

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

CIC Quarterly Report, January 1, 2011–March 31, 2011

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; Richard Burgis, UAHC's project information technologist; and Ajay Patel, information technologist from Administrative Information Services (AIS) and project technical advisor. Kristin Schuette, Associate Registrar for Technology, has been the acting RO systems analyst on the project since Fall 2010.

The Spartan Archive project team undertook the activities listed below during the reporting period.

Spartan Archive Project Workplan

- **Hiring of Project Information Technologist (PIT)**
Richard Burgis, the new project information technologist, started working at UAHC on January 17, 2011.
- **Survey of community needs and expectations**
During the February project team meeting, the team identified the following stakeholders in Spartan Archive: RO, university faculty, university staff, students, former students, other universities, CIC-UAG, researchers, general public, and news organizations. By interviewing the RO team, the UAHC reference staff, and a group of reference librarians from the MSU Libraries, the project team was able to solicit the information needs of all of these communities. With assistance from Ghering, Schmidt developed surveys for these designated communities.

On March 2, several members of the project team, including Ghering, Schmidt, Burgis, and Miller, met with Schuette and other RO team members to learn more about the needs of this designated community. For each of the four Spartan Archive records series, RO was asked about the source of the data, where it is stored, the format, how it is made accessible to users, who the users are, and what the users are looking for. Concerns over the privacy of student information were raised, with acknowledgment that the Spartan Archive system would take privacy into account. Also, the RO advised that the system be designed to thwart “screen scraper” activity; that is, the systematic collection of data from an online source.

Later in March, Schmidt interviewed UAHC and MSU Libraries reference staff members about the habits and identities of researchers making inquiries into the Spartan Archive data. The librarians provided a “wish list” of other university-related reference information they would like to see in the Spartan Archive. They also have excellent ideas for access interfaces, and have agreed to meet again when we are at the interface design stage of the project to explore these ideas in depth. On March 22, Schmidt also interviewed a student researcher referred by a UAHC archivist regarding his use of these records.

Results from the interviews with UAHC reference staff, MSU Libraries reference staff, and the student are included as an addendum to this report and may also be found at: <http://www.archives.msu.edu/documents/SADCInterviews--public.pdf>.

We invite feedback from our CIC-UAG colleagues on the results of these interviews, particularly those conducted with UAHC staff. Do you find the same patterns of usage for these types of records in your own archives? Do you know of similar patterns to our findings with the RO and the Libraries at your institutions?

- **Implementation of Archivists’ Toolkit (AT)**

Patel procured and set up a server for the implementation of Archivists’ Toolkit (AT), deployed an AT sandbox (with Burgis), and handed off the management of the software to Burgis. With assistance from Busch and Miller, Burgis identified the metadata to populate repository fields, lookup lists, and locations; developed and implemented a crosswalk between MicroMARC and AT; tested the export of databases; and created and tested scripts for data migration and loading. Conversion and migration of data, cleansing of data, and documentation of the processes has begun. Ghering is leading the UAHC staff in defining a new accessioning and processing workflow to work with AT. This includes mapping AT fields to the Describing Archives: A Content and Data Standard (DACS) rules to create internal conventions for output to MARC and EAD.

- **iRODS workshop preparation**

Schmidt finalized arrangements and registered participants for the April 7-8 iRODS workshop. As of March 31, about 40 participants were expected, with contingents from the University of Michigan, Ohio State University, the University of Illinois, and Michigan State University, as well as colleagues from other CIC partners and other Michigan universities.

- **Repository software and tool evaluation**

Schmidt created a list of repository software and pre-ingest/ingest tools to consider for use in Spartan Archive. These include: Fedora (repository framework); TAPER (submission agreement builder); Bag It (file transfer and fixity); ARK and NOID (persistent identifier); and DROID, JHOVE, JHOVE2, the New Zealand Metadata Extractor, and FITS (various combinations of file identification, file validation, metadata extraction, and fixity).

Some project activities scheduled through this phase of the project, which ended on March 31, 2011, will be carried over to the next phase, which runs April 1-June 30, 2011. These include continuations of several of the activities listed above along with the following:

- Development of appraisal criteria for the RO database records
- Definition of metadata for the RO database records

Presentations and Proposals

- **MSU IT Conference session proposal**

Schmidt submitted a proposal to the MSU IT Conference for a session on digital preservation projects at UAHC, including the development of Spartan Archive and the implementation of Archive-It for preserving websites. The conference, an annual event hosted by MSU's Vice Provost for Libraries, Computing and Technology, provides an opportunity for university staff involved in IT to come together and share their technology experiences and contributions through a variety of informational sessions. This year's MSU IT Conference will be held on June 7, 2011.

Publications

- ***MSU Alumni Magazine* article**

Ghering's article on the Spartan Archive project was published in "Michigan State Moments" in the "Around Circle Drive" section of the Spring 2011 issue of *MSU Alumni Magazine*. Along with other items in that section, it is available online at <http://www.alumni.msu.edu/magazine/archive/viewarticle.cfm?articleid=1573>.

Conferences, Workshops, and Classes

- **Digital Curation Curriculum (DigCCurr) Winter Institute, January 5-6**

Schmidt attended the second part of the DigCCurr Professional Institute, during which each participant gave a brief presentation on the status of their project since the first part of the Institute in May 2010; she presented on Spartan Archive. The institute provided a "safe" environment for participants to share triumphs, concerns, and ideas on overcoming roadblocks to project success. It also provided an opportunity to learn about other technologies and processes that might be used in Spartan Archive, and to build on relationships with colleagues.

- **"Overview of Student Records" class, February 21**

Ghering, Schmidt, and Burgis attended an MSU class that provided an overview of the different systems used by the university to maintain student records.

Other Related Activities

- **University of Denver records authority grant project**

Ghering and Schmidt have continued to sit in on the monthly calls for this project. In anticipation of UAHC participating in software testing, Burgis has come up to speed on the technical aspects. DU will start testing the software in the spring.

- **Digital Curation Planning Project activities**

On March 18, Schmidt delivered the keynote address at the spring meeting of the Michigan Academic Library Council (MALC). The focus of the meeting was institutional repositories, and Schmidt spoke about the Digital Curation Planning Project and UAHC's idea about building a federation of repositories at MSU. On March 25, Ghering and Schmidt presented on the project at the MSU Instructional Technology and Computing Café, which included presentations on the creation of open courseware and other types of repositories at the university.

- **Research data curation planning**

On January 5, Ghering led a "Data Management for Research" course for MSU faculty. The course included discussion and advice on understanding and complying with the new National Science Foundation (NSF) policies requiring submission of a data management plan as well as the Federal requirements for clinical research data. Ghering also attended the Research Data Access and Preservation (RDAP) Summit in Denver, March 31-April 1.

- **Archive-It implementation**

In January, UAHC officially began an Archive-It subscription with the Internet Archive to preserve the university's websites. Busch is the lead on identifying websites of interest and setting up the crawls. On March 17, Busch and Ghering gave a presentation on the project to the MSU WebDev Café. Busch and Schmidt have participated in informational webinars on Archive-It provided by the Internet Archive.



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