

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

NHPRC Interim Narrative Progress Report, April 1, 2010–September 30, 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. 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. This is the first of our interim narrative progress reports to NHPRC.

The Project

During the three-year Spartan Archive project period, UAHC will use a proof-of-concept approach to build an archival solution for the long-term access and preservation of four large electronic records series produced by MSU’s Registrar’s Office: the full catalog of Academic Programs, the Description of Courses offered each semester, the annual Student Directory, and the Schedule of Courses. (Note that the latter was not part of the original grant proposal, but has been added to the project.) A public interface will also be developed to provide access to electronic records transferred to the University Archives for permanent retention.

The Spartan Archive will be based on traditional archival principles in combination with the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) model, a reference model that provides a framework for long-term digital preservation and access. For data management, the Integrated Rules-Oriented Data System (iRODS) distributed data grid system will be utilized. UAHC will collaborate with multiple units within MSU on the project. In addition, UAHC will share quarterly progress reports with the Committee on Institutional Cooperation–University Archivists Group (CIC-UAG) and solicit feedback from our colleagues at other universities. The grant includes funding for iRODS training from the Data Intensive Cyber Environments (DICE) Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the developer of iRODS.

One of the first steps in developing Spartan Archive is the implementation of a new collection management system. After some deliberation, UAHC chose Archivists’ Toolkit as the replacement for the DOS-based MicroMARC software.

The Spartan Archive project is designed to run in 6 phases. UAHC started work on Phase 1 on April 1, 2010.

The Project Team

A core project team includes 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. The Office of the Registrar had assigned Michael Babcock, an information technologist, as its representative on the team. Soon after the project started, however, Babcock accepted another position at Michigan State; the Office of the Registrar is

currently in the process of hiring his project team replacement. The grant funds the position of a project information technologist (PIT) within UAHC who will be responsible for technical development of the archive. UAHC is in the process of hiring for this position.

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

Spartan Archive Project Workplan

- Development of project task list
- Creation of project web pages
- Introduction of regular Spartan Archive team meetings
- Creation of project advisory committee
- Search for Project Information Technologist (PIT)
- Preparation for Archivists' Toolkit implementation
- Survey of community needs and expectations
- Electronic records workflow: accessioning
- iRODS workshop arrangements
- Progress reports to CIC-UAG

Presentations and Proposals

- Society of American Archivists (SAA) 2010 Research Forum (poster)
- Best Practices Exchange 2010
- Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) 2011 session proposal
- SAA 2011 session proposal
- Digital Preservation Management Workshop, invitation to present

Publications

- Press release
- *State News* article
- *MSU Weekly News* article interview
- *MAC Newsletter* article invitation

Conferences and Workshops

- MAC 2010 annual meeting, April 22-24
- Digital Curation Curriculum (DigCCurr) Professional Institute, May 16-21
- SAA Research Forum and annual meeting, August 10-14
- Best Practices Exchange, September 29-October 1

Other Related Activities

- Revisions to general retention schedules
- Records survey of MSU Technologies' paper-sparse workflow
- Accessioning of records to "digital shelf"
- Revisions to university policies and procedures
- "Trusted Document Management System" checklist
- Inventory of electronic records from Office of Board of Trustees
- Retention schedule reviews: MSU Extension and College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Spartan Archive Project Workplan

- **Development of project task list**

Patel drafted a project task list for each of the project phases based on a project workplan submitted to NHPRC. The project task list was reviewed by Ghering, Schmidt, Babcock, Busch, and Miller. Both the project task list and the workplan may be found at http://www.archives.msu.edu/about/sap_project_documentation.php.

- **Creation of project web pages**

Schmidt created web pages for the project on the UAHC website, http://www.archives.msu.edu/about/spartan_archive.php. Project documentation, announcements, presentations, publications, and other information will be posted to the site on a regular basis.

- **Introduction of regular Spartan Archive team meetings**

In July, the Spartan Archive project team began holding monthly meetings.

- **Creation of project advisory committee**

An advisory committee was created for the project, including Shawn Nicholson, assistant director, Digital Information Services, MSU Libraries; Matt Kolb, information technologist from Academic Technology Services (ATS), and Spartan Archive project team members. The primary function of this advisory committee is to serve as a search committee for the Project Information Technologist.

