

RFC-000: The Library of Cyberspace

A Friendly Guide to Digital Preservation

For everyone, not just programmers

What Is This?

Imagine a library where:

- **Your work is safe** – because friends keep copies for each other
- **Nothing gets lost** – even if one computer fails
- **You know who made what** – like a signature on a painting
- **It belongs to everyone** – like a community garden

That's the Library of Cyberspace.

Why Does This Matter?

We all have things worth keeping:

- Family photos
- Creative work
- Research and writing
- Code we've written
- Things we want to pass on

Right now, most of this lives on company servers. That works great... until:

- The company shuts down
- Your account gets locked
- The service changes
- Something just disappears

Friends don't disappear. Friends keep copies.

The Simple Idea

What if preserving things worked like borrowing books from friends?

You ← → Friend ← → Friend

Everyone helps everyone.
Like a neighborhood library,
but for anything digital.

That's really all this is.

How It Works

1. You Sign Your Work

When you create something, you sign it digitally. Like initializing a document – but impossible to forge.

2. You Share With Friends

You give copies to people you trust. They might share with people they trust too.

3. Anyone Can Check

If someone has a copy, they can verify: “Yes, this is really from that person, unchanged.”

4. Together, Nothing Is Lost

No single computer has to hold everything. Together, friends keep it all safe.

Why “A Circle of Friends”?

This isn't a company or an organization. It's just people who:

- Care about keeping things safe
- Have some storage to spare
- Want to help each other out

Think of it like a book club, but instead of reading together, you're preserving together.

What Can You Keep?

Anything digital that matters to you:

- Writing and documents
- Photos and artwork
- Music and recordings
- Software and code
- Research and notes
- Family history

If it's worth keeping, it belongs in the library.

How Is This Different?

Cloud Storage	Library of Cyberspace
Company holds your files	Friends hold copies
You rent space	You share space
One place, one copy	Many places, many copies
Could disappear	Friends don't disappear

The Heart of It

Friends Helping Friends

That's really what this is. Not a product. Not a startup. Just people who think some things are worth preserving, helping each other do it.

Many Hands Make Light Work

No one person keeps everything. But together? Together we can keep it all.

Who Is This For?

- **Writers** who want their work to last
 - **Families** who want to preserve memories
 - **Researchers** who care about their data
 - **Artists** who want their work to survive
 - **Anyone** who has ever lost files they cared about
 - **Friends** who want to help each other
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How Do I Start?

1. Set aside some storage on your computer
 2. Find friends who want to do the same
 3. Share what you want to preserve
 4. Keep copies of what friends share with you
 5. That's it – you're part of the library
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Our Promise to Each Other

- **We keep copies** – so nothing is lost
 - **We verify authenticity** – so nothing is changed
 - **We share generously** – because that's what friends do
 - **We help each other** – because together we're stronger
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A Newton for Cyberspace

In 1993, Apple made something called the Newton. It had a revolutionary idea: your stuff just exists. You don't "save" files or "open" documents. Things float in a "soup" of objects, and you find them by asking questions:

- "Show me notes from last week"
- "Find everything about the garden project"

No folders. No filenames. Just your stuff, always there, always findable.

The Newton died because it needed a network that didn't exist yet.

We have that network now.

What We Learned from Newton

Newton Had	We Have
Object soup	Your vault – objects that just exist
Queries	Find by pattern: (soup "garden*")
Beaming to friends	Publish and subscribe
Personal assistant	Cryptographic identity (you are your keys)

What Newton Lacked

Newton objects weren't signed. You trusted the device, not the data.

Our objects prove themselves:

```
OBJECT: family-photos-2024
Signature: VERIFIED
Author: alice (your key)
Encrypted: yes (only you can read)
```

The object knows who made it. The object knows it hasn't changed. The object carries its own proof.

The Dream Realized

Newton was a dream of personal computing freed from the filesystem. It failed because it needed a network of friends that didn't exist.

We have the network now. We have the cryptography now.

We're building the Newton it deserves:

- **A soup that spans friends** – your stuff, replicated safely
- **Objects that prove themselves** – signed, verified, trustworthy
- **Identity without permission** – your keys are your identity
- **Memory that can't be rewritten** – every change is recorded forever

One Last Thing

The Library of Alexandria was the greatest library of the ancient world. It burned, and we lost so much.

We can do better now. Not with a building, but with friendship. Not with guards, but with mathematics. Not with one place, but with many.

The Library of Cyberspace is just friends, keeping copies, for each other.

A Newton that can't be turned off.

"Many hands make light work."

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