MLA Preservation Committee Business Meeting: Special Topic Discussion

Digital preservation and music library resources

Session moderator: Jonathan Manton, Music Librarian for Digital and Access services at Yale University.

Abstract:

As the number of resources published exclusively in digital form continues to grow, and the majority of most collection development budgets now fund access over ownership of materials through subscriptions to databases and hosted digital editions, libraries face a fundamental problem in safeguarding today's scholarship for the future. As noted by the Digital Preservation Collation’s (DPC) Bit List (https://www.dpconline.org/our-work/bit-list), without robust digital preservation plans, digital music resources are at risk. What happens if a content provider (vendor) goes out of business or the delivery platform used to access content is no longer available? Libraries and content providers must work together to ensure such digital preservation plans are in place, notably for content for which libraries are purchasing perpetual access, something that cannot be assured without digital preservation.

Both librarians and vendors are therefore invited to join the MLA Preservation Committee at the upcoming MLA Annual Meeting for a community discussion, moderated by Jonathan Manton (Music Librarian for Digital and Access services at Yale University), on how we can work together to address this issue. The discussion will allow vendors to outline any existing preservation solutions, and for librarians to discuss how we can best advocate that such solutions are implemented by all the providers we subscribe to.

Slides: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1XRpqLj2uKd-glQBHvYJZ8nRdLZtWql8xJpro7CgHmkc/edit?usp=drivesdk

Notes:

Digital resources: licensing over ownership of digital content - library resources typically being spent on temporary access (i.e. duration of subscription)
A digital preservation plan is necessary to provide ongoing and perpetual access to content acquired via subscription.
Vendors and options for digital preservation: Portico, LOCKSS/CLOCKS, Preservica
Questions for discussion:
What digital preservation plans do content providers currently have in place?
- From a collection management angle, certain content providers may go out of business, which is why it’s important to have a plan in place when acquiring content
- Journal content is being addressed, but not so much for audio and audio visual (video/film) content

Does your institution require content providers to have digital preservation plans in place?
- Work with colleagues (acquisitions, digital preservation) to ask for back-up options - at vendor’s end and institutional end - to preserve content received as electronic files
- Hold vendors accountable for providing information on digital preservation plans in place as part of acquisitions decisions

What can we as a music library community do to ensure digital content is being properly preserved?
- MLA publishers and vendors (A-R Editions) to lead the way with examples for other profession-related vendors and partners
- Work with other committees within MLA (Advocacy Committee) to create guidelines and talking points; create a list of questions to ask when you’re looking to connect with vendors and ask about their digital preservation plan; look at existing resources/FAQs in place + develop questions related to music/audio/audio-visual resources
- Educate the music library community on the difference between “licensing” vs. “perpetual access” (ownership), and why digital preservation plans are important