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Digital Preservation of Law Reviews: Two Ways

By Valeri Craigle

Digital Library Perspectives: Special Issue on Preservation (forthcoming, 2017)

Abstract

On November 7, 2008, the Durham Statement on Open Access to Legal Scholarship was released to the public. One of its main tenets - that law schools and libraries “stop publishing journals in print format and rely instead on electronic publication coupled with a commitment to keep the electronic versions available in stable, open, digital formats” - was an open call to law libraries to start thinking about digital preservation strategies for their law reviews.

The Legal Information Preservation Alliance (LIPA) responded to the need by developing the Law Review Preservation Program, an initiative which archives law reviews hosted on the Bepress Digital Commons platform in Controlled LOCKSS (Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe), or CLOCKSS.

For those law libraries without subscriptions to Digital Commons, there is an open-source, freely available alternative solution for ingesting digital law reviews into any preservation platform. This application, called the Submission Information Metadata Packaging, or SIMP tool was developed at the J. Willard Marriott Library at the University of Utah, initially as a solution for ingesting content into the Ex Libris Rosetta Digital preservation platform, as part of a CONTENTdm digital asset management workflow. Though the development of the SIMP tool was inspired by Marriott’s need to ingest digital files from CONTENTdm to Rosetta, they built it to work with any Digital Asset Management System (DAMS) and Digital preservation platform.

This article will explain these two strategies for digital preservation of law reviews, informing law librarians of the options which might best suit their needs.

Introduction

Law libraries are increasingly faced with the challenge of developing preservation strategies for digital content, often in conjunction with digital library development efforts. Too often, these activities are done separately, which can increase the time commitment and expense of these projects. To make the process more efficient, digital asset management and preservation work can be integrated, allowing libraries to simultaneously build digital collections and process preservation-quality content for archival purposes.

Digital preservation of law reviews, the primary vehicle for scholarly publishing in law schools, is still in its infancy. It is not, as articulated by the American Association

of Law Libraries in their Preservation Policy “the sole concern of law libraries”. (“AALL Preservation Policy,” July 11, 2013) Digitization and electronic publishing of law reviews have gained momentum, but preservation efforts are lagging behind. To complicate matters, law schools still devote significant resources to publishing law reviews in print, despite steep reductions in subscriptions, and an increase in demand for electronic formats (Reis, 2016). The Durham Statement on Open Access, a white paper created eight years ago by law library directors from some of the country’s top law schools, was created in part to address the reluctance of law schools to cease print publication of law reviews. The authors specifically called on law school administrators to “stop publishing journals in print format and to rely instead on electronic publication coupled with a commitment to keep the electronic versions available in stable, open, digital formats” (“Durham Statement on Open Access to Legal Scholarship | Berkman Klein Center,” n.d.). Almost a decade later, many law reviews have gone digital, but the call for ceasing print publication has largely gone unheeded and true digital preservation strategies for law reviews remain elusive (Reis, 2016).

The technology for digitally preserving law reviews is available. Indeed, there are a wide variety of options. (“Digital Preservation Tool Grid,” n.d.) However, in a study of preservation practices in law libraries, Sarah Rhodes and Dana Neacsu found that it is not a lack of options which inhibits a law libraries’ efforts at preservation, but “a lack of resources – both human and financial” (Rhodes & Neacsu, 2009)

This article aims to simplify the digital preservation process by focusing on two specific solutions: the Law Review Preservation Program, which utilizes the combination of Digital Commons and CLOCKSS, and a middleware option that can use any combination Digital Asset Management System (DAMS)/Preservation Platform. With this option, the preservation workflow is facilitated by a piece of software called the SIMP Tool (Submission Information Metadata Packaging), an open-source application developed by the J. Willard Marriott Library at the University of Utah. Each solution reduces the need for additional resources by streamlining workflows and sharing the burden of hosting and maintaining materials across reliable, distributed networks,

The Law Review Preservation Program

In 2010, LIPA launched the Law Review Preservation Program, an initiative, which archives law reviews hosted on the Bepress Digital Commons platform in Controlled LOCKSS (Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe), or CLOCKSS. In July 2016, LIPA renewed its contract with Bepress, extending the Law Review Preservation Program for another three years.

In a technological nutshell, Digital Commons (DC) is a DAMS used primarily by universities as an institutional repository platform. Law libraries use it primarily to publish digital law reviews. CLOCKSS is a dark-archive platform that harvests digital content from DAMS websites, like DC, and places it on secure servers in multiple

locations, where it becomes accessible only when all other modes of access to the content have failed. The two work together to provide a digital copy for public access (Digital Commons), and a preservation copy that is placed in a dark-archive (CLOCKSS). Bepress and LIPA together fund a law review “LOCKSS Box”, a server that is part of a network of servers configured with special software and licensing agreements that provide for immediate public access should the above-mentioned failure occur.

