

Digital Forensics: A Floppy Pilot Project at the University of Tennessee Libraries

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Abstract: The University of Tennessee Libraries Special Collections holds thousands of collections, a considerable amount of which contain born-digital material saved to static media at risk of becoming obsolete. Over the next few years, we expect the number of born-digital materials in our collections will increase dramatically. To prepare to preserve and provide access to our born-digital accessions, UTK Special Collections obtained a FRED (Forensic Recovery of Evidence Device) and sent staff to digital forensics training. In our pilot project using FRED, we turned our attention to a small set of 45 floppy disks documenting the work of poet and literary scholar Peggy Bach (1929-1996). We followed best practices and protocols from our training and utilized archives-specific digital forensics guidelines provided by the AIMS project; we also studied and modified workflows used by the University of Virginia and other archival institutions. While the migration of the information from obsolete media to PDF/As was successful, we were left grappling with questions of appraisal, security, and privacy. We learned that FRED and its migration capabilities provided the first step to a preservation solution. However, we still need better ways to ingest, manage, and disseminate these digital files. This poster will document UTK Libraries' efforts, as a mid-sized institution without dedicated technical staff, to grapple with the application of a digital forensics program to its existing archival practice. It will highlight our process, our successes and roadblocks, and allow for a discussion of digital forensics methodology and the future of managing digital assets.

About the authors:

Kris Bronstad is the Modern Political Archivist at the University of Tennessee Knoxville, where, in addition to managing the collections of 20th century Tennessee politicians such as Howard Baker, Estes Kefauver and Bill Brock, she works with the library to find ways to best provide lasting access to digital

material. Kris has a Masters in Information Science with a Specialization in Archives and Records Management from University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a BA and MFA from University of Texas-Austin.

Alesha Shumar is the University Archivist at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tennessee. As the University Archivist, she oversees the processing, preservation, and management of over 3000+ linear feet of multi-format university archives and manuscript collections. In recent years, Alesha has focused on preserving and providing access to digital archival materials, both digital derivatives and born-digital records. Alesha has her Digital Archives Specialist (DAS) Certification through SAA and now working on implementing specific guidelines and workflows for accessioning and preserving electronic records. Prior to UTK Libraries, Alesha worked at the Archives Service Center at the University of Pittsburgh as the Helen Clay Frick Processing Archivist. She has served on local and national archival committees. Alesha earned her MLIS from the University of Pittsburgh.