

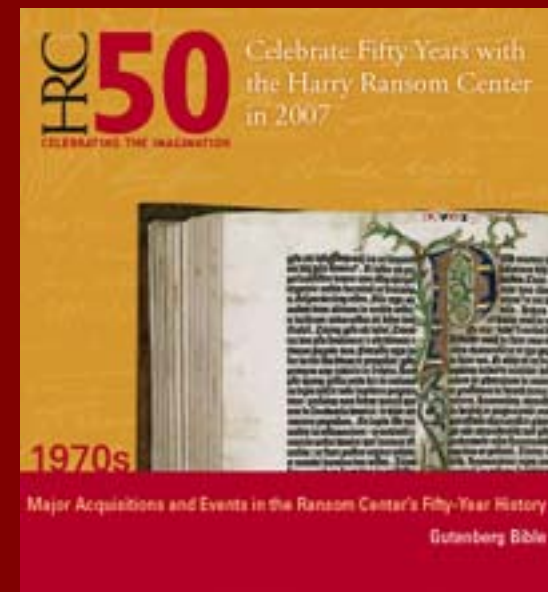
Digital Archives in Manuscript Repositories

A Discussion on Digital Manuscripts at the Harry
Ransom Center

Presented at the Manuscripts Section of Society of
American Archivists Annual Meeting 2007

Background

Worked at Harry Ransom Center in Austin,
Texas from 2004 to early 2007



Austin



Albany



New York State Archives

NEW YORK STATE ARCHIVES

WHERE



History

GOES ON RECORD

Spring and Clearing	59134	c. 725.00	59134.00	
Depositories Solid Rocks	59134	c. 725.00	59134.00	
do	Common Earths	95527	c. 211	22416.45
Embarkment				

Harry Ransom Center 2007

- Developing policies and procedures for processing electronic records
 - Evolving document
- Evaluating options for a Trusted Digital Repository
 - At the School of Information at the University of Texas at Austin
 - At the University Libraries at the University of Texas at Austin
 - Or develop institutional TDR
- Conducting a general electronic records survey and needs assessment
- Employs an Electronic Records Archivist/Specialist
- Processing collections with electronic records

Case Studies Processed or In Process

Michael Joyce (in process)

New Skills for Digital Era (SAA website)

Provenance 2006 (in print) and at

<https://pacer.ischool.utexas.edu/handle/2081/2226>

Arnold Wesker

<https://pacer.ischool.utexas.edu/handle/2081/2322>

Forthcoming publication

Norman Mailer (in process), Leon Uris, John Crowley case studies at <https://pacer.ischool.utexas.edu/handle/2081/288>

Archival Theory Applied to Digital Materials

Acquisition	Create a disk catalog with all pertinent metadata Copy to a processing computer drive
Appraisal	Appraise for duplicates and restricted material
Arrangement	Arrange material according to author's original arrangement
Description	Create a file catalog with the pertinent metadata Create and record checksums Extract metadata Transform metadata from NLNZ Schema to Dublin Core
Preservation	Migrate all of the files to a more stable format, such as Rich Text Format Make physical copies of all the files onto new media Ingest the files into DSpace Ingest the project documentation
Reference	Integration into paper-based finding aid

Tools Used

File cataloging software	CatFinder, WinCat(Light)
Checksum utilities	Jacksum, or command line utilities
Automatic file migration	ABC AmberText Converter
Duplicate Comparison Utilities	zsCompare, zsDuplicate Hunter
Metadata Extractor	NLNZ Metadata Extractor (new version)
PERL scripts	Custom and Modified
Dspace Bulk Ingest	Added to Policies and Procedures

Unique Aspects of Digital Manuscripts

- No print corollary
- Versioning
- Original black and white v. color
- Original usage, system, user experience, “look and feel”
- Terrence Harpold’s *Ex-Foliations* and Matthew Kirschenbaum’s *Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination* forthcoming publications address literary criticism and digital works

What About the Materials
Before They Arrive at Your
Doorstep?

Scholarly Study

Kirschenbaum article in *Chronicle of Higher Education*
Article “Hamlet.doc? Literature in a Digital Age”:

But by and large there has been a massive shift in the technological foundation of our writing, literary and otherwise; in the particular realm of literature and literary scholarship, this means that a writer working today will not and *cannot* be studied in the future in the same way as writers of the past, since the basic material evidence of their authorial activity—manuscript and drafts, working notes, correspondence, journals—is, like all textual production, increasingly migrating to the electronic realm.

So what can we do about it?

- Authors are creating digital content right now
- Determine best case scenario for materials upon arrival of documents
- Prepare a “Suggestions for Digital Preservation For Authors” document to match best case scenario for your institution
- Publish general preservation suggestions in literary journals
 - Arts and Humanities Data Service
 - <http://ahds.ac.uk/litlangling/creating/index.htm>
 - Electronic Literature Organization
 - <http://eliterature.org/publications/>
- Build relationships with authors to send materials in accretions
- Offer workshops for authors
- Work with publishing companies
- Implement your own suggestions (i.e. record metadata in properties)

Action Plans

1. Look to case studies for guidance
2. Start pilot projects
3. Write policies and procedures
4. Develop repository practices
5. Think about materials being created currently
6. Work with authors
7. Work with other creating agents
8. Read literary criticism for digital works
9. Implement guidelines

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