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STACKTRACE // News from Software Preservation Network

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Feb 2020 - Mar 2020
Volume 3, Issue 2

SDN-WIDE INITIATIVES

Learn about current SPN-wide efforts—activities that crosscut working groups and affiliated projects.

TWO-YEAR SEED FUNDED LAUNCH

Community Cultivation Update

Dear Software Preservation Colleagues,

In what feels like a moment, the world has changed dramatically. We hope that this message finds each of you healthy and safe—practicing patience with yourself as we all adjust to new routines.

In light of the rapid change and uncertainty brought on by the pandemic, we thought it would be helpful to ground ourselves in the familiar, in the things that bind us together across timezones and work contexts: our shared values.

Community

- The pandemic is something we are all living through together. Draw strength from that fact and also keep in mind that the pandemic is affecting people differently.
- As members of a virtually mediated and geographically distributed community that is engaged in complex and highly collaborative work, you are also in a unique position within your organization to support coworkers as they make the transition to a "work-from-home" environment.
- Collective action requires varied and complementary expertise. Remember that the Software Preservation Network is comprised of legal experts, public policy experts, data curators, archivists, librarians, educators, social science researchers, designers, and open source software developers. It's going to take an international community of software preservation practitioners to determine how and what software and software-dependent data needs to be preserved to effectively document the pandemic and the forced shift to virtual for whole segments of the international workforce.

Access

- Over the course of SPN's life as a network, we have collectively produced a library of open educational resources for those interested in learning more about software preservation and curation including copyright guides, webinar series, capacity-building templates, and presentations.
- In the coming weeks, the SPN backbone staff will release a guide that organizes SPN resources so that members can more easily put these resources to use as a professional development curriculum, or as a way to engage more staff within and across your organization in this work.

Sustainability & Transparency

- The two-year seed-funded period has been a tremendous success so far. In the next issue of Stacktrace, we'll share outputs from two Steering subcommittees: Research & Innovation and Executive & Membership. These outputs define the scope of SPN's activities moving forward, articulate our relationship to strategic partners, document the costs of our ongoing work, and outline three potential paths forward for the network. However, we acknowledge that these are uncertain times.
- As the longer-term impacts of the pandemic continue to surface, the SPN backbone staff will be in touch with you all. We commit to remaining open and transparent with all of our partners and affiliates about how the crisis is impacting us and where we are devoting our energies. Both Educopia and the SPN backbone staff will be openly seeking ways to support the networks of

people with whom we have the privilege to work.

LAW & POLICY

Mark Your Calendars: Upcoming Law & Policy Chat on April 16

Resource for SPN Members

Law & Policy Chats



An opportunity for members to chat with SPN's Law & Policy Advisor, Brandon Butler, and each other about their questions or concerns, plus learn more about how to use tools like the Best Practices and the DMCA Exemption to preserve and provide access to software.

Who: SPN Members

When: Thursday, Apr. 16 from 3:00-4:00 ET



If you're at a SPN member institution, mark your calendars for the next Law & Policy Chat on **Thursday, April 16 from 3:00 to 4:00 pm ET**. It's your monthly opportunity to chat with SPN's Law and Policy Advisor, Brandon Butler, about your software preservation questions and concerns.

All members should have received call-in information via email. We look forward to seeing you there!

A Law and Policy Bonanza for SPN in February and March 2020

It's been an **extremely** busy couple of months in the law and policy realm for SPN. We have multiple Supreme Court case updates, comments filed on the next Register of Copyrights, and much, much more. Here's the bullet-point version:

- The Supreme Court published its opinion in *Allen v. Cooper*, the case about pirates and state sovereign immunity, and **we won!**
- In the other case we're watching, *Oracle v. Google*, a bunch of amicus briefs were filed on Oracle's side, and the Court has **postponed oral argument** due to the COVID outbreak.

SPN submitted comments in the Library of Congress's inquiry about the attributes and priorities to consider in selecting the next Register of Copyrights.

- The Cyberlaw Clinic students will begin preparing for **the next cycle of the triennial DMCA rulemaking** this summer.
- The Law and Policy Working Group began gathering **information about the software license documentation** available in SPN member collections that they hope will help design a research project for clinic students.
- Allies and friends in the European Union and New Zealand have **reached out for guidance** as they attempt to influence copyright reform and processes in those regimes.

