STACKTRACE // News from Software Preservation Network

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WORKING GROUPS

Learn about current SPN working group activities through rotating reports from SPN Working Coordinators. This section will also feature any requests to the community for feedback.

Technological Infrastructure Working Group

The TechInfra Working Group is currently working on an operational definition of infrastructure so that members can embark on an investigation of existing virtualization, containerization, and emulation tools

with recommendations on the advantages and disadvantages of each in preservation and long-term access contexts.

Additionally, Charles Anthony, a software engineer, and long-term emulator developer wrote about his experience working on the MULTICS emulator, entitled "What Makes a Successful Emulation Project? The Case of MULTICS." Charles Anthony identifies 3 key opportunities for SPN to foster emulator development:

- Help with tracking down information: Metadata standards are a very good start, but collecting repositories must be engaged directly and encouraged to publish their software inventories.
- Making it easier for IP holders to release information: I would suggest that SPN Legal & Policy working group could evaluate the Multics license to inform the development of a more generic “historical and research” license. This would offer IP holders a direct way of participating in SPN.
- Recruitment: Fostering collaboration between emulation efforts, collection holders, IP holders.

Read Charles Anthony's entire essay here.

FACES OF SPN

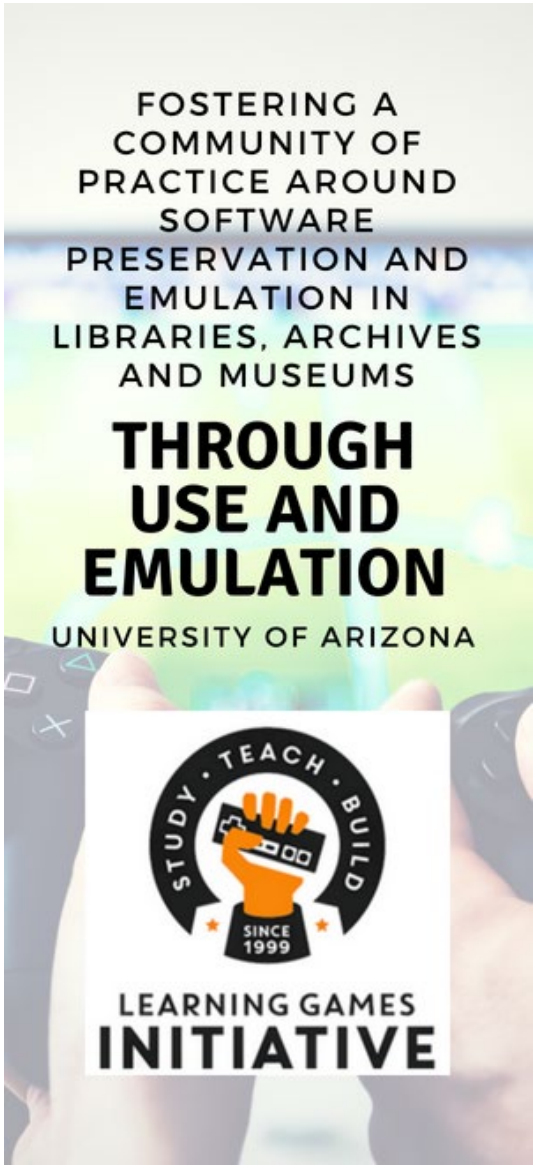
Learn about current SPN members - their current organizational roles, project activities and SPN working group membership.

Meet Monique Lassere:

Hi, SPNers! I’m Monique Lassere, the Digital Preservation Librarian at the University of Arizona. I work in the Office of Digital Innovation & Stewardship (ODIS for short) at the University Library where I’m responsible for the strategic and programmatic development of our digital preservation efforts. I joined SPN in August 2017 as a member of the Research Working Group.

Increasing Institutional Knowledge of Software Preservation with Computer Game Archiving:

The University of Arizona FCoP team aims to parlay the Learning Games Initiative Research



Archive's (LGIRA) almost intuitive appreciation for game software into an extensible and scalable software preservation project that, upon completion, will have developed (1) new workflows for translating the notion of "preservation through use" to other preservation approaches such as emulation that can be "re-skinned" for less conspicuous projects, and (2) raised the public profile and understanding of software preservation generally, thus contributing to a broader awareness of software preservation as a vital new field that deserves support. In doing so, we intend to collaborate with campus constituents such as the Computer Science and Computer Engineering departments, The Dendrochronology Lab, the Pharmacy Museum, and the High Performance Computing Center—to name a few.

