

# **PDA is a Good Thing: Embracing Collaboration to Address the Personal Digital Archive Needs of a Contemporary Artist**

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**Abstract:** The study of personal digital archives is an emerging research area that crosses multiple domains including archives, recordkeeping, digital preservation, and personal information management. The personal context of an individual is distinct from organizational or institutional contexts, and necessitates new methods and approaches to better understand and develop solutions to meet personal digital recordkeeping and preservation needs. The proposed presentation will describe research in progress that is focusing on this personal context by using a case study approach to extend and expand the discourse on personal digital archives by engaging in a project with a very practical goal: the design, development, and implementation of a functional personal digital recordkeeping system for a contemporary artist.

An action research methodology is being utilized in the project to facilitate the process of working towards practical goals and objectives. The action research method offers a structure that is particularly applicable to personal digital archives research, in that it entails an iterative process of planning, acting, and evaluating to work towards project goals. In the context of the current project, which is based on collaboration between an archivist and an artist, an iterative approach that incorporates continual evaluation will allow for flexibility in adjusting project activities. In addition, the current project is also investigating the applicability of the records continuum conceptual framework to the realm of personal digital recordkeeping.

The proposed presentation will report on initial project activities including: the development of diagrams modeling the artist's creative process, the identification of records and record value, and the development of recordkeeping system requirements.

**About the author:**

*Sam Meister* is a Digital Archivist and Assistant Professor in the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library at The University of Montana-Missoula. He is also currently an instructor in the Society of American Archivist's Digital Archives Specialist Certificate Program. He holds a Master of Library and Information Science degree from San Jose State University, where he completed a thesis on "Recordkeeping in Small Nonprofit Organizations". He is passionate about developing workflows, and is going to attempt a 100 mile bike ride this summer.