Digital Preservation: The Issues Aren't Going Away
Thursday, October 03, 2002
4:55 p.m. - 6:10 p.m.

Current Issues Roundtable: Digital Preservation: The Issues Aren't Going Away

1. The major recommendation of the group was that EDUCAUSE has not focused sufficiently on digital preservation and that it should shape guidelines on
   - how preservation should proceed in institutional libraries
   - how individual libraries can learn from one another

2. Regarding digital preservation, few mandates exist and few policies have been formed. Institutions need to identify who is responsible and promote the adoption and endorsement of policies, not only to comply with regulations but to preserve institutional memory and IP resources.
   - Preserving bytestreams must be viewed in the context of preserving meaning.
   - Thorough descriptions and standardized metadata must accompany preservation.

3. Institutional libraries are primary stakeholders, but there are others. Libraries need to raise awareness about the need for digital preservation: with physical loss (e.g., from acid paper) we can see the loss, but digital loss is more insidious because less noticeable. Data warehouse projects, now widespread, provide an excellent context for discussions of the need for digital preservation beyond the administrative resources.

4. How should an institution begin a program of digital preservation? With caution.
   - Explore the burgeoning institutional repository activity.
   - Proceed with a series of small projects.
   - Keep in touch with peer libraries engaged in digital preservation.
   - Acknowledge that not everything can be kept.
   - Start at the origin of the workflow: with digitizing efforts.

5. The wave of the future? Do emulations in modules, and then migrate the emulator modules.

--
Michael Neuman, Ph.D.
Program Director of Library-IT Collaborations
University Information Services
Georgetown University

Copyright Michael Neuman, 2002. This work is the intellectual property of the author. Permission is granted for this material to be shared for non-commercial, educational purposes, provided that this copyright appears on the reproduced materials and notice is given that the copying is by permission of the author. To disseminate otherwise or to republish requires written permission from the author.