Preserving and Providing Access to Privacy-sensitive Collections

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KEYWORDS

Digital preservation, privacy-sensitive records, historical records

1. OVERVIEW

Recent developments in digitization and dissemination technologies present the possibility of making archival collections broadly available to a global audience. In addition, new collections of born-digital documents will be readily available to support a multitude of objectives of their diverse, worldwide stakeholders. Demographics such as family members, journalists, social services providers, and policy makers can all benefit from access to these historical collections.

While these advances are broadly welcomed in most circumstances, some archival collections include restricted or privacy-sensitive collections. Examples of such privacy-sensitive records include mental health institutional records, prison records, records of the Truth and reconciliation commissions, Nazi archives, and the Guatemalan national police archives. While access to paper documents is protected by distance, physical barriers, and varying state and national policies and laws, digital access may exacerbate threats to the privacy of individuals named in these records. The online availability of such records has a potential to stigmatize or embarrass the families or descendants of those named in the records when they bear no responsibility for the acts or health conditions of the named individuals, raising ethical issues in providing broad, open access to these records. In some cases, the legal frameworks for digital records are substantially less clear than those for physical records.

2. TOPICS

This workshop will invite broad participation from scholars and practitioners who work with or are interested in issues surrounding the preservation of and providing access to digital, privacy-sensitive collections. A non-exhaustive list of topics of interest include:

- Digitization, curation, and preservation of privacy-sensitive collections
- Theoretical and metadata models
- Policies, workflows, and protections for accessing materials

- Issues in using cloud services for privacy-sensitive materials storage and scholarship
- Scholarly information behavior and needs
- Models that recognize diverse user needs (for example, aggregate data, individual information)
- Institutional and political negotiations surrounding access to privacy-sensitive collections
- Mechanisms and models for data retrieval from handwritten documents
- Privacy-aware digital repository architectures
- Privacy-aware crowdsourcing and transcription methods
- Privacy issues in designing user interfaces and data visualizations
- Privacy mitigation in data analytics and presentation
- Evaluation of existing software, infrastructure, and techniques
- Social justice issues and non-scholarly outcomes of work with restricted collections

3. TARGET AUDIENCE

While our first workshop has been accepted for hosting at the Digital Humanities 2017 conference, we have not conducted it yet. We have heard anecdotal expressions of interest from several communities but are unsure how broad and deep such interest goes. In this light, we have tried to make the topic as broad as possible, while retaining the core characteristics and constraints that we have found in our work. We anticipate receiving 10 to 20 submissions and accepting 4 to 6 for presentation at the workshop. We are unable to gauge the level of interest in the iPres community in attending the workshop without presenting. With connections in the Asian iSchools and the digital libraries communities.

4. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

The workshop will not require special technical support. A projector for presentations and an internet connection for participants to showcase web-based collections will suffice.

5. DURATION AND FORMAT

This workshop will be held over half a day. This time frame will allow for adequate exploration of the various aspects of the workshop topics as well as domains via presentations, as well as in-depth discussion. The workshop will be held in a seminar style, with several short and long presentations. Individuals may participate in the workshop without presenting. The organizers will include an open discussion time to engage the audience and, especially, to tease out aspects of scholarship with privacy-sensitive digital collections that the presentations do not cover.

6. ORGANIZERS

Unmil P. Karadkar is an assistant professor in the School of Information at The University of Texas at Austin. He situates his work at the intersection of digital libraries, human-computer interaction, and visualization. He studies data practices of researchers with an eye toward identifying unmet information needs. Based on an understanding of these needs, he designs software to support their evolving practices and evaluates the impact of this software on their work. His research contributes to areas such as the design of digital collection interfaces and digital humanities. His research has been funded by the National Science Foundation, Texas General Land Office, USAA, and most recently, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Pat Galloway is a professor in the School of Information at The University of Texas at Austin. Her research interests include institutionalization of digital repositories and appropriate appraisal practices for digital records. In keeping with her interests as a historian, she is also interested in understanding how archiving and cultural preservation in general fit into their historical and cultural contexts. Pat has developed a suite of courses designed to prepare students to become what has recently been referred to as "Archival Engineers," capable of managing and maintaining digital cultural objects indefinitely; she also teaches archival appraisal and a course on historical museums. She worked as a medieval archaeologist in Europe in the 1970s and then became involved with humanities-oriented computing, which she supported in the Computer Unit of Westfield College of the University of London, where her primary interest was text analysis. From 1979 to 2000 she worked at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH), where she was a documentary editor, archaeological editor, historian, museum exhibit developer, and electronic records program director, while at the same time creating the MDAH's automation program from scratch as manager of information systems. She is the author of Choctaw Genesis 1500-1700 (1995) and Practicing Ethnohistory(2006). From 1997 to 2000 she directed the NHPRC grant-funded project at MDAH to create an electronic records program for the state of Mississippi.

King Davis is a research professor in the School of Information at The University of Texas at Austin and has made outstanding contributions in the field of Health and Mental Health over the last three decades. Dr. Davis held the Robert Lee Sutherland Chair in Mental Health and Social Policy at the University of Texas at Austin, School of Social Work. From 2003-2008, Dr. King also served as the Executive Director of the Hogg Foundation, which awards grants and manages programs to improve mental health research and services in Texas. Prior to his work in Texas, Dr. Davis served as the Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services for the Commonwealth of Virginia by Virginia Governor L. Douglas Wilder. He also has served as the John Galt Chair in Public Mental Health at the University of Virginia's Department of Psychiatry. Dr. Davis has held academic appointments at Washington University in St. Louis, Virginia Commonwealth University, Eastern Virginia Medical School and Norfolk State University. Dr. Davis received his PhD from Brandeis University, Florence Heller School for Social Policy and Management, and his MSW from California State University Fresno, School of Social Work. He has written and published numerous articles and reports on mental health, fund raising, managed health care and social justice. His book, The Color of Social Policy, was published in 2004.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS