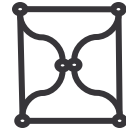

SCOPE DOCUMENT

MetaArchive of Southern Digital Culture Project



2005-04-19

Scope Document

The scope of this project was shaped by a discussion of what constitutes Southern culture and history, the formats and types of materials that would be included, and a brief discussion of what is meant by “at risk.” These discussions informed our choice of materials to inventory and include in the MetaArchive project.

Southern Culture and History

The definition of Southern culture and history used in this project is constructed with broad strokes. The Content Committee responsible for this definition owes a debt of gratitude to the editors of the Encyclopedia of Southern Culture on whose introduction we relied heavily.

A discussion of Southern culture and history must always begin with clarification of the terms. Southern is a term that, to most, brings to mind a particular region. However, upon closer inspection, the South and its boundaries are not so easily mapped. One could begin and end with the eleven former Confederate states, though that excludes the four other slave states that remained part of the Union. One could consider the “census south:” the Confederacy with the addition of Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Oklahoma, and the District of Columbia. There is also the Gallup organization’s South that includes the Confederate eleven plus Oklahoma and Kentucky, and the National Endowment for the Humanities includes Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands in its South Atlantic Humanities Center.

The South is also an identity. Southerners who move outside of the region, however defined, retain much of their culture and infuse their new locales with vestiges of their former homes. Conversely, people born outside of the South who come to live within the region find that their work and lives are influenced by their adopted home and themselves become a part of the evolving South.

As the Encyclopedia’s editors and authors did, we will rely on a cultural definition of the South more inclusive than not, focusing largely on the former states of the Confederacy but without excluding the margins of the region where the culture of the South is evident. After careful contemplation of the meaning of “culture,” the editors of the Encyclopedia planned their work “to carry out [T.S.] Eliot’s belief that ‘culture is not merely the sum of several activities, but a way of life.’” History is the most easily defined of the terms. This project will preserve materials documenting change over time in all aspects of the Southern “way of life.”

In choosing candidate digital content for collaborative archiving, the MetaArchive partners built upon the Encyclopedia's chapter headings to devise a list of broad themes that might guide local identification, prioritization and selection. They include:

- Agriculture, Business, and Industry
- Art and Architecture
- Education
- Environment
- Ethnicity
- Folk Art
- Folklife
- Foodways
- Gender
- Geography
- History, Manners, and Myth
- Language
- Law and Politics
- Literature
- Media
- Music
- Race
- Recreation
- Religion
- Science and medicine
- Social Class
- Transportation
- Urbanization
- Violence

These themes may be useful to each partner as it considers whether digital objects and collections fit into the original vision of the MetaArchive project. As many are aware, any particular object or collection may be closely related to more than one of these themes. Identifying "appropriate" candidate materials undoubtedly will be a very subjective process, and therefore should be left entirely to the discretion of each partner institution. Using this rationale, each partner should attempt to identify as many digital materials as fit this initial inventory consideration, regardless of on-line/off-line status, storage media, copyright, electronic format or other considerations. Each of those criteria will be used later to make local and collective decisions about collaborative archiving.

Resource Types

The MetaArchive of Southern Digital Culture understands that in the digital realm there are often times various versions of a digital object which comprise the complete copy of the object as a whole. In regards to this area we encourage our partners to select the version or versions of the digital object which best represent the original content of the object. We recognize that organizations such as DLF have created standards for elements of a digital master registry (<http://www.diglib.org/collections/reg/DigRegGuide.htm>). In such documents we note the attempt to distinguish two categories of digital objects which we will refer to as (i) preservation or digital masters and (ii) access, digital use or surrogate copies. Member institutions will decide whether they want to preserve their digital masters, their access copies, or all versions of a digital object.

Digital resources of the following types will be considered whether they are currently held off line or in deep or shallow archives available on the web.

- Animations (interactive maps, geographic representations, etc.)
- Complex or Learning Objects
- Collections (group of things, could be a mixture of multiple resource types)
- Databases (social science databases, archival finding aids, bibliographies, etc.)
- Datasets (statistical data file, CD-ROM of data, database, etc.)
- Events (gallery opening, symposium, parade, etc.)
- Integrated Commentary
- Interactive Resources (video games, virtual exhibits, etc.)
- Moving Images (news clips, television documentaries, interviews, oral history, etc.)
- Physical Objects (museum piece, architectural structure, monument, etc.)
- Services (system that provides function for the end-user, such as e-commerce order fulfillment, etc.)
- Software (application software such as presentation viewer, word processor, etc.)
- Sound (interviews, oral history recordings, music performances, etc.)
- Still Images (photographs, pamphlets, digital masters, architectural or design drawings, etc.)
- Text (scholarly commentaries, theses and dissertations, encyclopedia articles, etc.)

Formats and Media

The digital formats of the material considered do not affect the harvest because LOCKSS is format-agnostic. The LOCKSS system provides redundant replication of files in any format. Hence, formats were not a major consideration for risk ranking. Most of the candidate collections incorporate content in several formats and each institution will handle its own format migration outside the scope of this project. Collections stored only on off-line media should be considered at high risk and, therefore, become part of this preservation cache.

The extent or size of the collection and the Internet Media Types included will be noted. NOTE: This follows the Western States Dublin Core Metadata Best Practices Draft v 2.0 Draft August, 2004

http://www.cdpheritage.org/resource/metadata/documents/WSDCMBP_v2-0.pdf

Example

- Format [Extent] 3,000,000 bytes
- Format [Medium] DVD
- Format [IMT] image/jpeg

At Risk

Working within the broad parameters set by the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program, MetaArchive partner institutions will seek out and consider both web-based and born digital materials without analog counterpart. Partners also will identify digitally re-formatted materials intended to preserve a record of, or provide access to, fragile or at-risk analog originals. The partners expect to face a number of challenges when incorporating these materials, including establishing minimum standards for formatting digital content and creating metadata so that information can

become accessible via the web, even if only temporarily, for harvest. Among types of materials determined to have long-term value, partners may select

- Web-based projects, exhibitions, and instructional materials with significant related content
- Digital media, including video and sound recordings
- Institutional records or publications created in digital formats
- Datasets and other primary research materials developed by scholars in related fields
- Personal papers or creative works of Southern authors or artists developed in digital format

MetaArchive partners will be alert particularly to

- Materials with uncertain institutional support or unclear lines of responsibility
- Materials published or developed over time with various sections stored in different digital formats
- Content-rich web resources with dynamic components
- Materials based on older or outmoded technology.