NOTE: "Preservation through use" is a philosophy borrowed from LGIRA's mission and operating principles. This archival concept prioritizes the diverse and varied ways users engage with and play games through experience and memory-making as a means of preservation. In this way, use can include any interaction with a game or its ephemera: from troubleshooting to the comprehension of a game manual.

Meet Eric Kaltman:

As a data curator for Carnegie Mellon University Library, my main activities include helping with data repository and software curation workflows, liaison work with CMU's School of Computer Science, and support for various interdisciplinary

Digital Humanities and Cultural Heritage projects on campus.

Education & Background

My background in software curation and preservation began while I was finishing up my Masters in Asian Studies at UC Berkeley. I got a part-time job cataloging and archiving Stanford's game software collections and realized that there were significant—and unaddressed—questions about how to describe and store such materials. I decided to pursue a PhD in Computer Science in the Expressive Intelligence Studio at UC Santa Cruz to address basic technical and descriptive issues I had encountered as a practicing game software archivist. My research, in part funded by the NEH and IMLS, has looked into appraisal of software development documentation, the metadata and citation requirements of computer games, emulation management, and tools for the exploration of historical game collections.

Working Group Involvement

I'm active in the SPN Research, Metadata, and Technical Infrastructure groups, and am excited about SPN's potential to collaboratively address many of the software preservation problems I have encountered in my decade in this space. I'm primarily working with the Technical Infrastructure group to produce publications aimed at summarizing and explaining the various technical

approaches to software curation and preservation, along with their logistical requirements for institutions. This work will also include evaluations of the technical constraints and challenges of SPN-affiliated projects along with outreach to other communities engaged in building the tools, techniques, and systems supporting global software preservation efforts.

AFFILIATED PROJECTS

Learn about SPN affiliated project activities and milestones. SPN affiliated projects focus on some aspect of software preservation/curation that supports the strategic goals of SPN.

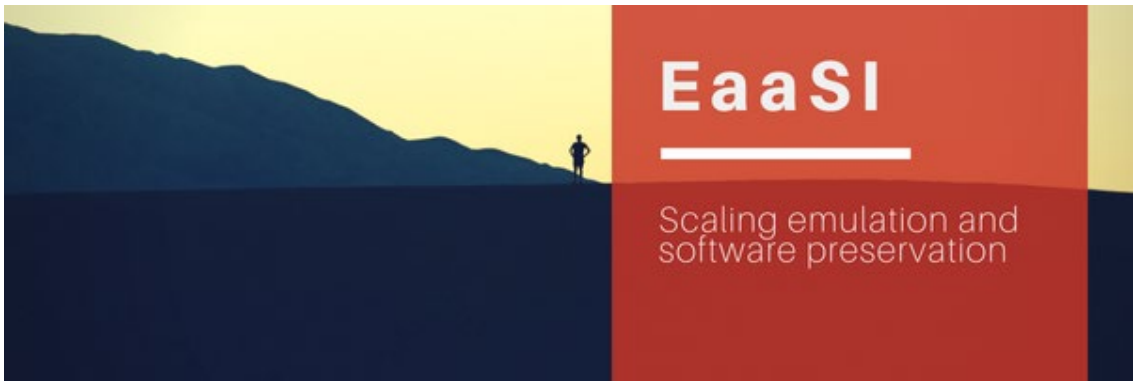
Timeline: January 2017 – June 2020

Funder(s): Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Awardee: Association of Research Libraries

The series of Best Practices for Fair Use in Software Preservation focus groups are done! Attention has turned towards the writing and vetting process, which should take the research team through the summer.

The Code is currently scheduled for publication in or around September 2018, accompanied by supplementary resources that address licensing and digital rights management. With the release of the Code in Fall 2018 the team has also begun lining up conference proposals, including iPres and DLF/NDSA. There are also plans to speak to the Deans at the Association of Research Libraries Fall meeting and the ALA midwinter meeting. The research team invites suggestions for other meetings they should look to attend, including webinars and virtual convenings of software preservation stakeholders.



