

Partners for Preservation: Advancing Digital Preservation through Cross-Community Collaboration. Edited by Jeanne Kramer-Smyth. London: Facet Publishing, 2019. \$93.99. Index. 212 pp. Softcover.

The title of this anthology of essays sets the readers' expectation for a very different experience than the book delivers. Neither a set of case studies nor a practical guide to digital preservation, the book is "an exploration of how computers and technology affect our ability to preserve information for the future," as explained by editor Jeanne Kramer-Smyth (p. xxii). Its 10 essays aim to introduce archivists to the perspectives of professionals working in areas adjacent to digital preservation. Boldly stepping beyond the GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives, and museums) community, Kramer-Smyth provides a platform for diverse voices with impeccable educational and professional credentials, including a color scientist, a journalism professor, and a legal expert in postmortem privacy.

Kramer-Smyth states the rationale for the anthology clearly in her introduction. As an archivist and a former software developer, she understands digital preservation as not merely "the storage of 1s and 0s" (p. xxii). Rather, she argues, digital preservation also requires the preservation of context, the accurate rendering of preserved files, and actions to maintain privacy and confidentiality—all within rapidly changing technological frameworks. Given the complexity of the task and the speed with which new technologies are introduced, "archivists cannot navigate the flood of technology and change alone" (p. xxii). Her goal, therefore, is to create connections between archivists and other professionals engaged with digital technology and the preservation of information.

The book consists of three parts, each grouping several essays around a common theme. Part 1, "Memory, Privacy and Transparency," includes examinations of the ownership of digital assets after a creator's death, the right to be forgotten, computer-assisted reporting (journalism employing computer-based data analysis), and link rot in legal citations. A legal perspective informs most of the content of part 1, and archivists will find the preservation and access challenges presented to be both familiar and disconcerting. Legal scholar Edina Harbinja's "The Inheritance of Digital Media" stands out as a particularly helpful overview of laws and recent court cases around the ownership of email and social media accounts after their creators' demise.

The second and third parts of the book do not hold together as tightly as the first. Part 2, "The Physical World: Objects, Art and Architecture," cobbles together pieces on the Internet of Things, maintaining color accuracy within digital displays, and BIM (building information modeling) for historic structures. While Kramer-Smyth frames these essays around the "blurring edge" between the physical and the digital (p. 79), the essays do not complement each other, and two of them seem not to be written for an audience of archivists. However, Abhijit Sarkar, a color scientist and author of chapter 6, "Accurate Digital Color Reproduction on Displays: From Hardware Design to Software Features," is to be commended for identifying and directly addressing issues within his field that are most relevant to the archival profession. Writing as an archivist's helpful guide to digital color display, his clear explanations will assist archivists working with

artists, photographers, and other creators of digital records for which color accuracy is an essential preservation consideration.

Part 3, “Data and Programming,” addresses “the mechanics of data, visualizations and software development” (p. 145) and consists of essays on maintaining privacy when releasing statistical data (such as census data), molding data into visual information, and developing open-source software. Again, these essays do not seem particularly geared toward archivists. But the last two do drive home the importance of good old-fashioned documentation in the work of data visualization and coding. Archivists less familiar with the technological aspects of our profession may find some comfort in the fact that they, too, have kindred spirits among computer scientists and technologists; both clearly articulate their appreciation of context and the integrity of master data sets and code.

In the anthology’s epilogue, Kramer-Smyth writes that it is her “fervent wish that [readers] leave this book inspired” (p. 201). Does she succeed? In some respects, yes. Several of the essays reveal eye-opening similarities and possible synergies between archival work and the computer technology-related concerns of a diverse group of professionals. Academics working to crack tough problems in digital preservation will find food for thought and possible collaborators for future research. But, ultimately, the book left this reader more perplexed than inspired. The topics addressed are so disparate that it is difficult to imagine anybody (other than a reviewer) reading the book from cover to cover. And, as an editor, Kramer-Smyth neglects to make meaningful connections among the essays or to recommend any actionable steps to further partnerships between archivists and non-GLAM professionals. More of the editor’s own voice as a successful networker who sees possibilities for the archival field across a wide assortment of disciplines would have been a welcome addition.

Colleen McFarland Rademaker, MA, MLIS
Associate Librarian, Special Collections
The Corning Museum of Glass