

Digipres Theory vs. Practice

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Objectives

- Focus on the prescribed standards and fundamentals of digital preservation theory
- Contrast these fundamentals with realities of digital preservation
- Explore how praxes can change to address disconnects in theory
- Discuss some of the remaining challenges for preservation done through praxis
- Consider why adhering to digital preservation standards is unsuitable given our current political climate

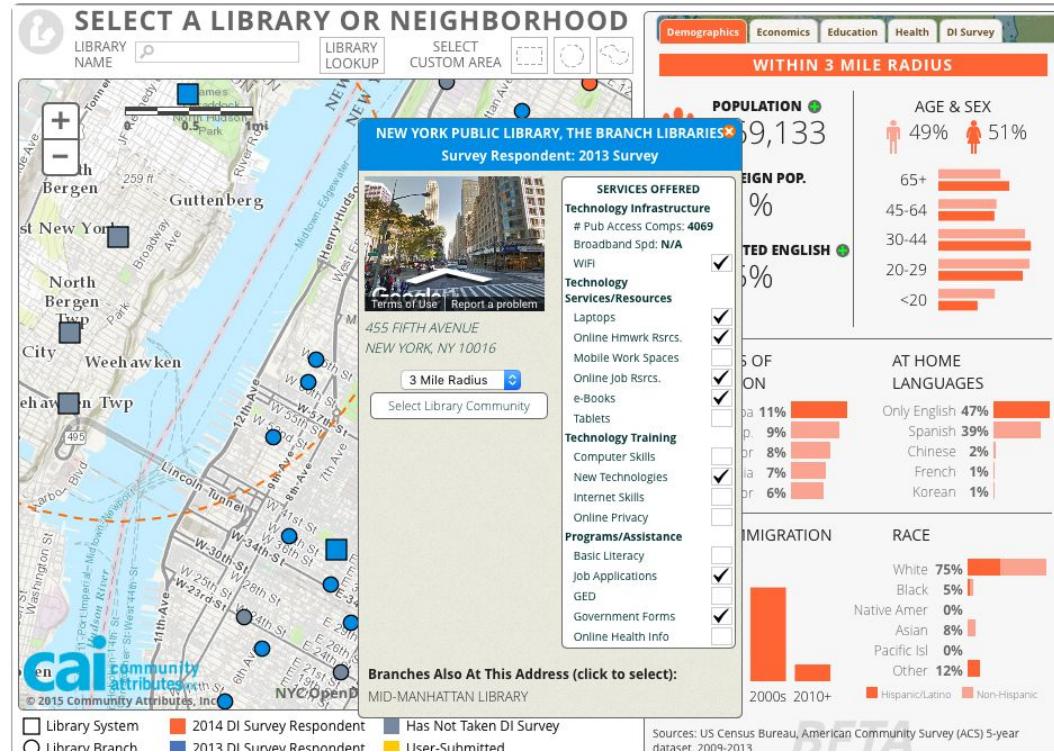
Digital Preservation Fundamentals

- International Organization for Standardization
- OAIS - ISO 14721:2003
 - SIPs, AIPs, and DIPs
- Trusted Digital Repositories - ISO 16363
- Storage Infrastructure

Skills Acquisition

- MLIS programs fixation on soft > hard skills
- Emphasis on internship-based learning of tech skills (but not required)
- Less than 25% of courses offer practical, 'hands on' experience with digital projects
- Even when experiences are made available they tend to rely on traditional skills (here things like archival processings vs digital preservation)
- Success found when worked tied to larger institutional Digital Humanities projects (Gonnerman and Epstein, 2016)
- Hard to attain skills within the “3 Credit Tyranny” (Lankes, 2013)
- The field is STILL incredibly exclusive

Location Matters



Location Matters

SELECT A LIBRARY OR NEIGHBORHOOD

LIBRARY NAME

LIBRARY LOOKUP

SELECT CUSTOM AREA

RICHLAND COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

1431 ASSEMBLY STREET
COLUMBIA, SC 29201

3 Mile Radius

Select Library Community

Export Library Profile to PDF

Edit Branch & Survey Info

There is no survey data recorded for this facility. A limited questionnaire is available within this app. If you are a representative of this library, click 'Edit Branch & Survey Info' to add your data to the map.