- **Search for Project Information Technologist (PIT)**

In July, the Project Information Technologist (PIT) job was posted in several venues. The search committee selected five candidates for interviews, and interviewing will occur through the month of October 2010. The Archives expects to extend an offer to the top candidate in November, with an expected start date of January 2011.

- **Preparation for Archivists' Toolkit implementation**

Patel reviewed the Archivists' Toolkit archival management software and created a document describing its features, for use within UAHC. This document may be found at <http://www.archives.msu.edu/documents/ATv2u5-Introduction.pdf>. Patel began the process of setting up a server for the implementation of Archivists' Toolkit.

- **Survey of community needs and expectations**

Schmidt began researching what the Office of the Registrar currently offers users online. She also met with Miller to determine where the Spartan Archive records series are currently defined in the records workflow. Documentation on historical/current practices in handling the Spartan Archives records series, by both UAHC and the Office of the Registrar, are available on the project website at <http://www.archives.msu.edu/documents/UAHC--CurrentHandlingSARecords.pdf> and <http://www.archives.msu.edu/documents/RegistrarsOfficewebsite.pdf>.

- **Electronic records workflows: accessioning**

With Busch and Miller, Schmidt began evaluating and documenting the current accessioning process for digital records.

- **iRODS workshop arrangements**

Schmidt made preliminary arrangements for the iRODS workshop at the Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center, East Lansing, for April 7-8, 2011, to include a block of hotel rooms for out-of-town attendees, a reception, and breakfasts and lunches. She also publicized the workshops to the CIC-UAG and CIC Center for Library Initiatives.

- **Progress reports to CIC-UAG**

Schmidt submitted quarterly project progress reports to the CIC-UAG for the periods ending June 30, 2010 and September 30, 2010. The reports are available on the project website at <http://www.archives.msu.edu/documents/CICQuarterlyReport6-30-10.2.pdf> and <http://www.archives.msu.edu/documents/CICQuarterlyReport9-30-10.2.pdf> respectively.

Some project activities scheduled for the first phase of the project, which ended on September 30, 2010, will be carried over to the next phase, which runs October 1, 2010-March 31, 2011. These include continuations of several of the activities listed above along with the following:

- Hiring of the project information technologist
- Implementation of Archivists' Toolkit and migration of collection data
- Development of public interface for Archivists' Toolkit

Presentations and Proposals

- **Society of American Archivists (SAA) Research Forum (poster)**

On August 10, 2010, Ghering and Schmidt presented a poster entitled "Spartan Archive: Building a Permanent Home for Electronic Institutional Records" at the SAA Research Forum in Washington, DC. The poster, which provided an overview of the project, including outcomes and major activities during each phase, is available on the project website at <http://www.archives.msu.edu/documents/SAARF2010Poster.web.pdf>. More than 100 archivists and researchers attended the Research Forum.

- **Best Practices Exchange 2010**

On September 29, 2010, Schmidt delivered the presentation "A Tale of Two Michigan State University Digital Preservation Projects" at the 2010 Best Practices Exchange in Phoenix. The presentation, which compared and contrasted several elements of the Spartan Archive project with Schmidt's earlier NHPRC-funded H-Net e-mail list preservation project, is available on the project website at <http://www.archives.msu.edu/documents/BPE2010.pdf>.

- **Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) 2011 session proposal**

Schmidt recruited participants and submitted a session proposal for the 2011 Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) meeting entitled "Streams in the E-Record Workflow: Developing Elements of the Archival Process for Electronic Records of Historical Value." Ghering agreed to chair the session. Other session participants include Jackie Esposito of Penn State University and Pat Michaelis of the Kansas State Historical Society.

- **Digital Preservation Management Workshop, invitation to present**

Ghering and Schmidt were invited to present on digital preservation tools and workflows at a Digital Preservation Management Workshop that will be held in Ann Arbor, November 1-5.

The presentation will include current digital archives accessioning practices and a discussion of the pre-ingest tools that are being examined for use with Spartan Archive.

