Overview: The MetaArchive Cooperative continues to grow, in terms of a maturing system and organization as well as its membership. Since 2008 it has successfully adapted LOCKSS’s software to provide a private and secure distributed digital preservation network and polling/validation/replacement routines for the Dark Archive of ETDs. The Cooperative has grown from the original six members to 16 institutions. There are six networked caches of ETDs at Virginia Tech, Emory, FSU, Georgia Tech, Rice and Boston College. 265 gigabytes of ETDs are preserved in each cache of the network.

TRAC: In February 2010 a self-audit of the MetaArchive Cooperative determined that its distributed digital preservation network conforms to all 84 criteria specified by the Trusted Repositories Audit & Certification: Criteria & Checklist1 (TRAC). Therefore, the MetaArchive Cooperative’s distributed digital preservation network operates according to the standards of a trustworthy digital repository. The MetaArchive Trusted Repository Audit Checklist is available at http://www.metaarchive.org/sites/default/files/MetaArchive_TRAC_Checklist.pdf

GDDP: This year members of the MetaArchive Cooperative finished writing a book, A Guide to Distributed Digital Preservation (GDDP) [http://www.metaarchive.org/GDDP].

A Guide to Distributed Digital Preservation is devoted to a still-emerging field of practice. Replication and distribution hold the promise of indefinite preservation of materials without degradation. But it doesn’t remove the daunting task of establishing effective organizational and technical processes to enable this form of securing long-term preservation of digital assets. GDDP describes successful, low-cost collaborative strategies and provides specific new models that can help higher education institutions work together for their mutual benefit. Readers can gain both a philosophical and a practical understanding of the emerging field of distributed digital preservation, including how to establish or join a network.

Rachel Howard (Louisville) and I wrote chapter 5, “Content Selection, Preparation, and Management.” Among other things it presents ETDs as a case study with best practices for organizing collections and preservation readiness, recalling in 2008 that the MetaArchive and the NDLTD formed an alliance to examine the practical issues involved in a collaborative strategy for the distributed digital preservation of ETDs. We provide practical information about preservation readiness for the range of collections from new ETD initiatives to ones like Virginia Tech’s that may need “Triage for Legacy Collections.”

Presentation: At the Canadian ETD and Open Repositories Workshop held in Ottawa at Carleton University, May 10-11, I promoted the NDLTD/MetaArchive Preservation Strategy through my presentation, “Collaborative Preservation of ETDs: The MetaArchive Cooperative and LOCKSS.”

Workshop: Martin Halbert, now Dean of Libraries at the University of North Texas, Bill Donovan (Boston College), and I will again lead an ETD Preservation Workshop, designed to be a ½ day preconference in conjunction with the annual NDLTD’s international symposium. This is the third year we have presented this workshop and look forward to offering it again next year in South Africa. The agenda is available at http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/preservation/ETDWorkshopAgenda2010.pdf and the revised edition of the

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Survey: It has been 2½ years since the NDLTD/MetaArchive sponsored the online ETD preservation readiness survey. I think this should be redone next Jan./Feb. (same time period as the 2008 survey) with minor modifications (i.e., no change in questions, but offer ranges of measurements instead of blank text boxes: what was I thinking???). I wrote about the 2008 survey results:

Correlating responses for universities that accept ETDs with those that have formal preservation plans reveals that less that one-fifth (18%) of the ETD-L with ETD collections also have formal plans. Two-thirds of the ETD-L accepts ETDs without having formalized preservation plans. Only one institution has a formal plan but does not accept ETDs.

With such a small percentage of universities indicating that they have preservation plans for their ETD collections, this survey reached a significant number of institutions that could clearly benefit from joining the NDLTD MetaArchive preservation network.

Membership: Unlike last year when three Cooperative members joined the NDLTD, this year we did not gain new members from this alliance. Auburn, Clemson, Florida State, and Louisville have stated their intention to preserve their ETDs in the MetaArchive’s preservation network. Louisville is already an NDLTD member and I asked each one of the others if they would join the NDLTD. Other potential members include North Texas, Indiana, Penn St., and South Carolina. There is also the potential for a Spanish consortium joining the Cooperative, as well as Oregon St. and JMU, all of which have also expressed interest in preserving their ETDs.

ETD Preservation in the MetaArchive Cooperative

For more information about the ETD preservation network, you may contact the MetaArchive Program Manager, Katherine Skinner (katherine.skinner@metaarchive.org), as well as me (gailmac@vt.edu).