H3: Here’s to Your (Digital Archive’s) Good Health:

Applying TRAC and Other Evaluation Parameters to a Local Digital Preservation Project

102nd AALL Annual Meeting & Conference
Washington, D.C.

July 28, 2009
Agenda

- Introduction & Overview of The Chesapeake Project
- Legal Information Archive
- Self-Assessment Evaluation Parameters & Findings
- TRAC Assessment & Findings
- Discussion of Costs & Lessons Learned
About The Chesapeake Project

• The Chesapeake Project is a shared Legal Information Archive
  – Two-year pilot (2007-2009) to investigate the feasibility of establishing a collaborative digital archive, shared by multiple institutions in the law library community, for the preservation of Web-published legal materials
  – Pilot Participants:
    • Georgetown Law Library
    • Maryland State Law Library
    • Virginia State Law Library
  – Affiliated with the Legal Information Preservation Alliance (LIPA)
Digital Preservation System

- Began harvesting/archiving Web content in early 2007 using OCLC Digital Archive

- July 2008 = migration of archived files to a new two-tiered digital-preservation and access system
  - Access copy in CONTENTdm + archival masters in dark Digital Archive (similar to original OCLC Digital Archive)
  - Added point of access through CONTENTdm interface at www.legalinfoarchive.org, Web search engine discovery
Access via local OPAC

Reforming redistricting [electronic resource] : why popular initiatives to establish redistricting commissions succeed or fail / by Nicholas Stephanopoulos.

Stephanopoulos, Nicholas.


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Publisher: American Constitution Society for Law and Policy

Access via CONTENTdm
Votelaw, Edward Still's blog on law and politics

"Reforming Redistricting: Why Popular Initiatives To Establish Redistricting Commissions Succeed or Fail. ..... decreasing the black population of the adjacent 4th District, encompassing Chesapeake, from 39.4 percent to 33.6 percent. ... www.votelaw.com/blog/archives/redistricting/ - 977k - Cached - Similar pages

The Chesapeake Project: Search Results
Reforming redistricting why popular initiatives to establish redistricting commissions succeed or fail, Apportionment (Election law)—United States.; ... cdm256901.cdmhost.com/odm4/results.php?CISOBOX1=apart&CISOFIELD1=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOOP1=any ... - 91k - Cached - Similar pages
Project Evaluation (Self-Assessment)

- Evaluation to occur at one-year mark and two-year mark (end of pilot phase)

- Quantitative/Objective Evaluation Parameters:
  - No. of items/titles archived during project’s first year
  - Analysis of archiving activity
  - Access statistics
  - ‘Link rot’ analysis, a count of archived items altered/removed from original locations on Web
Project Evaluation (Self-Assessment)

- Qualitative/Subjective Evaluation Parameters:
  - Staffing requirements
  - Time committed to project activities
  - Challenges & problems encountered
  - Progress toward the realization of the project’s mission, vision
Preparation for Final Pilot Evaluation

• First-Year Evaluation (self-assessment) conducted in March 2008

• Follow-up 2009 Second-Year Evaluation based upon same quantitative/qualitative parameters

• Also enlisted Center for Research Libraries (CRL) to conduct independent assessment based on criteria set forth in Trustworthy Repositories Audit & Certification (TRAC): Criteria and Checklist
Final Pilot Project Evaluation, June 2009

• Findings:
  – 4,306 digital items archived over two years
  – Usage spiked following migration to CONTENTdm/Digital Archive system:
    • March 2007-June 2008 = 6,612 instances of access
    • July 2008-February 2009 = 177,152 instances of access, 73,614 terms searched
Final Pilot Project Evaluation, June 2009

• Link Rot Analysis:
  – 2008 sample:
    • Link rot found in 8.3% of titles
  – Same sample, one year later:
    • Link rot found in 14.3% of titles
Final Pilot Project Evaluation, June 2009

• Qualitative analysis:
  