- **SAA 2011 session proposal**

Ghering and Schmidt put together a “work in progress” session and submitted a proposal for the 2011 SAA conference entitled “Spartan Archive: A Permanent Preservation Environment Under Development at Michigan State University.” Ghering, Schmidt, and the information technologist would present on the high level, project implementation and progress to date, and technical aspects respectively. Jackie Esposito of Penn State agreed to chair the session.

Publications

- **Press release**

Ghering and Schmidt wrote and submitted a press release announcing receipt of the grant to the *MSU Weekly News*, an online news publication distributed to the MSU community. The press release is available on the project website at <http://www.archives.msu.edu/documents/NHPRCPressRelease.pdf>.

- **State News article**

Ghering was interviewed for an article on the Spartan Archive project for the *State News*, the student newspaper of Michigan State University. The article, which was published on July 27, 2010, may be found at http://www.statenews.com/index.php/article/2010/07/msu_continuing_update_of_digital_archives.

- **MSU News article interview**

Ghering and Schmidt were interviewed for an article on the Spartan Archive project for the *MSU News*, Michigan State University’s online employee newsletter. The article will be published in October 2010.

- **MAC Newsletter article invitation**

Schmidt was asked to write 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. Ghering will co-author.

Conferences and Workshops

- **MAC 2010 annual meeting, April 22-24**

Ghering, Schmidt, Busch, and Miller participated in the Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) annual meeting in Chicago. At a gathering of CIC-UAG members during the conference, Ghering presented the Spartan Archive project.

- **Digital Curation Curriculum (DigCCurr) Professional Institute, May 16-21**

Ghering and Schmidt participated in the Digital Curation Curriculum (DigCCurr) Professional Institute at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Schmidt plans to examine tools and other resources introduced at the Institute as to their use in better executing project tasks. The Institute also presented networking opportunities with colleagues working on similar projects. Participants designed 6-month plans that they will report on in January 2011.

- **SAA Research Forum and annual meeting, August 10-14**
Ghering and Schmidt attended the SAA Research Forum and annual meeting in DC and learned about tools, workflows, and policies that will be explored for use in Spartan Archive. In addition to the poster on Spartan Archive at the Research Forum, they delivered a presentation entitled “It’s Different with Digital: Influencing Curation Policy When There’s No Mandate to Curate” that referenced the Spartan Archive project. This presentation is available at <http://msudcp.archives.msu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/SAA-2010.pdf>.
- **Best Practices Exchange 2010, September 29-October 1**
Schmidt gathered more information and ideas for tools to use with the Spartan Archive project and general electronic records workflow at the University Archives.

Other Related Activities

- **Revisions to general retention schedules**
Busch, Miller, and Ghering proposed revisions of all university general retention schedules. Ghering has circulated the proposed revisions across the university and met individually with administrative and academic units for feedback. The revisions are currently in the third draft and continue to be circulated to key university committees and senior administration.
- **Records survey of MSU Technologies’ paper-sparse workflow**
Ghering and Miller are conducting a records survey of MSU Technologies’ new paper-sparse business workflow, in preparation for specific unit-level records retention schedules.
- **Accessioning of electronic records to “digital shelf”**
Busch is accessioning electronic records from the MSU College of Human Medicine and College of Osteopathic Medicine, in preparation for transfer to the University Archives. These records are being stored in a secured holding area on the UAHC server in anticipation of future ingest into the Spartan Archive permanent preservation environment.
- **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.
- **“Trusted Document Management System” checklist**
Ghering and Schmidt drafted a “Trusted Document Management System (TDMS)” checklist for document repositories that store university records, based on the Trusted Repository Audit and Certification (TRAC): Criteria and Checklist. Pending review by Internal Audit, revisions of university policy and procedures will be proposed that reflect the TDMS recommendations.
- **Inventory of electronic records from Office of Board of Trustees**
Ghering performed an inventory of electronic records from the Office of Board of Trustees currently residing in the university’s ANGEL course management system. Schmidt and Busch will test ingest tools and workflow on this set of records.

- **Retention schedule reviews**

Miller reviewed records retention schedules with MSU Extension and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.



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