Exploration of the Motivation for and Knowledge of Preservation Practices for Personal Digital Artifacts
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Abstract

Libraries and other cultural institutions are very aware of the crisis in digital preservation and are taking steps to preserve our collective cultural heritage. In contrast, individual consumers are much less aware of the fragility and value of their personal digital possessions. As a result, valuable representations of personal memories intended for future generations will be lost through ignorance and/or benign neglect. This research will explore user behavior as it relates to the preservation of personal digital objects. We seek to understand value and digital objects, what steps are involved in keeping them preserved, and how preservation decisions are affected. The theory of information assimilation behaviors will be used to explore the attitudes and values of individuals regarding digital preservation. In this first phase of this research, 15 semi-structured interviews will be conducted with friends of friends' members of a local urban public library. The interviews will be used to analyze the factors that influence the relationship between the personal sentiment of digital objects and the decision to preserve them. The research will be used to explore the behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs of individuals regarding digital preservation. In the next phase of this research, 15 semi-structured interviews will be conducted with friends of friends' members of a local urban public library. The interviews will be used to explore the factors that influence the relationship between the personal sentiment of digital objects and the decision to preserve them. The research will be used to explore the behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs of individuals regarding digital preservation.

Problem Statement

Digitally-born objects are threatened by technology obsolescence. Users of digital objects depend upon computer hardware and software to view or view the objects. Changes in advances in computer technology can render digital objects obsolete or lose functionality. We are interested in studying user behavior as it relates to the preservation of personal digital objects. We seek to understand the factors that influence personal digital objects, what steps are involved in keeping them preserved, and how preservation decisions are affected. In addition, we are interested in exploring the factors that influence personal digital objects, what steps are involved in keeping them preserved, and how preservation decisions are affected.

Research Questions

1. What factors (interpersonal, technical, financial) do individual attribute to digital artifacts? How do these factors differ for males and females?
2. What significant factors motivate individuals to acquire and use technical knowledge for digital preservation of personal digital possessions?
3. How can information professionals and information researchers use the knowledge of user sentiment, behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs about digital preservation to promote information literacy about digital preservation practices and more broadly, to understand the role of digital preservation in information preservation?

Data Collection and Analysis

In the final phase of this research, 15 semi-structured interviews will be conducted with friends of friends' members of a local urban public library. The interviews will focus on specific information systems as it relates to the preservation of personal digital objects. After the participants have completed the interview, they will be asked to fit in the three zones of their information source location.

Expected Findings

Analysis of the interview transcripts will lead to insights into the factors that influence personal digital artifacts, what steps are involved in keeping digital artifacts preserved, and how preservation decisions are affected. In addition, the research will provide insight into the personal sentiment, behaviors, and attitudes of individuals regarding digital preservation. This research will focus on exploring the factors that influence personal digital artifacts, what steps are involved in keeping digital artifacts preserved, and how preservation decisions are affected.

Expected Contributions

From this initial exploration of the information behaviors surrounding digital preservation, resulting information will be used to further develop a theory of digital preservation practice. This theory will have potential to inform systems designed for personal metadata and be information access in both personal and formal collections. This study will also need to investigate relationships between personal use, sentiment, and how preservation decisions are affected.

Related References

[References]

Valuable Across all Information Contexts

Boomer & Female

Valued for Long Term Preservation

GEN Y Male