The Complete Guide to Personal Digital Archiving. **Edited by Brianna H. Marshall. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2018. 304 pp. Softcover. $68.00.**

Personal digital archiving (PDA) has become a subject of public interest in recent years because of an increasing need to learn skills and strategies for preserving personal data as information technologies progressively change. Unfortunately, archival theory and digital preservation practices do not always translate well to the general public. To help overcome this challenge and create new knowledge-building relationships, librarians and archivists are evaluating and adapting professional standards and exploring new ways to support and empower a larger community of digital stewards and preservationists.

As one of the more recent professional publications on PDA, *The Complete Guide to Personal Digital Archiving* provides practitioners in libraries and archives with a collection of thoughtful essays on common practices, case studies and instructional programs, and ethical implications related to the management and preservation of personal data. The book's editor, Brianna Marshall, is a bright information professional quickly rising in the ranks of the library and archives community. Since earning an MLS from Indiana University Bloomington in 2014, Marshall has held a leadership position in data curation and research services at the University of Wisconsin–Madison Libraries and recently transitioned to the University of California, Riverside, Library to become the director of Research Services. She has presented extensively at national and international conferences on research data management, literacy, and services, and this volume is her first major publication initiative. The book is divided into four parts that serve as an anecdotal guide to becoming more comfortable with building instructional programs to empower and enable communities to document and preserve their lived experiences. Each of the four parts is subdivided into chapters authored by 23 contributors. The backgrounds of contributors range from doctoral students and early-career professionals to more experienced coordinators and administrators, many of whom work in academic settings.

Part 1, "Learning about Personal Digital Archives Best Practices," covers many of the accepted standards and common practices in PDA. Part 1 has five chapters and introduces both practical and conceptual areas of PDA, including storing and managing digital images, preserving social media data, web archiving, and handling other types of digital objects. Prior to diving into the mechanics of preservation actions in each chapter, most contributors in part 1 provide a helpful list of common terms to explain some of the jargon digitization and curation practitioners frequently use. Although different types of content require different techniques and tools, contributors explain how some high-level concepts and models can be universally applied in local settings. For example, creating and managing web archives differ a great deal from creating and managing digital photographs, but storage principles (e.g., the 3-2-1 rule) can be applied to any personal collection of files. For other less-common types of content, readers will find abbreviated procedures for assessing, downloading, and reformatting files. However, a few of the handling tips listed for these less-common types seem to conflict with some established best practices in digital preservation. For preserving personal documents, for

example, contributors recommend converting all files created in major word-processing programs to the RTF format (or to PDF as a last resort), which excludes several other open file formats recommended by the Library of Congress (e.g., DOCX/OOXL, EPUB 3, and PDF/A).[1] Moreover, other content types equally at risk for obsolescence, such as proprietary e-mail and data stored on legacy storage media (e.g., floppy disks, Zip disks), are given little to no attention. Many libraries and archives are expanding their instruction programs and services to help educate communities on how to safely retrieve and preserve these types of personal files—a trend acknowledged later in part 4.

Parts 2 and 3, "Personal Digital Archives and Public" and "Community Audiences and Personal Digital Archives and Academic Audiences," take readers on a journey through several examples of successful PDA initiatives. Each of these examples contains an overview of the project, instructional approach and design, teams and institutions involved, significance of the project to user communities, and plans for ongoing activities. These case studies include the Memory Lab at the DC Public Library; the Queens Memory Digitization Project in Queens, New York; the Plateau Peoples' Web Portal at Washington State University; interinstitutional Personal Digital Archiving Days (PDAD) events held at liberal arts colleges across the Northeast; the Learning from Artists' Archives (LFAA) workshops at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and PDA programming for undergraduates at Montana State University. The authors write with authority and passion, making these forward-thinking, user-centric efforts informative, useful, and exciting. Many contributors emphasize the need to plan PDA activities carefully and to focus on engaging user communities in creative ways. They also encourage educators to be concerned more with learning from newer communities of users and thinking creatively about how to connect with them and support their needs. From learned experiences to instructional design, these essays will appeal most to practitioners and scholars involved in collections management, digital curation, or community outreach.

Part 4, "Social and Ethical Implications of Personal Digital Archives," is dedicated to an understudied aspect of PDA: the ethical underpinnings of personal archival work. The first two chapters cover issues surrounding privacy and metadata in digital environments, and how this impacts, and is influenced by, the cultural heritage sector. Chapter 12 offers a compelling argument that librarians and archivists are best positioned to counter the corporate "gambit" that poses a grave threat to the power and rights of users' data in the digital age. Other chapters continue in this direction, arguing that the role of libraries and archives is to help users understand and utilize their agency in personal records and metadata. As one author notes, librarians and archivists should reflect more on our own professional bias and seek a better cultural understanding of diverse communities to explore ways to support, encourage, and engage individuals and their records because that very work is transformative for both community and identity (pp. 221–23).

In many ways, the contributions in this volume are incredibly useful, especially for librarians and archivists developing or interested in becoming involved in PDA programs. However, a few areas of interest could have been included to support the ambitious

goal of providing a *complete* guide. First, a list of PDA-related communities, websites, e-mail groups, workshops, and other resources in the back matter would have benefited readers interested in connecting with the broader community of practitioners. Second, the process for identifying and selecting contributors to the volume, which the publisher may have influenced, remains unclear. Contextual information related to how authors and corresponding topics were arranged helps inform readers regarding the inception of the publication and establishes a connection between the contributor and the topic. It also sheds light on the impartiality among contributors, editor, and authorities on the subjects examined. Last, in relation to the core topics covered (best practices, successful programs and initiatives, and ethical implications of PDA), the lack of discussion of the history of PDA, understanding the costs of PDA, or how archival selection and appraisal can be applied to an individual's personal digital collection was disappointing. Although these topics are absent, they have been addressed to some degree elsewhere.[2]

As suggested throughout this guide, one the biggest challenges, and areas of opportunity, in PDA is rethinking traditional frameworks and processes originally designed for institutional settings, and *The Complete Guide to Personal Digital Archiving* is an example of recourse to this phenomenon. Many of the contributors are less interested in recycling the agendas of archival theory and professional standards and more concerned with leveraging highly practical programs in libraries and archives to empower individuals and community groups to better create, manage, and preserve personal data. Long-term access to personal collections will become more challenging with time, so it is important for libraries and archives to take a proactive approach to PDA programming and seize the opportunity to democratize digital preservation practices.

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NOTES

1. Library of Congress, "Recommended Formats Statement, 2018–2019," http://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs.

2. Christopher A. Lee, ed., *I, Digital: Personal Collections in the Digital Era* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011); Trevor Owens, *The Theory and Craft of Digital Preservation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2018); Gabriela Redwine, *Personal Digital Archiving, Digital Preservation Coalition, DPC Technology Watch Report* 15-01, December 2015, http://dx.doi.org/10.7207/twr15-01.