Timeline: January 2018 – June 2020
Funder(s): Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
Awardee: Yale University

Guest Post by: Seth Anderson

In mid-May, the EaaSI project team convened for an intensive three-day planning retreat. In the dimly-lit meeting rooms of Yale University Library, the team debated and designed various system features, use cases, and related requirements, resulting in specifications and a scope of work for Phase 1 of the EaaSI project. This first round of project work will focus on services for sharing and exchange of software and emulation environments between EaaSI network nodes, as well as procedural and interface updates to improve workflows for import of software and digital resources, emulator configuration, documentation, and discovery. Use cases and requirements for Phase 1 of the project will be shared in the coming months when complete.

The team also determined EaaSI Node Host Requirements which were shared with our current stakeholders. Read the node host requirements here. We will announce the Node Hosts for Phase 1 in the July/August issue of Stacktrace.

Currently, the EaaSI project team invites applications for a Software Preservation Analyst that will play a crucial role in the future of the Yale University Library software preservation program and the EaaSI emulation-as-a-

service network.

- Are you passionate about digital curation workflows?
- Are you interested in contributing to a community-driven network that supports software preservation and emulation?
- Do you believe in the importance of documentation and training to advance the field?

The Software Preservation Analyst will lead efforts to build a collection of emulated operating systems and computing environments, create documentation of system workflows and technology, and develop training and support materials for the emulation service. The position is an essential member of the EaaSI project team and will make valuable contributions to emerging tools and practices for software preservation and emulation. Learn more about the posting and submit your application here: http://bit.ly/YaleSWPA
If you have additional questions, please contact me at seth.anderson@yale.edu.

Timeline: June 2017 – May 2020
Funder(s): Institute for Museum and Library Services #RE-95-17-0058-17
Awardee: CalPoly State University

Guest Post by: Zach Vowell
It has been nearly 5 years since I assumed my current role as Digital Archivist at the Robert E. Kennedy Library, Cal Poly State University. Alongside my day-to-day roles of managing the library's digital archives program, I've had the opportunity to investigate the potential of developing a repository-embedded disk image browser, and conduct user studies of non-traditional archival users interacting with traditional archival description and organization.

But the bulk of my research and scholarly work has been devoted to articulating the need for software preservation (particularly commercially distributed proprietary software) and assessing which resources and partnerships would be necessary for a comprehensive software preservation solution. It all started when Jessica Meyerson, Carlos Ovalle, and myself presented at the 2014 Society of American Archivists in a panel entitled 'Software Preservation Network: A Model for Long-Term Access to Proprietary File Formats.' From there, I co-developed and hosted the August 2016 Software Preservation Network (SPN)

Forum, the community roadmap and working groups that emerged from that forum, and now the FCoP project (2017-2020).

There are 3 primary components to FCoP: 1) the cohort of information professionals and their software preservation projects, 2) a dedicated Emulation-as-a-Service installation available for each cohort member and 3) the information, documentation, and lessons learned at the intersection of those first 2 components.

As we draw near to the close of FCoP Year 1, the cohort has begun working together to define their projects. At the last cohort conference call, each project leader had the opportunity to offer feedback on each other's project, which resulted in a rich discussion that we all hope will continue in person at the Project Kick-Off meeting scheduled to take place during the first week of August.

NETWORK MAINTENANCE

Learn about changes and improvements to functional aspects of the Network. This section will feature updates on governance, funding, engagement strategies and other activities that comprise backbone support for working groups, affiliated projects and strategic partnerships.

Thanks to the support of the EaaSI and FCoP projects, we are currently contracting with designers to expand the SPN website. The updated site will feature SPN member profiles; SPN blog; new initiatives; and affiliated project microsites that provide in-depth information about project staff, partners, approaches, and deliverables.

SPN working groups are currently contributing to a communications campaign, scheduled to go live in August, that will broadcast popular software preservation use cases (featured in news media), discuss SPN's current work and feature personal software stories of SPN membership. The goal of this campaign is to raise awareness for software preservation as a collective action challenge.

FIND OUT MORE

The Software Preservation Network (SPN) facilitates and supports software preservation efforts. SPN preserves software through community engagement, infrastructure support and knowledge generation in five core activity areas including Legal & Policy Advocacy, Metadata & Standards Development, Training & Education, Research-in-Practice and Technological Infrastructure.

Software Preservation Network

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