Library System

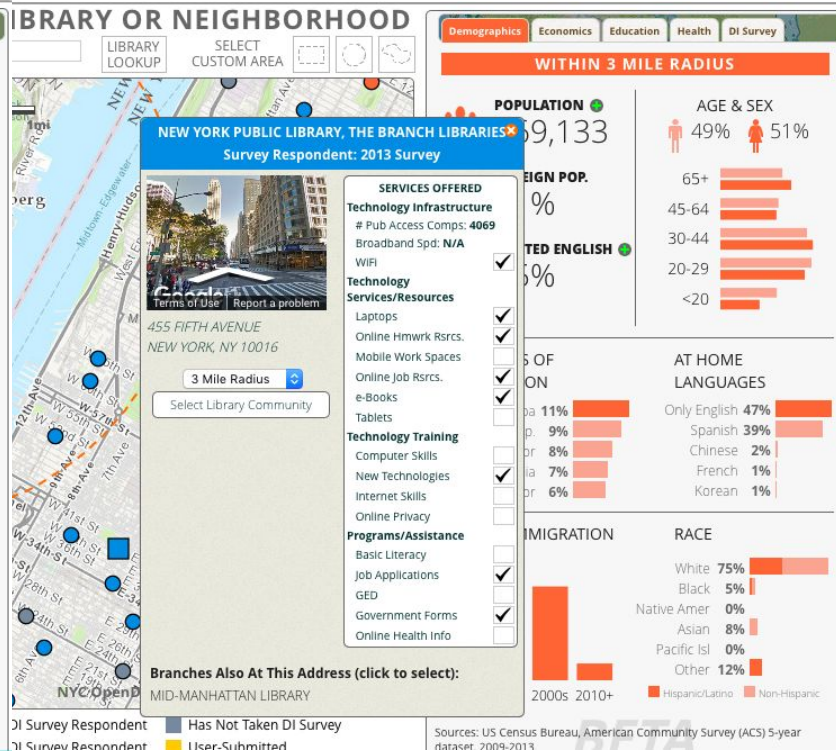
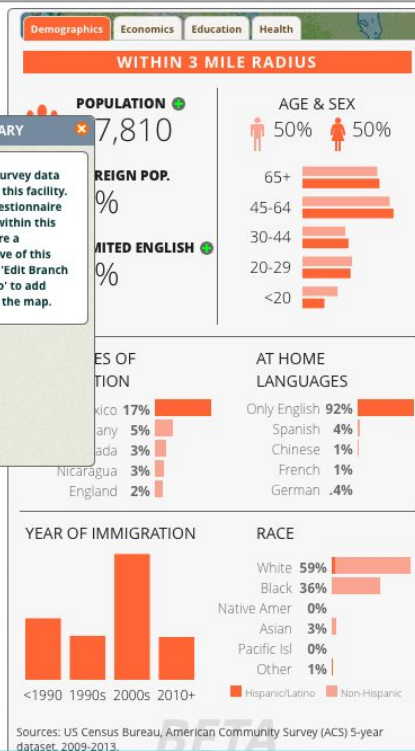
Library Branch

