Archival Practices in the United States: National Standards

Adam Kriesberg, PhD

Summer School for Young Archivists, Almaty, Kazakhstan

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Introduction

- Overview of Archival Workflow
- DACS- Describing Archives: A Content Standard
- EAD- Encoded Archival Description
- ISAD(G)- General International Standard Archival Description

Archival Workflow

Appraisal → Accession → Arrangement & Description → Preservation → Access

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Standards for Archival Description

- It is important to maintain standards around archival description. The way Finding Aids are structured has a big impact on the user experience, and helps users find what they are looking for in archival repositories.

- We work towards standard description across archival repositories so that users will be able to find what they need regardless of the type of institution they are at.

Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS)

- Instructs archivists how to write finding aids
- Developed in 2005 by the Society of American Archivists
- Not related to any specific software tool
  - Explains how to write finding aids, what types of information should be included in descriptions of records

- For more information, see http://www2.archivists.org/standards/DACS

Encoded Archival Description (EAD)

- This standard relates to how archivists make finding aids available online
- Process involves taking the text of a finding aid, which is a user's guide to a collection of records, and encoding it so that a computer can display it on the internet
- For more information, see https://www.loc.gov/ead/

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General International Standard, Archival Description ISAD(G)

- Standard for writing finding aids and describing archival records that is internationally-focused

- Provides an outline of the essential elements of archival description that users would want to know in order to determine which records are relevant for their purposes.

- See the ICA website for more information
(standard available in Russian)

Digital Preservation Standards

- When we obtain digital materials, it is important to make sure we can manage these over the long term.

- These standards are more technical in nature, but are important for managing electronic records and other digital documents.

Preservation Metadata: Implementation Strategies (PREMIS)

PREMIS

PRESERVATION METADATA MAINTENANCE ACTIVITY
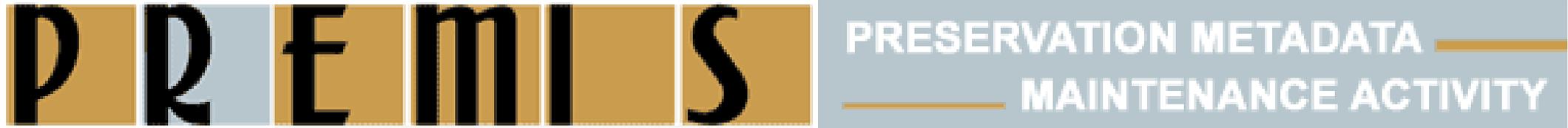
- This standard is designed to help archivists manage digital materials
- Event-based standard that documents actions taken to digital documents over time
  - Ex. A PDF report was uploaded to the archives on a specific date by a specific user, the file is not corrupted and was imported onto archives computers

National Digital Stewardship Alliance- Levels of Digital Preservation

	Level One (Protect Your Data)	Level Two (Know Your data)	Level Three (Monitor Your Data)	Level Four (Repair Your Data)
Storage and Geographic Location	•Two complete copies that are not collocated •For data on heterogeneous media (optical disks, hard drives, etc.) get the content off the medium and into your storage system	•At least three complete copies •At least one copy in a different geographic location •Document your storage system(s) and storage media and what you need to use them	•At least one copy in a geographic location with a different disaster threat •Obsolescence monitoring process for your storage system(s) and media	•At least 3 copies in geographic locations with different disaster threats. •Have a comprehensive plan in place that will keep files and metadata on currently accessible media or systems
File Fixity and Data Integrity	•Check file fixity on ingest if it has been provided with the content •Create fixity info if it wasn't provided with the content	•Check fixity on all ingestsUse write-blockers when working with original media •Virus-check high risk content	•Check fixity of content at fixed intervals •Maintain logs of fixity info; supply audit on demand •Ability to detect corrupt data •Virus-check all content	•Check fixity of all content in response to specific events or activities •Ability to replace/repair corrupted data •Ensure no one person has write access to all copies
Information Security	•Identify who has read, write, move, and delete authorization to individual files •Restrict who has those authorizations to individual files	•Document access restrictions for content	•Maintain logs of who performed what actions on files, including deletions and preservation actions	•Perform audit of logs
Metadata	•Inventory of content and its storage location •Ensure backup and non-collocation of inventory	•Store administrative metadata •Store transformative metadata and log events	•Store standard technical and descriptive metadata	•Store standard preservation metadata
File Formats	•When you can give input into the creation of digital files encourage use of a limited set of known open file formats and codecs	•Inventory of file formats in use	•Monitor file format obsolescence issues	•Perform format migrations, emulation and similar activities as needed

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