

Working Together to Ensure the Future of the Digital Scholarly Record

The last decade has seen broad recognition of the long-term continuing access risks inherent in scholarly e-journal licencing and distribution models and of the need for trusted archiving agencies that collect and securely hold electronic journals independent of publishers.¹ Many libraries now have preservation policies that encourage investment in such trusted archiving agencies, and publisher awareness of the benefits of participation and the value their customers place upon it is growing. The number of preservation services and archives has grown significantly and regional and national initiatives, some led by research library consortia, now operate alongside large globally-active third party archiving agency services.

The Keepers Registry, an online service jointly developed and operated by EDINA at the University of Edinburgh and the ISSN International Centre and financially supported by Jisc (UK) for the benefit of scholarship internationally, provides a global monitor on the preservation coverage of e-serials and highlights journal content that is at risk of loss.

By reporting up-to-date and accurate information about the extent of their electronic journal holdings to the Keepers Registry, archiving agencies enable librarians and policy makers in every country to find out who is looking after which e-journals, how and with what terms of access. Together these 'Keepers' form a network and a community of practitioners who are committed to acting as the stewards of digital content, especially electronic serials. They seek to work collaboratively in order to further their shared mission, and to speak in one voice where possible to encourage actions and behaviours conducive to digital preservation on the part of other stakeholders in the lifecycle of electronic serials.

Ensuring the preservation and long-term accessibility of the digital scholarly record and of other parts of each country's published heritage is essential for scholarship. This is an international challenge that requires concerted, coordinated and sustained action from multiple sectors and organisations.² There is value in multiplicity: different approaches reduce dependencies and safeguard against single points of failure. However there are also opportunities to work more efficiently and to target limited resources more effectively. Together the Keepers network will engage with publishers, research libraries and national libraries to help enable further activity and progress.³ As a starting point we recommend the following:

Publishers

- Support archiving agencies and be vocal in your support with both your customers and your peers. Join at least one archiving initiative – preferably more – and confirm archival deposit of your content to ensure persistent long-term access to the scholarly record.
- Make it easier for archives to collect your content by using ISSNs, DOIs, and standardised metadata, and by following industry best practice and guidance for content ingest processes and mechanisms.

Research libraries

- Identify clear digital preservation roles and responsibilities in your organisation to support long-term access to e-journals, enabling library staff to become an active part of the Keepers community. Use your expertise to identify important titles and classes of content at risk of loss, and help the Keepers prioritise that content.
- Join an archiving organisation and invest resources to ensure that your researchers will have long term continuing access to the journals and other serial content they value. Make sure that any journals that your university publishes are archived.

- Embed systematic consideration of long-term access issues at the point of licensing content. Discuss preservation during subscription negotiations with publishers: ask publishers if they have a digital preservation plan, and explain why archiving is important to libraries.
- Increase awareness of the issues within your communities and advocate for digital archiving and preservation among publishing, research and funding communities.

National libraries

- Provide leadership in setting preservation priorities for your country's serial publications. Forge partnerships with other archiving agencies and explore ways of working together to maximise coverage and avoid duplication of effort. Use your national collecting mandate to ensure the preservation of content produced by small, local and regional publishers, which is at significantly greater risk of loss than the content of larger, international publishers.
- Promote awareness and understanding of archiving and digital preservation to stakeholder groups within your country. Advocate for dedicated resources and support from government and funders.

This statement represents the consensus of the following librarians, preservation specialists, archivists and technologists, who participated in the Keepers Extra workshop, supported by Jisc and held in Paris on the 6th and 7th of June 2016: Craig Van Dyck (CLOCKSS), Clifford Lynch (Coalition for Networked Information), Oya Rieger (Cornell University), Paul Wheatley (Digital Preservation Coalition), Peter Burnhill (EDINA, University of Edinburgh), Adam Rusbridge (EDINA, University of Edinburgh), Michael Seadle (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), Gaëlle Béquet (ISSN International Centre), Sam Alloing (KB, National Library of the Netherlands), Barbara Sierman (KB, National Library of the Netherlands), Theron Westervelt (Library of Congress), Vicky Reich (LOCKSS Program), Wei Zhao (OCUL Scholars Portal), Amy Kirchhoff (Portico), Kate Wittenberg (Portico), Bronwen Sprout (Public Knowledge Project/ University of British Columbia), Wu Zhenxin (National Science Library, Chinese Academy of Sciences), Arlene Healy (RLUK/The Library of Trinity College Dublin). It is supported by the following: Professor Julian Richards (Archaeology Data Service), Andrew MacEwan (British Library), Miguel Ángel Mardero Arellano (Cariniana Network/IBICT), William Kilbride (Digital Preservation Coalition).

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¹ In 2005, the Association of Research Libraries released a statement titled 'Urgent Action Needed to Preserve Scholarly Electronic Journals' (<http://www.arl.org/storage/documents/publications/ejournal-preservation-15oct05.pdf>). In 2008, Jisc (UK) invested in a project to pilot an e-journals preservation registry service. This led, in 2011, to the launch of the Keepers Registry. In the same year, the 2CUL partnership between Cornell and Columbia University libraries began investigation into e-journal preservation issues ([2CULLOCKSSFinalReport.pdf](http://www.2cullibrary.org/2CULLOCKSSFinalReport.pdf)). This led to a Mellon-funded project 'Strategies for Expanding E-Journal Preservation' which began in 2013 (<https://confluence.cornell.edu/display/culpublic/Strategies+for+Expanding+E-Journal+Preservation>). In 2013 the Digital Preservation Coalition (UK) commissioned a report 'Preservation, Trust and Continuing Access for E-Journals', which made a series of recommendations for libraries, publishers and archives (Beagrie, N. et al. 2013. 'Preservation, Trust and Continuing Access for e-Journals' <http://www.dpconline.org/newsroom/not-so-new/1068-new-preservation-trust-and-continuing-access-for-e-journals-technology-watch-report-released-to-dpc-members>). Jisc has continued its investment in this area, constituting an e-Journal Archiving Implementation Group (JARVIG) in 2011 (<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/preservation/jarvig.aspx>), whose recommendations form the basis of the Keepers Extra project (2014-2016) which aims to develop collaboration between agencies around the challenge of increasing preservation coverage (<http://thekeepers.blogs.edina.ac.uk/keepers-extra/>).

² See 'E-Journal Archiving: Progress and Future Challenges' <http://thekeepers.blogs.edina.ac.uk/2016/05/18/e-journal-archiving-progress-and-future-challenges/>

³ These actions are fleshed out in a series of posts on the Keepers Registry blog: <http://thekeepers.blogs.edina.ac.uk/2016/07/19/supporting-e-journal-archiving-publishers/>, <http://thekeepers.blogs.edina.ac.uk/2016/07/19/supporting-e-journal-archiving-research-libraries/>, <http://thekeepers.blogs.edina.ac.uk/2016/07/19/supporting-e-journal-archiving-national-libraries/>