2014 DI Survey Respondent

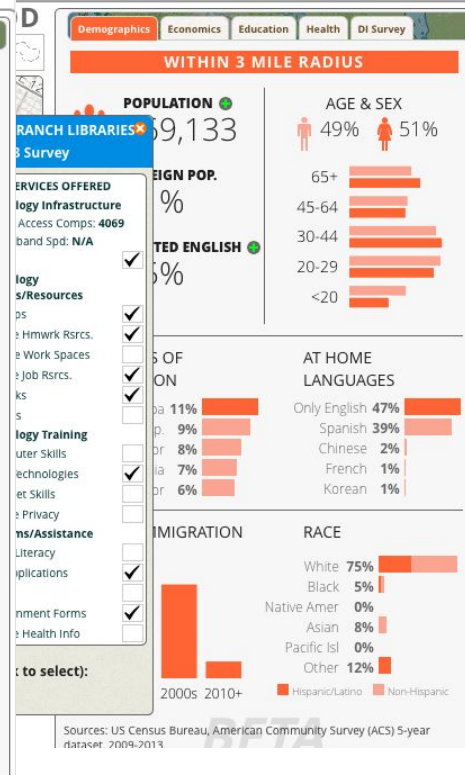
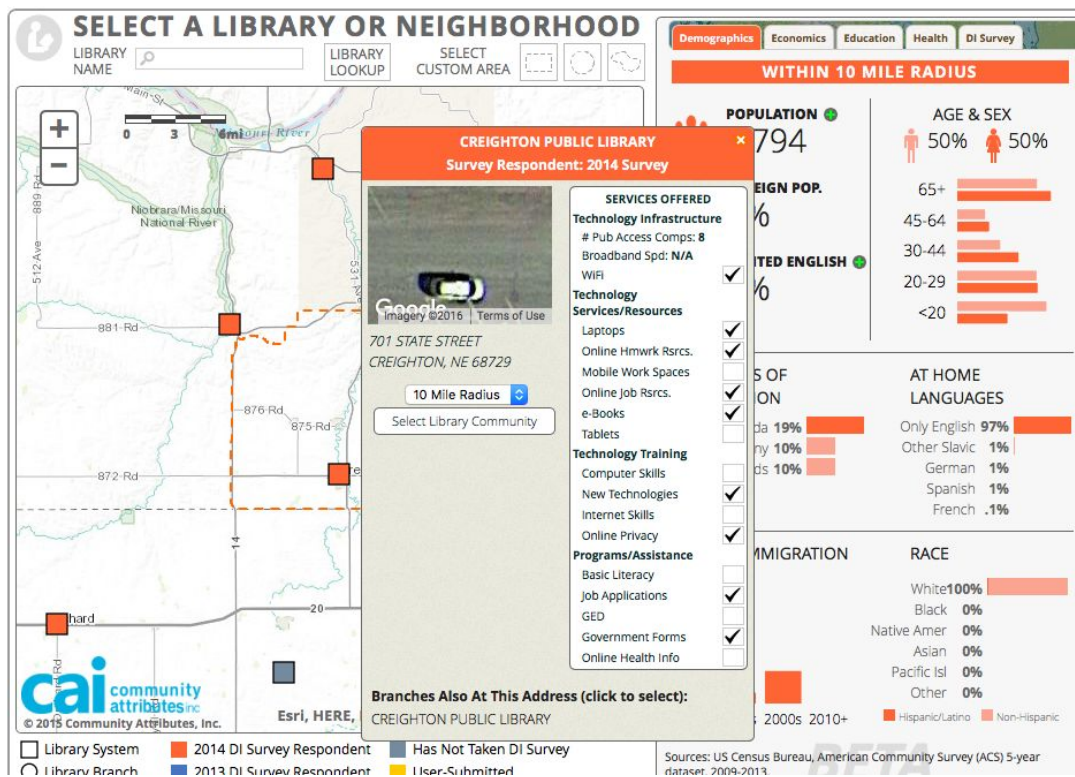
2013 DI Survey Respondent

User-Submitted

Has Not Taken DI Survey



Location Matters



Challenges of Prioritizing Digital Preservation

- Other needs take precedence (more popular collections, obsolete format, understaffed, etc...)
- Some groups vastly underrepresented in collections (queer persons, folks of color, location limited)
- Assessments are under utilized, but when done show a considerable amount of materials unaccounted for in even ideal digitization workflows (Harris, 2015)
- Then there is....DEGRALESCENE! (Casey, 2015)

Further Challenges to Community Archives

- Low funding, small labor pool, lacking technology (software), lacking technology (hardware), long-term sustainability, 'best' practices comprehension, location (climate), location (population), location (cultural issues), information organization, viable digital storage, server space, security (digitally), security (physically), controversial materials, not processed, sporadic access, complicated access to physical materials, acquisition plans, documentation, variety of digitization specs, no digitization specs, single holder of knowledge of materials, institutional support for digital preservation policies, community board expectations, political censorship, political climate, adherence to ADA compliance, diversity of formats and file types, etc..

So Why Does Praxis Matter?




A Definition of Praxis; Or the Time Travis Completely Shamed His Teachers By Using a Dictionary Definition in a Presentation

praxis 

[**prak**-sis]

 **Spell**

 Syllables

[Examples](#) [Word Origin](#)

[See more synonyms on Thesaurus.com](#)

noun, plural **praxes, **praxes****  [**prak**-seez] ([Show IPA](#))

1. practice, as distinguished from theory; application or use, as of knowledge or skills.
2. convention, habit, or custom.
3. a set of examples for practice.

