Spartan Archive:
An Electronic Records Archive at Michigan State University
NHPRC Project #RE-10025-10

CIC Quarterly Report, October 1, 2010–December 31, 2010

In late 2009, the Michigan State University Archives & Historical Collections (UAHC) received a three-year, $251,079 grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) to develop policies and procedures to appraise, ingest, process, describe, and preserve institutional electronic records. UAHC will thus use a proof-of-concept approach to build and test an archival solution for the long-term access and preservation of four large electronic records series produced by MSU's Office of the Registrar (RO): the full catalog of Academic Programs, the Description of Courses offered each semester, the annual Student Directory, and the Schedule of Courses. The original grant proposal and supporting documents for the project, "Spartan Archive: An Electronic Records Archive at Michigan State University," may be found at http://www.archives.msu.edu/about/sap_project_documentation.php. (Note that UAHC decided to include the Schedule of Courses in the project, even though it was not included in the original grant proposal.)

In the spirit of sharing models and lessons learned for better management of university electronic records and digital assets, and as required in NHPRC's performance objectives for the Spartan Archive project, UAHC is sharing quarterly progress reports with the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) and soliciting feedback from colleagues at other universities.

Project team members include Cynthia Ghering, director of UAHC and project director; Lisa Schmidt, electronic records archivist and project manager; Ed Busch and Whitney Miller, archivists; and Ajay Patel, information technologist from Administrative Information Services (AIS) and project technical advisor. Note that the RO is in the process of hiring a new technologist as its technology services representative on the team.

The Spartan Archive project team undertook the following activities during the reporting period:

Spartan Archive Project Workplan
- Search for/hiring of Project Information Technologist (PIT)
- Survey of community needs and expectations
- Preparation for implementation of Archivists' Toolkit
- Accessioning of records to "digital shelf"
- Electronic records workflows: accessioning

Presentations and Proposals
- Digital Preservation Management Workshop instruction
- Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) 2011 session proposal
- Mid-Michigan ARMA Meeting
- SAA 2011 session proposal

Publications
- *MSU News* article
- *MAC Newsletter* article
- *MSU Alumni Magazine*

Conferences and Workshops
- Digital Preservation Management Workshop, November 1-5
- 6th International Digital Curation Conference, December 6-8

Other Related Activities
- University of Denver Records Authority Grant Project
- Digital Curation Planning Project Activities
- Revisions to university policies and procedures
- Retention schedule reviews

Spartan Archive Project Workplan

- **Search for/Hiring of Project Information Technologist (PIT)**
  The search committee for the Project Information Technologist (PIT) position interviewed five candidates through the month of October 2010. An offer was extended to Richard Burgis, a highly qualified candidate who is retiring from the State of Michigan after having worked there for many years. Burgis will begin working at UAHC on January 17, 2011.

- **Survey of community needs and expectations**
  Schmidt documented what the RO currently offers users online and how the Spartan Archive records have historically been handled by UAHC in their paper form. These documents may be found on the project website at
  http://www.archives.msu.edu/documents/RegistrarsOfficewebsite.pdf and
  http://www.archives.msu.edu/documents/UAHC--CurrentHandlingSARecords.pdf,
  respectively. She also began researching and developing surveys for the Spartan Archive user community.

- **Preparation for implementation of Archivists' Toolkit (AT)**
  Patel continued the process of procuring and setting up a server for the implementation of Archivists' Toolkit (AT). UAHC's instantiation of AT will operate on Oracle, the DBMS for which MSU has a site license. (Note that it appears to be rare for AT to be implemented on Oracle.) Patel advised against implementing Oracle on UAHC's current production server and recommended a separate server environment.

- **Accessioning of records to "digital shelf"**
  Busch and Schmidt accessioned electronic records from various campus units, including University Relations and the MSU College of Human Medicine and College of Osteopathic Medicine. The digital files, most of which are sent to UAHC on removable media, are copied over to storage on a shared drive—the "digital shelf"—in anticipation of future transfer to the Spartan Archive preservation environment.

- **Electronic records workflows: accessioning**
  With assistance from Busch, Schmidt documented the current accessioning process for digital records (for internal use).