[Check out our latest post on the SPN blog to learn more about what's going on at the Supreme Court, the Copyright Office, in the EU, and more!](#)

QUARTERLY COMMUNITY FORUM

Software Preservation Community Forum

Subscribe to the Software Preservation Network
listserv to receive call-in information:

<http://bit.ly/spn-listserv>



On March 10, we were delighted to once again host the [Software Preservation Quarterly Community Forum](#). Each quarter, we invite our colleagues across professional and disciplinary communities to participate in an hour-long discussion on topics related to software curation, preservation, and reuse.

The March Forum featured progress reports from parallel efforts, including:

- Eoin O'Donohoe and Claudia Röck of [The Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision](#) discussing their work on a software preservation and emulation pilot

they are running with other organizational members of the [Dutch Digital Heritage Network](#)

- More examples of emulation-in-action with members of the [EaaS project](#)
- Notes on building organizational capacity for software preservation from [FCoP members](#)
- How the [Code of Best Practices for Fair Use in Software Preservation](#) is expanding to colleagues across the world

If you missed the Forum, or if you simply want to revisit all of the ideas and inspiration, be sure to check out the [running notes document](#)!

SAVE-THE-DATE: the next Quarterly Community Forum is scheduled for June 9, 2020 at 8 am PT/10 am CT/11 am ET. If you are interested in discussing a specific topic during future Community Forums, [submit your topics and questions via Google form.](#)

WHAT WE'RE READING

Across practically every facet of daily life, software ([and the cloud computing infrastructure that supports many of these critical software applications](#)) mediates our experience: supply chain logistics, grocery/retail inventory management, communication, data analysis and visualization, and information exchange.

Under these unprecedented circumstances we are seeing: software developers and companies apply their existing code towards COVID-19 tracking, new cybersecurity risks, increased investment in open source software development, and an accelerated pace of data publication and sharing via online platforms. In this issue of Stacktrace we invite you all, as a software preservation community of practice, to reflect on the long-term implications of these changes for cultural stewardship and curation. We've included a list of examples and associated resources below:

- **Support for Open Source Software to Support Open Science**
 - [Mozilla Open Source Support Program \(MOSS\) COVID-19 Solutions Fund](#)
 - New COVID-19 module developed for existing open source software that facilitates communication between health workers and health departments about epidemic-prone diseases. [Surveillance Outbreak Response Management and Analysis System](#) (SORMAS)
 - [COVID-19 researchers are using open source software Nextstrain.org](#) to

provide at-a-glance view of "how the virus has spread and how local outbreaks are connected. Nextstrain is significant because, "it also lets other scientists evaluate the scientific validity of of the team's work says contributor James Hadfield."

- [Roll-up of COVID-19 free and open source software projects on GitHub](#)

- **Cybersecurity**

- [Major increase of new domain registrations for almost every leading communication platform](#) that are almost identical to the domains for the platforms themselves (Google classroom, Zoom, WebEx). Some percentage of these (around 4% of the domains registered in the last two weeks) are used to host phishing sites. Cybersecurity experts have also seen malware bundled into downloadable executables with misleading filenames like zoom-us-#.exe
- ["Zoombombers" are interrupting virtual meetings whose links are made available online](#). The FBI has seen so many reports in recent weeks that they posted a [message on the website of the Boston FBI Field Office](#) that encourages people to file reports to the Internet Crime Complaint Center.
- [Telehealth \(physical and mental health appointments done via web conferencing tools that are required to meet stricter-than-normal federal compliance standards regarding patient privacy\) is reaching adoption levels that far exceed any point in the past](#)—requiring new skills and protocols for health professionals unaccustomed to completing patient diagnosis and providing health services in response to nonverbal cues and other data that is harder to capture through the screen.
- StaySafeOnline.org provides a [COVID-19 Security Resource Library](#) with information about the types of cybersecurity threats we are seeing during COVID-19 as well as tips and recommendations on how to secure your virtual spaces.

