Personal Digital Archiving at the Public Library

Amy Wickner ‡ MARAC Spring 2017 ‡ Newark, N.J. ‡ April 21, 2017

BACKGROUND  Mapping the research space.

Personal digital archiving

How individuals accumulate, organize, store, and preserve digital material as part of their personal lives

Digital possessions are extensions of individual identity

Saving, remembering, losing, sharing

● From everyday management to “digital hoarding”
● Online memorials, social media curation, community archives

Catastrophic data loss, deliberate forgetting, benign neglect

Public Library


Personal archiving: Preserving digital material as part of their personal lives

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Values & impacts

Assessing and demonstrating value ↔ managerialism

How are values and impacts expressed in storytelling?

Incorporating library and user perspectives

Motivations

What brings you here? What do you want to do?

Values

Why does this opportunity matter? How has this experience affected your life?

Impacts

How does this experience affect your life?

Motivations, values, and impacts.

Sharing with a close circle of family and friends

Preserving ties to the aging or deceased, obsolescent media

Special-occasion projects v. everyday management

“I don’t know that anyone else would care”

“I have no other record of her speaking”

Natural fit with library mission

Digital literacy

Access to information lifecycle

Responding to community needs

Preserving local history

Memory Lab as learning space

Experiential aspects of using the Memory Lab

Obstacles to / supports for do-it-yourself

Digital archiving & conversion as domain of experts

Measuring participation against received standards

Downplaying improvised methods

Motivations, values, and impacts.

“I have no other record of her speaking”

“Topical, D.C.-area stories”

Autonomy and independence

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NEW QUESTIONS

How do participants draw on discourses of Maker culture, digital literacy, and the public library as space & place?

DATA & METHODS

7 hours participant observation

● Digital Commons, Memory Lab, Home Movie Day 2016

Semi-structured interviews

● 60 min, 5 patrons, 8 library staff

● Background

● Experiences with the Memory Lab, personal digital archiving resources

● Other ways of using the library

● Memory Lab’s perceived fit within DCPL

Notes, transcripts, and support material (e.g. handouts)

Analysis

Coding along major and emerging themes:

● Personal digital archiving at DCPL

● Personal digital archiving beyond DCPL

● Other library uses

● Expressions of motivations, values, and impacts

● Public memory frames

● Other (emerging themes)

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