Some project activities scheduled through this phase of the project, which ended on December 31, 2010, will be carried over to the next phase, which runs January 1, 2011-March 31, 2011. These include continuations of several of the activities listed above along with the following:

- Implementation of Archivists' Toolkit and migration of collection data
- Development of appraisal criteria for the RO database records
- Definition of metadata for the RO database records

Presentations and Proposals

- **Digital Preservation Management Workshop instruction**
  On November 4, Ghering and Schmidt presented on the "Digital Preservation Tools and Workflows" segment of a Digital Preservation Management Workshop sponsored by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) in Ann Arbor. The presentation included descriptions of the Spartan Archive project and current digital archives accessioning practices, as well as discussion of the ingest and other tools that are being examined for use with Spartan Archive. The presentation is available on the project website at http://www.archives.msu.edu/documents/ICPSR-TW-GheringSchmidt-final.pdf.

- **Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) 2011 session proposal**
  The session proposal for the 2011 Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) meeting was accepted. The session entitled "Streams in the E-Record Workflow: Developing Elements of the Archival Process for Electronic Records of Historical Value" will be chaired by Ghering. Other session participants include Schmidt, Jackie Esposito of Penn State University, and Pat Michaelis of the Kansas State Historical Society.

- **Mid-Michigan ARMA Meeting**
  On November 16, Ghering and Schmidt delivered an informal presentation on the Spartan Archive project to the Mid-Michigan chapter of ARMA, which held its monthly meeting at UAHC.

- **SAA 2011 session proposal**
  The "work in progress" session proposal was not approved. The Program Committee felt that it would benefit from further project development, and suggested resubmission in a year or two. As an alternative, Schmidt and Ghering are planning on submitting a proposal on the Spartan Archive project to the SAA 2011 Research Forum.

Publications

- *MSU News* **article**
  Ghering and Schmidt were interviewed for an article on the Spartan Archive project for the *MSU Weekly News*. The article, "Grant helping to preserve MSU's digital records," which was published on October 26, 2010, may be found at http://news.msu.edu/story/8507/&keyword_search=University%20Archives&keyword_action=all_words.

- *MAC Newsletter* **article**
  Ghering, with assistance from Schmidt, wrote an article on Michigan State's electronic records program, with a focus on the Spartan Archive project, for the "Electronic Currents" column of the *MAC Newsletter*, December 2010 issue.

- *MSU Alumni Magazine* **article**
  Ghering submitted an article on the Spartan Archive project to *MSU Alumni Magazine*, to be included in the Spring 2011 issue.

Conferences and Workshops

- **Digital Preservation Management Workshop, November 1-5**
  Busch, Ghering, and Schmidt attended the ICPSR Digital Preservation Management Workshop in Ann Arbor. The workshop was segmented by topic, with Busch attending the "Introduction" and "Tools and Workflows" segments, Ghering attending the "Tools and Workflows" segment, and Schmidt attending the "Tools and Workflows" and "Legal Issues" segments. The team learned about tools, techniques, and intellectual property issues that will aid in the handling of current electronic records accessions as well as the development of Spartan Archive.

- **6th International Digital Curation Conference, December 6-8**
  Ghering and Schmidt attended the DCC conference in Chicago and gathered more information and ideas for tools to use with the Spartan Archive project.

Other Related Activities

- **University of Denver Records Authority Grant Project**
  On November 16 and December 14, Schmidt participated on partner conference calls for the NHPRC-funded "Records Authority" grant project spearheaded by the University of Denver (DU). UAHC volunteered to partner with DU and test the open source software for records management administration that the grant is funding. Other partners include American University, the City of Seattle Clerk's Office, and Wheaton College. DU intends to have the software ready for the partners to begin testing in January 2011. These calls will be held on a monthly basis, with Ghering and Schmidt participating.

- **Digital Curation Planning Project Activities**
  At the request of the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan, on December 16 Schmidt met with Bentley staff to discuss UAHC's recent Digital Curation Planning Project. Schmidt and Ghering have also been asked to present on the project and brainstorm the creation of an open courseware repository for MSU at the February 2011 meeting of the MSU Instructional Technology and Computing Libraries, Computing, and Technology (LCT) Café. In addition, Schmidt has been asked to deliver a keynote on institutional repositories at the March 2011 meeting of the Michigan Academic Library Council (MALC).

- **Enterprise Business Systems Project: Revisions to university policy and procedures**
  Ghering proposed revisions to current university policy and procedures as part of Michigan State's Enterprise Business Systems Project implementation. Starting on January 1, 2011, the university will begin a "paper-sparse" business workflow for finance and human resources transactions. This will result in the creation of more born-digital records that will require preservation in a permanent electronic records archive.

- **Retention schedule reviews**
  Ghering reviewed office practices and records retention schedules with the Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Activities, College of Social Science, and Residential and Hospitality

Services. With Miller, she revised specialized retention schedules with MSU Technologies (the former Office of Intellectual Property.)

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