- **Data Gathering, Analysis, and Visualization**

- [Governments are contracting](#) with [mass surveillance software companies](#) in order to track people infected with coronavirus. The rationale being that if we are able to track people more closely then we can slow the spread of the virus. However, Elizabeth Renieris asks in a [recent blog post](#), "what if there is no care or treatment available to those identified? What if we still have the same number of hospital beds, personal protective equipment (such as face masks and gloves), and ventilators available, as is likely to be the case in the United States?"
- [Mathematica is curating a list of analysis software platforms and data](#) for tracking different aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic including health

provider capacity, case counts & surveillance, prediction, and policy/public health action.

- [Google is hosting a COVID-19 public dataset program](#) in which they are hosting and providing free access to public datasets and then providing tools like BigQuery ML to train models inside Google's BigQuery service at no additional cost.
- ["The coronavirus pandemic may be the most visualized ever."](#) There are a growing number of data visualization hubs (some hosted on open source software as mentioned above, and some commercial data viz companies hosting spaces where users can publish and share their COVID-19 visualizations including [Coronavirus Visualization Gallery](#), [TIBC Visual Analysis Hub](#), [Information is Beautiful COVID-19 Infographic Datapack](#)
- **Attempts at Meeting Needs and Capturing a Market in Need**
 - We've seen [free upgrades](#), [free accounts](#), extended trial periods, and special accounts for the segments of the working population that are impacted the most by current work-from-home directives and local lockdowns. The pandemic is both increasing dependence on non-commercial and commercial software among people that were already managing many aspects of work and personal life online - it increases the number of people who are now dependent on commercial software to mediate daily interactions and transactions.
 - In the last few days, [New Jersey has been desperately recruiting COBOL programmers](#) in order to fix the COBOL-based unemployment insurance software systems. Due to a staggering 1600% increase in unemployment claims in New Jersey in a single week, the systems are overwhelmed. In 2017, Reuters reported that in the finance industry "[an estimated \\$3 trillion in daily commerce flows through the COBOL systems.](#)"

AFFILIATED PROJECTS

Learn about SPN affiliated project activities and milestones. SPN affiliated projects focus on specific aspects of software preservation/curation that support the strategic goals of SPN.



Timeline: January 2018 – June 2020

Funder(s): Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Awardee: Yale University

The EaaS team has been hard at work preparing for the next major release of the system, which will integrate the work of PortalMedia and OpenSLX to create a fresh user interface for our platform. We are very excited for the EaaS Network and our friends to finally get their hands on these exciting improvements!

We are also responding to the new realities of the Coronavirus pandemic and will soon be announcing opportunities to participate in the project from the safety of your home office.

[Read the complete update here!](#)



Timeline: June 2017 – May 2020

Funder(s): Institute for Museum and Library Services #RE-95-17-0058-17

Awardee: CalPoly State University

According to Etienne Wenger, "communities of practice" are formed with a "shared

domain of interest," "joint activities," and "a common repertoire of experiences, tools, and approaches." In light of the pandemic we are all living through, the existing virtual learning spaces, platforms, tools, outreach collaborations and peer-to-peer relationships within the FCoP cohort provide an anchor. As we continue to engage in outreach activities, wrap up our documentation, and synthesize our individual and collective experiences, the FCoP community of practice is also shaping a vision for the future that recognizes the challenges, opportunities, and potential partners in software preservation and emulation.

[Read the complete update here!](#)

JOIN SPN

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 Law & Policy Advocacy, Metadata & Standards Development, Training & Education, Research-in-Practice, and Technological Infrastructure.

Do you appreciate the work that SPN has been doing over the last several years to broaden participation and ensure lawful preservation, sharing, and reuse of software? Would you like to SPN to continue its work of coordination, research, advocacy, and capacity building? Do you have ideas or a vision for the future of software preservation that you would like to see realized through the SPN community?

If you answered "Yes" to any of these questions, then consider supporting our work through membership or sponsorship. To learn more about the benefits of membership and sponsorship, visit: <https://www.softwarepreservationnetwork.org/get-involved/>

To join, download, complete and submit your [SPN Participation Agreement](#) to [<jess.farrell@educopia.org>](mailto:jess.farrell@educopia.org).

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