



PORTICO®

VOICES: LIBRARIANS TALK ABOUT ARCHIVING,  
PRESERVATION AND PORTICO

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Dear Colleagues –

As the higher education community continues its transition to ever greater reliance upon electronic resources, we – publishers, libraries and archives – are faced with an array of challenges surrounding the long-term preservation of these important scholarly resources.

Notable progress has been made, but a tremendous number of publications *remain unprotected*, and a majority of libraries face an increasing risk that electronic scholarly content will become inaccessible. Most publishers and libraries are still working to develop archival strategies and identify appropriate partners. At this point, two certainties stand in sharp relief. First, building and sustaining effective and robust preservation solutions requires broad support from a diverse array of publishers and libraries. Second, in this dynamic environment much can be gained by active communications and sharing of experiences among responsible parties.

To address in a small way the community's need for open communications, three libraries participating in Portico have agreed to share their perspective on digital preservation and strategies being developed at their institutions. We share these perspectives with you in the hope they may usefully contribute to discussions underway at your organization. We appreciate the openness and unique voices of the colleagues whose perspectives follow, and we look forward to hearing from others as digital preservation strategies continue to be developed.

At Portico we look forward to continuing to learn and communicate with our librarian and publisher colleagues. I hope that you will feel free to be in touch with Portico or myself directly if you have any questions or experiences to share.

Sincerely,  
Eileen Fenton  
*Executive Director, Portico*  
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*Linda Connors*  
*Head, Acquisitions & Collection Development Department, Library*  
*Drew University*  
*New Jersey, United States*

“Like many other small institutions, Drew University does not have adequate funding to pay for both print and online versions of journals if the online version costs extra; with the exception of titles in JSTOR, Project Muse and similar collections we have retained print subscriptions. For all JSTOR journals for which our holdings are incomplete or split between bound volumes and microform, we

withdraw all bound volumes and microform from circulation. This policy recognizes that a catalog listing with multiple formats and locations is confusing to users and that some users have assumed that a partial run means that JSTOR does not include those particular volumes. In a few cases where we have a complete run of a journal in bound volumes and only in a subject where we offer the Ph.D degree, we have retained the bound volumes. We may re-think this decision in the future.

“Despite our users’ preference for electronic journals, we have been reluctant to move in that direction exclusively, in part, because of our concern about maintaining an electronic archive. We simply would not be able to do this on our own and thus would be relying on the journal publisher to maintain its archive, and understanding that, we became an Archive Founder of Portico in 2006.

“Keeping in mind that access to Portico requires a trigger event, we have decided that with the 2008 renewals, we will convert to electronic-only all those titles which are committed to Portico. As additional titles become part of Portico we will mark them for conversion to electronic with the next renewal cycle. We are applying this decision across-the-board: we are not agonizing over whether Professor X really prefers print or whether the illustrations in a given subject are better in print (and as one colleague pointed out, if you photocopy from an art journal, it’s in black and white. If you print from the electronic, it’s in color).

“Our library is also using this information to plan for future growth in the periodicals stacks and we are canceling the corresponding microform subscriptions. This policy recognizes that patrons rarely want to browse scholarly journals in print. What they want to do is find the citation and click through to the full-text article. Portico allows us to provide the electronic journal this year without worrying whether the electronic version will continue to be available in future years. We anticipate considerable savings in time: electronic issues do not have to be checked in, stamped with ownership marks, shelved and re-shelved, gathered and sent to the bindery or be replaced by microform.”

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*Jeffrey L. Horrell*  
*Dean of Libraries and Librarian of the College, Dartmouth College Library*  
*Dartmouth College*  
*New Hampshire, United States*

“As many research libraries are faced with the challenge of meeting the expectations, demands, and necessity (now often with a single e-format) of providing electronic journals, we have the responsibility of developing a strategy for preserving them. We believe, at this early stage of thinking and planning, we need to take advantage of multiple approaches to the preservation of the varied electronic formats we purchase or license. It is not certain what models or services will ultimately be successful but we cannot wait, for the real and perceived risk is too great not to make reasonable commitments. Our approach at Dartmouth, a private four-year liberal arts college, is to participate in projects or services which fit within this strategy.

“Early on Dartmouth joined the LOCKSS alliance as one mechanism for attempting to preserve those titles under their responsibility. With the announcement of the establishment of Portico, we felt it was an excellent program for preserving a continually expanding array of scholarly electronic journals. The ever-growing list of contributing publishers and titles is at the center of the content we feel must make arrangements for ongoing access. We see Portico as an ‘insurance policy’ in the event of problems of access from the publisher or if, for some reason, we must discontinue a license and need ongoing access, provided by the original terms of our agreement. The credibility of Portico, with its roots in the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the collaboration with JSTOR in this area, is very strong. It is clear that serious and realistic thought has been given to creating Portico and it provides a level of assurance

that we are doing what we can for this aspect of our collections. In the end, it is a matter of trust that Portico will be there and we have confidence in them. Another important aspect of our support of Portico is the collaboration of publishers and libraries as we see this as equally beneficial. Also, sharing the costs is vital to making this successful. We are now routinely asking potential vendors in license negotiations if they are participating in Portico and if not, why not?

“In terms of our overall strategy for preserving electronic content, we see Portico as one piece of the whole. We realize we need to build or outsource other parts of the infrastructure for different formats and categories of our collections. Portico helps us with our discussions with faculty and students about storage decisions for print knowing that we may not need to maintain certain materials or they may be stored off-site. We believe the Portico concept could be expanded to other formats. Portico has a solid plan and infrastructure to support it.”

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*Paul Ayris*

*Director of UCL Library Services and UCL Copyright Officer*

*UCL (University College, London)*

*London, United Kingdom*

“UCL is a large, research-led University in the centre of London. The strategy of UCL Library Services is to keep researchers in Science, Technology and Medicine out of the library buildings altogether. Instead, the Library wishes to offer electronic delivery to its users 24x7, anytime, any place, anywhere.

“One of the great constraints in moving to e-only delivery – canceling our paper copies – is the lack of trusted digital archive arrangements. For 2007, UCL has engaged in a pilot whereby just over 500 journal titles have been cancelled in paper copy, where the digital equivalent exists in Portico. UCL will rely on publishers for e-delivery and will rely on Portico for digital archiving and providing long-term trusted digital access when defined trigger events lead to loss of access to publishers’ content. UCL became an Archive Founder member of Portico in December 2006. Should the pilot be successful, UCL believes that it will have a scaleable option for managing the entirety of its research collections of journal literature.

“UCL Library Services sees digital curation as one of the deliverables of its new Library Strategy. In the LIFE project, a collaboration with the British Library, LIFE (Phase 1) has developed a Generic Preservation Model for costing digital curation at an item level: preservation equals technology watch plus preservation frequency multiplied by overall preservation action.

“All this fits into a formula for identifying the whole lifecycle costs of digital objects over time. LIFE (Phase 2) is further refining and developing the formulae. The result will establish benchmarks for local digital curation services in a University or National Library. It is irresponsible to create or store digital objects and not to curate them digitally. The result of this work will facilitate the creation of a local digital curation service in UCL Library Services.

“However, UCL does not see itself as having a role in the e-curation of e-journals. It looks to Portico and similar offerings for this and is happy to work in collaboration with partners to support the maintenance of trusted digital repositories across the globe. The landscape in information provision is fast-changing, and digital curation marks an important step on the road to research libraries being able to achieve key strategic goals.”