52.2.1

At the 2008 ALA Annual Conference, Council voted to adopt the Definitions of Digital Preservation and the Revised Preservation Policy for the American Library Association, 2007-2008 ALA CD#55.

At the 2009 ALA Midwinter Meeting, upon recommendation by the Policy Monitoring Committee, Council voted that ALA Policy 52.2.1 be DELETED and REPLACED with the text that appears in the 2007-2008 ALA CD#55, Definitions of Digital Preservation and the Revised Preservation Policy. See attached document.

ALA COUNCIL DOCUMENT # 53 1ev.
Assigned by Council Resolutions
Committee _____
Member Initial
Date 6/29/2008

Resolution Adopting the Definitions of Digital Preservation and the Revised Preservation Policy for the American Library Association

Whereas, the American Library Association's preservation policy (53.1.7) is based on the Association's mission to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all, and

Whereas, the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services has been delegated responsibility for preservation and formatting issues by the American Library Association, and

Whereas, the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services charged the Preservation and Reformatting Section to draft definitions of digital preservation and update the American Library Association Preservation Policy to include digital preservation: now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the American Library Association adopt the definitions of digital preservation and the revised Preservation Policy for use on the web, verbally, in written policy statements, and other documents.

Moved: Diane Dates Casey, ALCTS Councilor (Marriott-Anaheim 714-750-8000)

Seconded: Wei Jeng-Chu, Councilor-at-Large (Marriott-Anaheim 714-750-8000)

Council Resolutions Committee

Definitions of Digital Preservation

Prepared by the Preservation and Reformatting Section, Working Group on Defining Digital Preservation
ALA Annual Conference, Washington, D.C., June 24, 2007

Preamble:

These definitions have been developed to promote an understanding of digital preservation within the library community, as well as our allied professions and the user communities we exist to serve. This draft is presented to mark our current understanding of digital preservation and encourage further development of these ideas.

During the American Library Association's (ALA) 2007 Midwinter Meeting, a working group within the Preservation and Reformatting Section (PARS) was charged to draft a definition for digital preservation to support the work of PARS, the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS) and the ALA, for use on the web, verbally, in written policy statements, and other documents. Our work was reviewed at the 2007 Annual Meeting and approved for further distribution by the PARS and ALCTS Executive Committees.

The working group studied a number of resources to familiarize itself with the critical elements of digital preservation identified by a broad selection of individuals and agencies. We endeavored to cast these ideas into language that would speak to a wide variety of stakeholders while also being consistent with the core preservation concepts that have developed in the library and archival communities.

We decided to package a set of core concepts into a short, medium, and long version to accommodate a variety of needs. The long version includes a number of currently accepted best practices but is not intended to be an exhaustive list. As more is learned about implementing digital preservation programs, the definitions should be reviewed and revised on a regular basis.

A few key terms and phrases have already been identified as points that require further discussion and require special attention to clarify their relationship to the professional vocabularies of archivists, librarians, computer scientists and system administrators. These are explained here and *italicized* in the definition draft that follows.

- *Policies, strategies and actions:* this phrase makes explicit the need for a declared intention to preserve, a plan for doing so, and engagement in measurable activities to realize that plan. These policies and strategies determine the precise actions required of a digital preservation effort.
- *To ensure access to:* the concept of access was initially used because of its fundamental place in the mission of libraries, but the working group has recognized that the phrase "to ensure usability of" may speak more effectively to the needs for computer processing and rights to access that are crucial for digital content, as well as the traditional interaction of our patrons with our resources.
- *Accurate rendering of authenticated content:* this phrase refers to well-established library and archival concepts for the authorship and provenance of a work as well as the integrity and functionality of a digital object. In digital preservation there may be a requirement to support the ongoing machine readability and future processing potential of digital content in addition to human interaction with the content.
- *Born digital and reformatted content:* The term "reformatted" carries a very particular meaning in the library community and among the PARS membership. This meaning is different than its colloquial use and its meaning in information technology. Consequently, the group is considering expansion of this phrase to "content that is born digital as well as converted to digital form."

The working group:
Further information, including revisions and background documentation, is available at the working group's public website: http://blogs.ala.org/digipres.php.

- **Cathy Martyniak**, University of Florida (Co-chair)
- **Jake Nadal**, Preservation Field Service Librarian, The New York Public Library (Co-chair)
- **Becky Ryder**, Preservation Librarian, University of Kentucky
- **Evelyn Frangakis**, Chief Librarian for Preservation, The New York Public Library
- **George Blood**, Safe Sound Archive
- **Karen Brown**, Preservation Librarian, SUNY Albany
- **Margaret Byrnes**, Head, Preservation & Collection Management Section, National Library of Medicine
- **Sian Meikle**, Digital Services Librarian, University of Toronto

Short definition:

Digital preservation combines policies, strategies and actions that *ensure access to* digital content over time.

Medium definition:

Digital preservation combines policies, strategies and actions *to ensure access to* reformatted and born digital content regardless of the challenges of media failure and technological change. The goal of digital preservation is the accurate rendering of authenticated content over time.

Long definition:

Digital preservation combines policies, strategies and actions to ensure the accurate rendering of authenticated content over time, regardless of the challenges of media failure and technological change. Digital preservation applies to both *born digital and reformatted content*.

Digital preservation policies document an organization's commitment to preserve digital content for future use; specify file formats to be preserved and the level of preservation to be provided; and ensure compliance with standards and best practices for responsible stewardship of digital information.

Digital preservation strategies and actions address content creation, integrity and maintenance.

