Perspectives on the Economics of Sustainable Digital Preservation

Brian Lavoie
Abby Smith Rumsey
Martha Anderson
Paul Courant
Patricia Cruse

iPRES 2009
San Francisco, CA
October 5, 2009
Session Roadmap

• Opening remarks ...
  – Economically sustainable digital preservation; Task Force
  – Analyzing digital preservation as an economic problem

• Panel session (Abby Smith Rumsey, moderator)
  – Martha Anderson (Library of Congress)
    • Funder perspective
  – Patricia Cruse (California Digital Library)
    • Repository perspective
  – Paul Courant (University Of Michigan)
    • Economist perspective

• Audience Q&A
Sustainable Digital Preservation

• Secure digital materials as part of enduring scholarly & cultural record
  – Sustainable access to digital content requires sustainable digital preservation activities

• Frame digital preservation as a *sustainable economic activity*
  – Economic activity ➔ deliberate allocation of resources
  – Sustainable ➔ ongoing resource allocation over time
Blue Ribbon Task Force on Sustainable Digital Preservation and Access

• Task Force:
  – Supported by NSF, Mellon, Library of Congress, JISC, CLIR, NARA
  – Co-chairs: Brian Lavoie (OCLC), Fran Berman (RPI)
  – Editor of Final Report: Abby Smith Rumsey
  – Cross-domain, cross discipline
  – Articulate the problem/provide recommendations

• Interim Report (December 2008):
  – Define economic sustainability
  – Establish baseline understanding of the problem space:
    • What’s been tried
    • Issues/challenges/questions
Economic Sustainability

Economically sustainable digital preservation requires:

– Recognition of benefits
– Incentives for decision-makers to act
– Selection
– Mechanisms to support ongoing, efficient allocation of resources
– Appropriate organization and governance
Risk & Investment

• Digital preservation: active intervention to reduce the risks to long-term accessibility and use

• Technical sustainability: robust, scalable repository infrastructure, workflows (e.g., OAIS)
  – Reduces technical risks to digital assets

• **Economic sustainability:** secure adequate resources to achieve long-term goals
  – Reduces *economic risks* to digital assets
  – Requires *active investment* by key decision-makers

• Panel session: decision-makers’ perspective on digital preservation investment
Digital Preservation: Supply & Demand

Economically sustainable digital preservation requires:

– Recognition of benefits \(\text{Demand-side}\)

– Incentives for decision-makers to act \(\text{Supply-side}\)

– Selection

– Mechanisms to support ongoing, efficient allocation of resources

– Appropriate organization and governance