South Carolina Department of Archives and History

When the State Archives needed a unified electronic records repository to protect and future-proof permanent government records and historical assets, it selected Preservica's enterprise digital preservation platform.

Background   As one of the oldest state archives in the U.S., the South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH) is the steward of 325 years of documentary and cultural heritage. SCDAH has continuously adapted its records preservation practices and techniques, most recently embracing new technologies and best practices to meet the needs of an increasingly electronic government. Permanent government records managed by the Archives include colonial and state

South Carolina Department of Archives and History

land records, legislative papers, county court cases, military service and pension records, executive papers and state agency records. Because the state has a joint archives and records management (ARM) program, department staff manages schedules for the retention of common government records and provides technical advice to agencies on managing the lifecycle of records from creation to preservation.

The Archives works with state and local government offices across South Carolina to promote good record keeping practices and to accession and provide access to permanently valuable documents.

Department mandates and challenges   SCDAH is the permanent repository for millions of government records that have been transferred from state and local government agencies. Their collections include paper documents, film, and a rapidly growing cache of born-digital and digitized materials. Before the Archives started working with Preservica, they did not have a way to process all formats of records from the various state agencies for long-term digital preservation.

Today, things are different. Bryan Collars, Electronic Records and Imaging Supervisor, has worked at the Archives for 26 years and is supported by a team that includes Morgan Jones-King, Electronic Records Archivist. To date the SCDAH team has digitized about half a million records and plan on adding more than 60,000 images of state land records into their Preservica repository this year.

Overview

Challenges

Address the backlog of "at risk" electronic records.

– Process inbound government records from 250+ state agencies

– Exponential increase in born-digital records

– Maintain in-state control of government records

Solution

Preservica's active digital preservation platform.

+ End-to-end approach to digital preservation

+ File format agnostic

+ Reduce burden on state agencies to transfer records

+ Increase efficiency of SCDAH staff

+ Increase online access to historic resources

The Preservica solution   SCDAH has been using Preservica's digital preservation system since 2016, successfully demonstrating the efficiency and accuracy of their digital preservation workflows and access capabilities. Two benefits that the trusted digital archive is delivering to state agencies include:

- Mirroring the file plan structure in the digital collections making it fast and easy to search and find records through the Preservica Universal Access, and

- Flexibility in transferring electronic records to SCDAH in virtually any format since the archives can ingest, characterize, and readily handle hundreds of file formats.

In addition, they are currently conducting a pilot project with local government agencies and departments that don't have the infrastructure and resources to keep records for the current disposition protocol of 50 years. Also, ephemeral records, like those posted to social media or agency websites, must be routinely captured and archived—or be lost. The SCDAH team is proactively engaging records custodians and technologists to evaluate the best method and timing to transfer electronic records to mitigate the risks of digital fragility, bit corruption, and file format obsolescence.

The future   Now that SCDAH can efficiently process a wide range of electronic records transferred from state and local government agencies, it is addressing the challenge of scale. Its vision includes increased automation to ease the burden on agencies. As born-digital records grow exponentially in volume and complexity, supporting agencies in the systematic and automated transfer will enable SCDAH to continue to meet their mission to preserve and promote the documentary and cultural heritage of the state through archival care and preservation.

> "The street is no longer a one-way conduit of us going out to the state agencies and trying to find records or information to bring into the Preservica system, it's now more of a superhighway moving in both directions."

Bryan Collars
Electronic Records and Imaging Supervisor

S208009-Dept. of Public Works. Road, River, and Canal Projects *Edisto Island Plat, 1817.*

S112113-Sinking Fund Commission, Insurance File Photographs *Holly Hill School, ca. 1933.*

S112113-Sinking Fund Commission, Insurance File Photographs *Rowesville School, ca. 1933.*