



***Digital POWRR*** Interim Report  
to  
The Institute of Museum and Library Services  
December 1, 2011 through November 30, 2012

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**Project Partners**

Chicago State  
Illinois State  
Illinois Wesleyan  
Northern Illinois  
Western Illinois

<http://digitalpowrr.niu.edu/>

## INTRODUCTION

This document serves as the first interim report for the Digital POWRR project, a National Leadership Grant Award exploring digital preservation solutions for small and medium-sized college, university, and research libraries. While many larger institutions have made considerable advances in digital preservation, institutions with fewer resources have struggled to make similar progress for a variety of reasons. The Digital POWRR team is investigating and evaluating scalable, sustainable digital preservation solutions for these smaller institutions. The team is also exploring potential business and implementation models for equitable access to digital preservation, so that these memory institutions can become a driving force in protecting their organizations' significant digital objects.

## YEAR ONE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Project Team Formation: Conducted a nation-wide search and hired a Project Director as required by the project proposal. Selected and hired the project graduate assistant.
2. Advisory Board Formation: Recruited subject matter experts and leaders in the profession to create a board of advisors to oversee and guide the project. Board members are as follows:
  - **Liz Bishoff** – Principle Partner, Bishoff Group
  - **Steve Bromage** – Executive Director, Maine Historical Society
  - **Martin Halbert** – Dean of Libraries, University of North Texas
  - **Jerry McDonough** – Associate Professor, University of Illinois
  - **Chris Prom** – Assistant University Archivist, University of Illinois
  - **Amy Rudersdorf** – Director, Digital Information Mgmt Program, NC State Library
3. Gathered current literature in the field of digital preservation including white papers, case studies, scholarly articles, etc. For the purposes of this project, we are focusing on publications aimed towards smaller and medium-sized institutions to include in the literature review portion of our final paper.
4. Conducted an environmental scan of digital preservation tools, technologies, and services available as options to institutions with fewer resources. The master list of options can be found on the project wiki at:  
[http://powrr-wiki.lib.niu.edu/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://powrr-wiki.lib.niu.edu/index.php/Main_Page)
5. Convened the initial meeting of all Advisory Board members, principal investigators from each partner institution, and project team members. The outcomes of this 2-day, face to face meeting were:
  - Made the final selection of the digital preservation tools and services that will be tested in depth by the project team
  - Created the preliminary outline of the final white paper report
  - Finalized the project timeline, including deliverable deadlines
  - Documented advisors' recommendations for project activities going forward

6. Began negotiations with service providers for pilot instances of the tools selected for in-depth testing and evaluated NIU's current technical infrastructure to determine its ability to handle pilot implementations.
  - **DuraCloud:** We received a quote for 1TB for 1 year saved in 2 data centers for \$2500. This is currently going through NIU's account and requisition processes.
  - **MetaArchive:** A proposal will be going before the MetaArchive Board in early December, 2012 to allow for a pilot instance costing \$3,000 that would require no formal membership to MetaArchive and no purchase of a server.
  - **Preservica:** We received an estimate for 1 year of licensing fees for the software, 1TB of cloud storage, and training fees for a total of \$28,890. As this estimate is not affordable to the project nor to the study's target audience, we have proposed some alternative pricing and delivery models to Tessella (the owner of Preservica). As of November 30, 2012 we have not received a response from them. If we are unable to test this particular digital preservation tool, we will look to the Advisory Board for a suggestion of an alternate one.
  - **Archivematica:** This is a free, open source tool. However, we may be retaining the services of Artefactual Systems (the associated consulting group) to experiment with creating plug-ins for some of NIU's existing data management infrastructure for the purposes of the study. If so, this consulting would likely occur in the late spring of 2013.
  - **Hoppla:** This is a free, open source tool that will require no contract.
  - **Internet Archive:** This service is hypothetically free and will require additional investigation by the project team to determine how and if it can be used for the purposes of digital preservation. This investigation will take place over the next 60 days (through Jan 2013) and, if viable, will continue on into the in-depth testing phase.
7. Created a digital preservation tool evaluation framework. For the dozens of tools, services, etc. that were not selected for in-depth testing, the project team will use this framework to map at a higher level each tool's capabilities against an OAIS-based digital preservation functionality grid. This framework can be viewed on the project [wiki](#).
8. Conducted more than 60 campus-wide interviews of faculty, staff, and administrators for several of the partner institutions. The interviews will wrap up in early year two. The goal of these interviews is to:
  - Obtain an understanding of the types of digital objects being generated on our campuses so that the project can take into consideration faculty needs for creating and using content that is intended to be preserved.
  - Collect a variety of digital objects from our interviewees to use in the testing of the digital preservation systems.
  - Build awareness for both the importance of and the complexities of digital preservation throughout our institutions.

9. Created a database to collect, track, and explore the data gathered in the interviews. This will allow the team to aggregate the data once the interview phase is complete and provide robust reporting on the state of digital preservation within our campuses, including faculty knowledge of and attitude towards the concept of digital preservation.
10. Created a website, blog and wiki to provide multiple touch points for professionals following the progress of this project. These are hosted on servers at NIU's library and will remain accessible following the conclusion of the project.
  - The website contains information about the project goals, profiles of the project team members and partner institutions, a digital preservation 101 section with links to external resources, and a listing of media interviews, press releases, etc. <http://digitalpowrr.niu.edu/>
  - The wiki is publicly accessible and contains most of the project's working documents as well as meeting agendas, meeting minutes, presentations, timeline for team deliverables, and other project-related information. [http://powrr-wiki.lib.niu.edu/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://powrr-wiki.lib.niu.edu/index.php/Main_Page)
  - The blog is actively updated with contributions by many of the project's team members. <http://digitalpowrr.niu.edu/blog/>
11. The Project Director and Project Technical Coordinator attended the UNESCO's Memory of the World in the Digital Age conference. They discussed the Digital POWRR project with other delegates to build awareness of the project's goals, gained an understanding of the state of digital preservation in under-resourced institutions across the globe, and participated in the formation of digital preservation policy recommendations that were presented to UNESCO.
12. Acquired the equipment necessary for conducting the pilots of the selected digital preservation tools. The technical infrastructure required to support the testing has been mapped out and is being implemented. It is expected the testing environment will be complete and ready for pilot installations at the beginning of year two.

## YEAR ONE CHALLENGES

1. The process of conducting a nation-wide search, interviewing, and hiring a Project Director took over 6 months. Without this vital role filled for an extended period of time and the team's desire to hold off on making major project-related decisions before the director came on board, the project was necessarily delayed in performing significant activities until midway through the first year. As such, the installation of pilot implementations will be delayed until the start of year two. It is expected that the team will apply for a 6 month no-cost extension to successfully carry out the project activities.
2. Based on recommendations by the project's Advisory Board and a discussion with the grant's Program Officer, it seems that attempting to hold a national conference in Dekalb, IL with a budget of \$20,000 may not be the best way to disseminate the project's findings to its target audience. The team is working to come up with innovative, effective

dissemination models that will reach a large number of professionals at smaller and mid-sized institutions who are working to achieve long term digital preservation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Professionals who are responsible for digital preservation in their institutions, but who have been given few or no resources to accomplish this crucial mandate, are demonstrating a high level of interest in the outcome of this study. Indeed, the Digital POWRR project partners are driven by the critical need in their own organizations to create a scalable, sustainable digital preservation solution. Compelled by the urgency demonstrated by our target audience, encouraged by our accomplishments, and motivated by our challenges, the Digital POWRR team is eager to progress into the activities of year two.