How Can Praxis Inform Theory?

- Lean hard into the fact that **Best Practices** is plural for a reason
- Theoretical standards are contextual and relational
- Theory can stifle one's ability to encounter praxis (in the practical skills sense)
- An inversion of this model could inform not a theory, but theories on digital preservation
- Produces more extensive list of replicable models that relate to size of collection, funding and staffing
- Theory, can only be taught in theory

How is Praxis Currently Managed in LIS Programs?

- Unpaid internship model
- Internships often focused on laborious, non-skill oriented tasks
- Failure to encounter theory-infused workflow, even in high degree institutions
- Rare for archives to have a person dedicated to training/aiding interns

Extended Challenge to Moving Image Archival Training

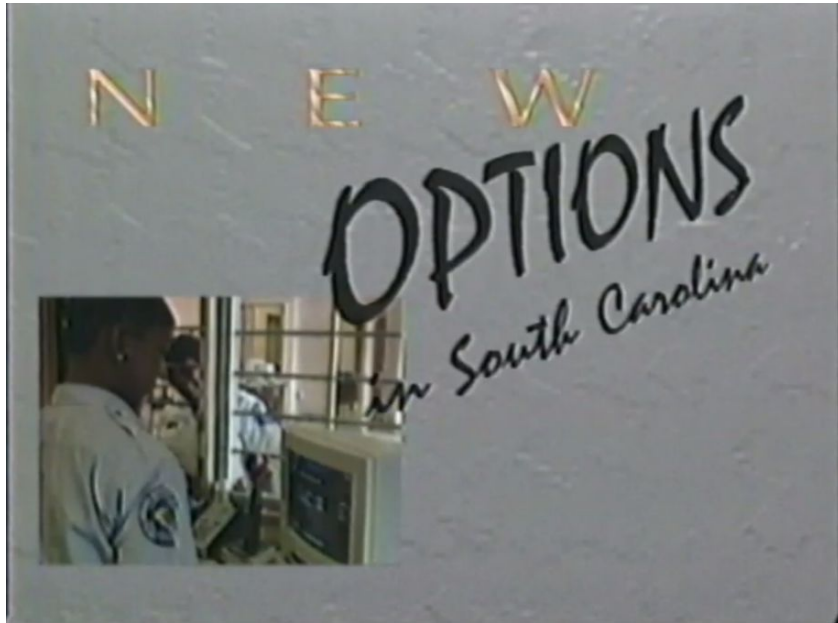
- Conflicting understandings of preservation between institutions/employees
 - Server demands result in prioritizing of materials
 - Small window of error for digitization
- Reliance on grant funding limits exploration for alternatives to theoretical ideals
 - Negatives failure in troubling ways and delegitimizes productivity of trial and error (MacDonough et al. 2015)
- Format challenges
 - Video lower priority
 - Born digital content

The Role of Praxis in the Classroom

A Case Study: Currently Co-Teaching Design and Management of Digital Image Collections

- A Service-Learning Course
- Creation, curation, and management of digital archive reflecting collection of documents chronicling the history of contemporary women's activism in Columbia, South Carolina
- While mostly paper-documents, the collection does include a handful of VHS tapes of speeches, public broadcast documentaries and event recordings
- These item specifically resulted (and are still resulting) in a myriad of challenges

What Challenges?



NEW OPTIONS: Five Women, Five Stories Video (1997)

- Cannot feasibly provide ‘archival’ preservation copies
 - Cannot promise access to physical copy
 - Even access copies too large to house on server-end
 - Items which do not meet defined institutional priorities
 - Must reconstitute how and where items of this capacity should be stored...theoretically
-

Pulling Models from Praxis Vs. Theory

- Ideally, this course would explore intensive options available to moving images preservation (NOT A A/V ARCHIVING COURSE)
- Recalibrates the options for preservation standards that allow mobility between size of institutions
- It teaches against the internal-internship model and allows students to deliver their own practitioner skills and good, if not equal, products to institutional counterparts
- Praxis understands the possibility for multiple ways doing things, as opposed to one frustratingly unattainable option

Understand Praxis as a way
to help not hinder groups
who need narratives
prioritized and preserved,
digitally and culturally

Power.

References

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Casey, M. (2015). Why Media Preservation Can't Wait: The Gathering Storm. *IASA Journal*, 44, 14-16.

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