  – 2-25 hours devoted per week; task requiring most time = cataloging

  – Challenges: change of system, loss of our project’s visionary, Bob Oakley

  – Strong sense that mission accomplished throughout two-year pilot phase; vision is within reach
TRAC Assessment Parameters

- Three aspects of the project assessed, based on TRAC:
  - Organization (financial and operational framework and policies)
  - Preservation Strategy (processes and procedures governing management of archived digital objects)
  - Technology (assessment of OCLC’s system architecture, hardware, and software)

- Areas of risk identified, recommendations provided
TRAC Assessment Process

- Comprehensive collection of project documentation provided to CRL Analyst

- CRL Analyst site visit to Washington, D.C., and participant observation during February 2009 quarterly meeting

- Two-day site visit to OCLC facilities in Dublin, Ohio, by CRL Analyst and Repository Architecture Technology Advisor
TRAC Assessment Findings

• Project organization commended
  – “Overall, The Chesapeake Project provides good stewardship of the Web content it has identified and collected.”
  – Project addresses a real need
  – Project activities are “cost-effective and focused”
  – “Project decision- and policymaking apparatus is relatively lean and structured in a way that should ensure the archives’ responsiveness to the law library community.”
TRAC Assessment Findings

• Three areas of risk identified:
  – “Bit preservation” service may result in future difficulties associated with long-term preservation
  – Selection criteria and preservation strategies must evolve to adapt to dynamic “Web 2.0” as well as future Web-based technologies
  – To accommodate growth of project size and scope, base of support should be broadened/diversified, and commitments formalized
TRAC Assessment Findings

- Recommendations fell within two general categories:
  - Relating to collaboration, e.g.:
    - Enlargement of participant population
    - Formalization of the partnership
  - Relating to “life cycle” management, e.g.:
    - Exploration of “current and future uses” of digital archive collections and “life-cycle” model of information preservation
TRAC Assessment Costs

- Scaled to accommodate smaller project, modest cost divided equally by three participating institutions

- Did not include comprehensive technical audit of OCLC systems, but did include assessment of:
  - self-reported information from OCLC
  - third-party information about OCLC systems, and
  - an examination of a 10% random sample of preservation metadata records for archived digital objects
Response to TRAC Assessment

• Overall, very pleased, a worthwhile investment

• Feel that some risks applied to the entire field of digital preservation and could be put into larger context

• On-site OCLC visit, documentation review, and archive metadata test sample results affirm choice of OCLC for the project

• Project expansion and diversification has been incorporated as a major goal in the post-pilot phase
Lessons Learned

• Define self-assessment parameters based on your project’s unique mission and goals; explore objective as well as subjective assessment measures

• *TRAC Criteria & Checklist* provides significant and detailed guidance about best practices in digital preservation and should be consulted in self-auditing exercises
Lessons Learned

• Maintain thorough documentation relating to project policies, staffing, budgets, procedures and workflows, decision-making processes, and meetings

• Maintain monthly reports of project activity and usage statistics

• Keep and document data and samples used for evaluation purposes. These can be revisited in future assessments to measure change, progress
Lessons Learned

• Be flexible in the reporting and presentation of your statistics. Technology is rapidly evolving, and inconsistencies in what you can and cannot measure are likely to occur.

• An independent, third-party assessment is a worthy investment, and can be especially helpful in identifying risks associated with offsite vendor systems. Negotiate scaled assessment costs to meet the needs of your project.
Lessons Learned

- Understand and attempt to meet established standards and best practices – while also making independent decisions and adjustments appropriate to your project, preservation system, mission, priorities, and parent institution
More Information

• The Chesapeake Project Legal Information Archive: www.legalinfoarchive.org


• The Legal information Preservation Alliance (LIPA): www.aallnet.org/committee/lipa

• TRAC Criteria & Checklist (from CRL): www.crl.edu/PDF/trac.pdf
Thank You!

- **Sarah Rhodes**, Digital Collections Librarian
  Georgetown Law Library
  Office: (202) 662-4065
  E-mail: sjr36@law.georgetown.edu