

From the Editor-in-Chief: Introduction

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“Of the gladdest moments in human life, methinks, is the departure upon a distant journey to unknown lands.”
– Sir Richard Francis Burton (1821–1890)¹

A regular section of *Preservation, Digital Technology & Culture* is “Currents and Comments,” which features news, projects, and information about professional meetings throughout the world. Every “C&C” column contains news from many countries; in any calendar year events in dozens of countries are included. The most frequently represented are the United States, the UK, China, Australia, and India. Many European countries host digital preservation conferences; this issue includes events in Belgium, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, and Switzerland. There are probably activities in many places that we miss; we invite you to send news to us.

“Currents and Comments” reflects the globalization of preservation, as do the journal’s articles. This issue contains Milijana Micunovic, Hana Marčetić, and Maja Krtalić’s study “Literature and Writers in the Digital Age: Organization and Preservation of Digital Documents and the Digital Literary Legacy of Contemporary Croatian Writers” which offers fresh insights into writers and their digital texts. The study’s authors interviewed 9 distinguished Croatian writers to learn about their practices in creating and preserving digital works. The writers use a host of preservation strategies, described in the article. While they all use simple strategies to preserve their texts, such as backing them up, few have considered their “digital legacy.” A couple of the writers have considered leaving their work to a “memory institution.” This suggests that information professionals should regularly reach out to insure that the work of local artists and scholars is preserved.

“Read by Touch: Stewarding the Reading and Writing Collection at the Perkins School for the Blind,” by Molly Stothert-Maurer, Jennifer Arnott, and Jennifer Hale, addresses another concern: how to preserve items whose meaning inheres in their very structures. The Perkins School contains examples of a variety of writing systems created for the blind and deaf, also referred to as the

“deafblind.” It is one of the richest such collections in the world. Books printed without ink such as those in Braille, or on other embossed surfaces, nearly defy such preservation strategies as rebinding or digitization. The physical structures of these books provide a narrative of the history of deafblind publishing. The authors demonstrate the importance of thoughtful preservation strategies based on how such materials are created and used.

A pair of invited articles describes the evolution of AERI: the Archival Education & Research Institutes that have been held since 2009. (A report on the AERI 2013 institute, by Patricia B. Condon and Eliot Wilczek, appeared in *PDT&C*, 42.6 [2013]: 226.) Anne Gilliland, AERI’s chief architect, evaluates the impact that AERI has had on archival research—including preservation. Sarah Buchanan, a doctoral candidate at the University of Texas, Austin, provides a perspective on how the AERI institutes have fostered support for doctoral research. Both authors reflect on AERI’s international reach.

In this issue “Conversations” features Amy Ryan, Chair of the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) Board. The DPLA aims to digitize and bring together the contents of American libraries and archives and make them freely available online. It contains a portal that delivers to students, teachers, scholars, and the public rich digital resources; the portal is a platform that enables new and transformative uses of digitized cultural heritage. In a future issue we will feature a follow-up interview with Dan Cohen, Founding Executive Director of DPLA.

Preservation is a universal concern; we must all find ways to insure access to born digital and digitized collections of text, image, and time-based media. The pages of *PDT&C* reflect international research and practice. Sir Richard Burton’s quote might be slightly modified to refer to the aims of this journal: “The most *informative* moment in human life, methinks, is *to learn about research in other countries*.”

Erratum to: In Derek Murphy’s “Documenting Pocket Universes: New Approaches to Preserving Online Games” in *PDT&C* 44.4 (2015), p. 180, “Tom Lowood” should have read “Henry Lowood.” The name is correct in the References. We apologize for the error.

¹ Richard Francis Burton, Journal Entry (December 2, 1856). See https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Richard_Francis_Burton (accessed 2/18/16).