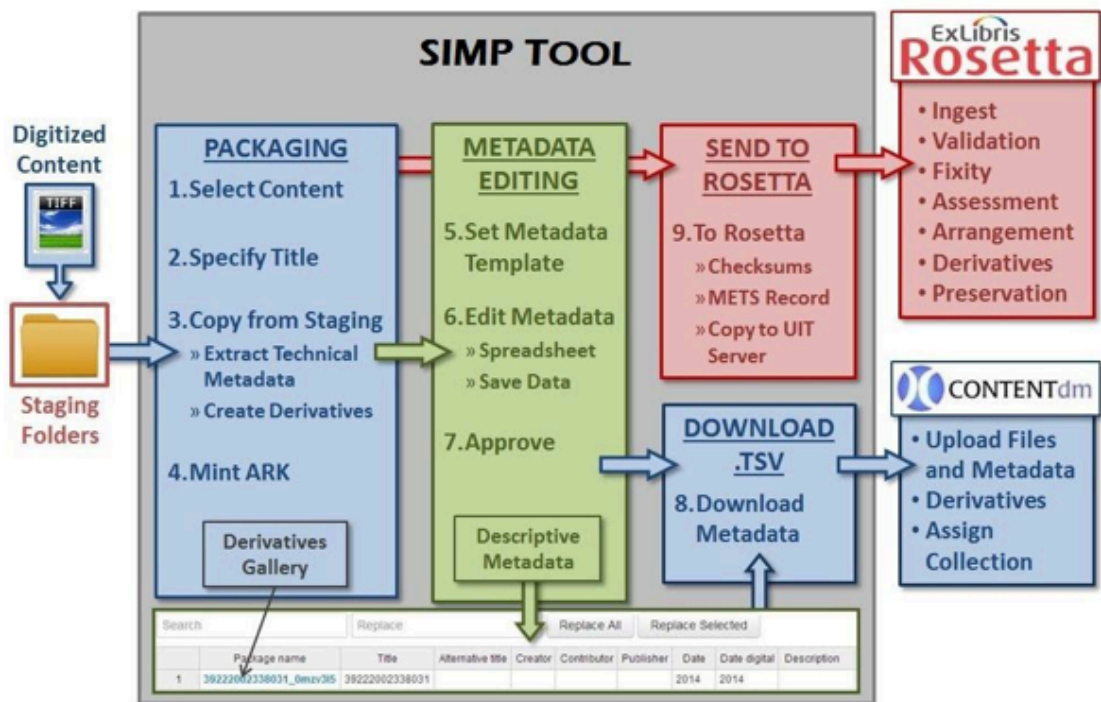
The DC/CLOCKSS option is the optimal solution for law reviews. The two systems work seamlessly together to integrate the entire law review submissions/processing/publishing/preservation lifecycle. Law libraries need not add anything to their Digital Commons workflow in order to have their content ingested in the CLOCKSS dark archive. Direct inquiries regarding the Law Review Preservation Program may be directed to LIPA Executive Director, Margie Maes at mkmaes@gmail.com.

The SIMP Tool

For law libraries utilizing other DAMS/Preservation systems, The SIMP Tool can be used to integrate a DAMS/preservation workflow. SIMP is a web-based, modular, scalable, and platform-agnostic application. It can also be configured to integrate with an organization’s user authentication system, streamlining staff workflows between collaborating departments. The modular design is functional on many platforms, allowing law libraries the flexibility to adapt to the ever-changing environment of digital library development and the evolving nature of digital preservation systems.(Neatrou, Brunsvik, Buckner, McBride, & Myntti, 2014)

The J. Willard Marriott Library has been using the SIMP Tool for over 2 years as a DAMS/preservation workflow integration system between CONTENTdm and Rosetta. Currently, they are in the process of migrating their digital collections from CONTENTdm to a Hydra-based system, but they will continue to use Rosetta as a preservation platform. Because of its flexible design, SIMP has already been integrated with the new Hydra/Rosetta setup, and will serve as the primary user interface between the two systems.

The DAMS/Preservation workflow and SIMP’s role in this process is illustrated below. This example illustrates the use of CONTENTdm/Rosetta, but, theoretically, any combination DAMS/Preservation system will work with SIMP:



Original Diagram created by Sean Buckner, Digital Preservation Librarian, Texas A&M University

Description of the Workflow:

- Materials are digitized and a master copy is placed into a staging folder located on a library server (this can be any basic Unix server).
- In the staging folder, directories are created and named to correspond with collection titles.
- Individual digital items are placed in sub-folders within their respective collection directories
- Digital items are sent to the SIMP Tool for packaging and metadata editing
- Completed packages are approved by an administrator.
- A .tsv file is downloaded containing all of the metadata and file information needed for upload to a DAMS, along with the corresponding derivative access copies of the content for upload to a preservation platform
- Content is uploaded to a DAMS
- Master copies of the fully processed digital files are sent to the preservation platform.
- The SIMP tool queues the selected digital assets and generates a Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard (METS) record that includes checksums, file titles, and some structural and technical metadata. The descriptive metadata is excluded.

- The master copies and METS record of each asset are packaged in accordance with the OAIS model to create a SIP (Submission Information Package), which is then copied over to the preservation platform.

The xml generated by the SIMP tool can be formatted to any platform and adapted to different systems as the digital library and digital preservation programs continue to evolve.

Conclusion

Today, Law libraries digitizing their law reviews can easily integrate preservation strategies into existing workflows. LIPA's Law Review Digital Preservation Program offers seamless integration with Digital Commons/CLOCKSS. This solution works best for law libraries already subscribed to Digital Commons and requires no extra cost or personnel resources. For law libraries using other systems, the SIMP Tool is freely available, open source, and adaptable to any systems combination. This solution works best for law libraries without a subscription to Digital Commons, but who may already have some technological infrastructure and personnel dedicated to digital publishing of law reviews. With the plethora of tools currently available, there can longer be any reasonable justification for delaying preservation efforts for law reviews.

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