePARE team](#) |

We have been successful in recruiting a Project Officer and expect our new team member to start in January. This will allow us to kickstart the interview rounds among researchers.

We have started on our desk research and are currently identifying potential participants within the University to interview about their current preservation practices. We are also finalising the interview questionnaire and will be talking to a couple of volunteers this week.

Posted in [Monthly Update](#) | Tagged [desk research](#), [digital preservation](#), [interviews](#), [new staff](#) | Comments Off

Project Introduction

November 2, 2011 by [PrePARE team](#) |

[PrePARE](#) (<http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/prepare/>) is a 9 month JISC funded project (Nov 2011-Jul 2012) which aims to improve the digital preservation and information management skills of the academic community at the University of Cambridge. It is led by the [DSpace@Cambridge](#)

outputs from previous projects relating to the digital lifecycle, such as [Incremental](http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/incremental/) (<http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/incremental/>), [DataTrain](http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/datatrain/) (<http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/datatrain/>) and [EPIC](http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/epic/) (<http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/preservation/epic/>).

Our activities will include the investigating how (if at all) preservation activities currently fit in with researchers' workflows, studying what aspects of preservation and information management are particularly relevant to academics and investigating what modes of guidance or training the community would find most appealing and valuable.

We are aiming to develop and repurpose relevant content on preservation actions based on these findings and to provide skills development materials and guidance (as appropriate) in ways that will be accessible and useful.

We will work closely with JISC and other relevant parties in disseminating our findings and when possible sharing our outputs.

Posted in [Introduction](#) | Tagged [digital preservation](#) | Comments Off

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