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# Practical digital preservation: a how-to guide for organizations of any size

**Adrian Brown**

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Adrian Brown is a highly respected authority in the area of digital preservation who has published widely on this topic. In this book he sets out to distil his extensive knowledge and experience into a practical guide for individuals or teams in any size of organisation embarking on the 'sometimes overpowering', as he describes them, challenges involved in developing a digital preservation project or longer term strategy. One of the strengths of this book is the writing style: at all times the reader feels guided and supported by an expert in the field willing to pass on all the wisdom he has gained over the years. He highlights both examples of good practice and some of the pitfalls to avoid along the way but never in an overly didactic fashion. The introductory chapter is very reassuring to non-experts, clearly stating the minimum requirements for entry-level digital preservation and dispelling some of the myths, including huge costs, which can put smaller organisations off even starting a co-ordinated approach to preservation.

It is possible to read through the whole book to get a complete picture of the digital preservation process. Ten chapters cover: making the case; understanding your requirements; implementation models; selecting and acquiring digital objects; accession and ingest; describing digital objects; preservation; access and future trends. Using the book in this way would benefit anyone embarking on a new strategy, or as suggested in the introduction, students who need to understand the theory and practice of digital preservation as currently practised. Each section is very detailed, with a number of key concepts,

acronyms and processes illustrated in tables or flow diagrams and the excellent index provides a quick finding tool for everything in the book. Teams like ourselves at Liverpool John Moores University are more likely to have made a start on some aspects of digital preservation and will be able to turn to the relevant sections very easily for guidance on a particular stage of their project or strategy – at the moment we are considering changing our storage methods and the chapter on preserving digital objects will be very useful to us in our discussions with the technical support team. What also comes over in Adrian Brown's book is his enthusiasm and commitment to digital preservation – rather than seeing it as a chore or something difficult that just has to be done, he sees it as a wonderful opportunity to preserve heritage for future generations. The case studies used throughout the book are from a range of United Kingdom organisations including the Parliamentary Archives, the Wellcome Library the London School of Economics and the county archives of Gloucestershire and West Yorkshire and illustrate a number of different projects varying in size and complexity.

One of the concerns about a book like this is that the technologies described will date fairly quickly. This could of course be addressed by future new editions and there is so much else of lasting value in Adrian Brown's text that I would have no hesitation in recommending it to any organisation currently addressing their digital preservation policies or embarking on a new project.