



CSHL Library & Archives Digital Preservation Policy

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To be reviewed: Annually

Purpose

This document formalizes Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Library & Archives continuing commitment to both short-term and long-term preservation of its diverse and extensive range of digital resources.

Digital resources are part of the CSHL Library & Archives collections and subject to the same criteria for selection and retention decisions as other media. CSHL Library & Archives are committed to ensuring that the collections remain available over the long term through prevention of damage and deterioration; reversing damage where possible; and, when necessary, changing the format of materials to preserve their intellectual content.

As with other parts of the collections, decisions about preservation are made by the Executive Director of the Library & Archives, staff archivists, and other department heads as experts on the value of the content, and in consultation with the relevant technical experts (CSHL Library & Archives systems administrators and the CSHL Information Technology Department). When possible, decisions about the need for long-term retention should be made at the time of creation, acquisition, or licensing of digital resources.

For digital resources that are deemed to be of long-term value, preservation can be defined as the actions needed to assure enduring access to the full content of those resources over time. Content has wider implications than simply assuring that a given file can be accessed. For example, hierarchical and structural relationships among the files (such as the pages of a book) and metadata that make the files usable must be preserved as well as the files themselves,

Digital resources may exist in multiple versions. CSHL Library & Archives is committed to preserving the archival version: the fullest, highest-quality available version of the resource, whenever possible; and the descriptive, structural, and administrative metadata associated with it.

Our short-term plan for implementing our Digital Preservation Policy includes both ongoing, yearly actions as well as a multi-year strategy towards the implementation of a long-term viable digital preservation program. Long-term means a period of time long enough for there to be concern about the impacts of changing technologies, including support for new media and data formats, on the information being held in a repository. This period extends to the indefinite future.

Objectives

The primary intention of the digital preservation program is to preserve the intellectual and cultural heritage important to Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, as well as the history of molecular biology and genetics in general. CSHL Library and Archives recognizes its responsibility to preserve digital collections in support of teaching, learning, scholarship, and research. The program's objectives are to:

- Maintain and develop processes and systems to capture, manage, preserve, find, and make accessible digital materials now and into the future
- Identify, through systematic selection, digital assets to be preserved across new generations of technologies
- Include in the scope of the program materials that originated in digital form (born digital) and those that were converted to digital form through a digitization process
- Provide context for digital materials by creating the metadata necessary to understand them
- Identify and support the core working team to develop and operate the digital archive and provide requisite training and development as needed
- Comply with prevailing community standards for digital preservation and access
- Explore collaborative opportunities to collect and preserve digital materials so as to make the best use of available resources and avoid duplicative efforts

Scope and Priorities

The digital preservation program is responsible for identifying, securing, and providing the means to preserve and ensure ongoing access to selected digital assets. Not all of the digital content CSHL Library & Archives creates or acquires will be preserved. CSHL Library & Archives commits to these classes of objects with associated preservation priorities and levels of commitment:

- Priority 1: Born digital materials - Rigorous effort will be made to ensure preservation in perpetuity of material selected for preservation, both library resources and institutional records.
- Priority 2: Digitized materials (not available analog) - Every reasonable step will be taken to preserve materials without a print analog, when re-digitizing is not possible or no analog versions are located elsewhere. Also included are digitized materials that have annotations or other value-added features making them difficult or impossible to recreate.
- Priority 3: Digitized materials (available analog) – Reasonable measures will be taken to extend the life of the digital objects with a readily available print analog. However, the cost of re-digitizing as needed will be weighed against the cost of preserving the existing digital objects
- Priority 4: Technology conservation – maintaining obsolete hardware and software as a means of access in the short to medium term.

- Priority 5: Administrative, scholarly, and other digital resources created at CSHL outside of the Library. CSHL Library & Archives have responsibility for informing, consulting, and as appropriate coordinating with other units of CSHL to assure that CSHL staff and students will have adequate ongoing access to these resources. Included here are resources considered to be of long-term value.
- Priority 6: Commercially available digital resources. CSHL Library & Archives have responsibility for working externally through consortial action, licensing agreements, etc. to assure that someone (possibly, but not necessarily CSHL Library & Archives) carries out preservation so that CSHL staff and students will have adequate ongoing access to these resources. Particular emphasis should be given to resources which exist in digital form only.

Storage

Data storage at CSHL is managed by the CSHL Information Technology Department. The primary computing facility consists of an 800-square foot data center with raised flooring, and is climate and UPS controlled. CSHL Library & Archives must coordinate with the Information Technology Department to ensure the long-term security of its digital assets.

Metadata

Metadata is fundamental to preserving CSHL Library & Archives' digital resources. Preservation metadata includes a number of different types of metadata: administrative (used in managing information resources including rights and permissions), technical (describing hardware and software needed to maintain an information object) and structural (identifying the relationships between objects such as part of, dependent upon that form intellectual entities. Particular attention is paid to the documentation of digital provenance (metadata documenting the history of the object and any actions taken to maintain and provide access), and of relationships among different objects within preservation repositories (vs. relationships between resources, i.e., structural metadata).

Access/Use

Access to preserved digital content is provided using the most up to date technology available at the time of use. When retaining the look and feel is deemed necessary, CSHL Library & Archives will seek to enable the original versions of the digital objects to be rendered over time. CSHL Library & Archives complies with access restrictions as defined in relevant laws, regulations, licenses, and deposit agreements. Appropriate preservation plans to make rendering the original version possible are devised on a case-by-case basis and revised as needed. Without the preservation of digital materials, access would not be possible and essential cultural heritage materials would be at risk.

Sources consulted

Columbia University Libraries Policy for Preservation of Digital Resources (2006)

<http://library.columbia.edu/services/preservation/dlpolicy.html>

Cornell University Library Digital Preservation Policy Framework (2004)

<http://ecommons.library.cornell.edu/handle/1813/11230>

LYRASIS Preservation Services Leaflet - Contents of a Digital Preservation Policy

<http://www.lyrasis.org/LYRASIS%20Digital/Pages/Preservation%20Services/Resources-and-Publications.aspx>

University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries Digital Preservation Policy (2011)

<http://www.library.umass.edu/assets/aboutus/attachments/University-of-Massachusetts-Amherst-Libraries-Digital-Preservation-Policy3-18-2011-templated.pdf>

Yale University Library Policy for the Digital Preservation (2007) <http://www.library.yale.edu/iac/DPC/revpolicy2-19-07.pdf>