Content creation includes:

- Clear and complete technical specifications
- Production of reliable master files
- Sufficient descriptive, administrative and structural metadata to ensure future access
- Detailed quality control of processes

Content integrity includes:

- Documentation of all policies, strategies and procedures
- Use of persistent identifiers
- Recorded provenance and change history for all objects
- Verification mechanisms
- Attention to security requirements
- Routine audits

Content maintenance includes:

- A robust computing and networking infrastructure
- Storage and synchronization of files at multiple sites
- Continuous monitoring and management of files
- Programs for refreshing, migration and emulation
- Creation and testing of disaster prevention and recovery plans
- Periodic review and updating of policies and procedures

The Preservation and Reformatting Section contributes to library service and librarianship through encouragement, promotion of, and responsibility for those activities of the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services of the American Library Association relating to the preservation and reformatting of library materials in all types of institutions The Preservation and Reformatting Section provides leadership in the application of new technologies to assure continued access to library collections.

Policy Revised 2008

Preamble:

The American Library Association's policy on preservation is based on the Association's mission to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all. The Preservation policy has as its goal promoting the preservation of our cultural heritage and ensuring access to information in a useable and trustworthy form. ALA affirms that the preservation of library resources protects the public's right to the free flow of information as embodied in the First Amendment to the Constitution and the Library Bill of Rights.

The Association supports the preservation of information disseminated and published in all media and formats. The Association affirms that the preservation of information content and information resources are central to libraries and librarianship.

National Information Services and Standards Responsibilities

The Association and its Divisions will work closely with standards-setting organizations to identify and develop standards relevant to the preservation of library collections, participate in their periodic review and updating, identify and develop new standards when needed, and promote compliance with existing standards.

The Association will actively support its Divisions and other organizations in developing preservation guidelines and best practices that may serve as catalysts for official national and international standards.

Usability, Longevity and Durability of Library Collections

The preservation of library materials is a process dependent upon both the producers and curators of information resources. In keeping with the missions of their individual institutions, librarians must commit to preserving their collections through appropriate care. Preservation of materials in their original format should be practiced whenever possible, through proper storage and handling, supplemented by remedial treatment of damaged and fragile items. Replacement or reformatting of deteriorated materials must be actively pursued to enable users to have unimpeded access to the intellectual record, regardless of the condition of original documents. Preservation issues should be addressed while planning for new construction or the renovation of existing buildings to ensure that collections are preserved through appropriate and non-damaging storage and given proper security.

Librarians who create, maintain, and share bibliographic records and other metadata associated with their collections enhance security, access, and preservation. These activities facilitate collaborative efforts to protect the Nation's cultural heritage and are integral to effective life-cycle management of digital publications, whether born digital or digitized, to assure their usefulness for future generations.

Media manufacturers, information creators and disseminators, publishers, distributors and libraries must work together to improve the usability, durability, and longevity of their products (e.g., paper, film, magnetic tape, optical disk) that ensure the persistence of these products.

It is the Association's official position that publishers, information distributors and manufacturers have an obligation and responsibility to libraries and to the public to report appropriate information about the usability, durability and longevity of media. The Association strongly urges publishers to use paper and other media that meet standards promulgated by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the International Standards Organization (ISO) for all publications of enduring value. Publishers should include a statement of compliance on the verso of the title page of a book or the masthead or copyright area of a periodical, and in catalogs, advertising, and bibliographic references.

The Association will engage in active education and public relations efforts to develop, promote, and publicize standards for the usability, durability, and longevity of information media; to engage both librarians and information producers in the preservation process; and to produce educational materials devoted to promoting the longevity of information resources.

Digital Preservation

The Association defines digital preservation as policies, strategies and actions that ensure access to digital content over time. Publishers and distributors of content in digital form must address the usability and longevity of their electronic works. The Association encourages publishers to provide metadata that will facilitate the life cycle management of works in digital formats and to deposit digital works in repositories that provide for the long-term persistence and usability of digital content. The Association will work with the publishers to develop guidelines on digital preservation to help ensure that such information will not be lost when publishers can no longer retain and disseminate it.

The Association encourages research on metadata, software, operating systems, and life cycle management techniques that may effect the preservation of digital works.

Advocacy

Librarians must educate the public (including public officials and administrators) about the choices and the financial commitments necessary to preserve our society's cultural and social records.

The preservation of primary source documents is integral to our right to know about and understand ourselves and the communities in which we live. Libraries have an obligation (a) to inform donors, users, administrators, and local officials about the ephemeral nature of primary source materials, (b) to promote strategies for the proper care, handling, and

storage of these materials, and (c) to recommend the use of durable media and methods of documentation.

The Association will help libraries cultivate public interest in this issue and will make information available regarding how concerned individuals, organizations, and governments may act on behalf of preservation.

Legislative Policy

The federal government must provide leadership in developing an expansive and inclusive national preservation policy. This policy should reinforce the mutual efforts of national, state, and local libraries to preserve materials that document our cultural heritage and make them widely available to all citizens. The federal government, by example, by policy, and by the efforts of its historical, cultural, and information institutions, should affirm the responsibility of all cultural institutions, including local and state libraries, to preserve and provide access to historical documents. The federal and state governments should provide incentives that encourage all institutions to participate in the national preservation effort.

The Association urges the federal and state government to take responsibility for the longevity of information that it publishes on paper, in microform, and in digital formats.

The Association, through its ALA Washington Office and its Legislation Agenda, will strongly support the efforts of librarians to increase Federal and state government funding for preservation programs.

End of Section