

# Is It What It Is? And Who Cares? Translating WHAT We Do Into WHY We Do

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**Abstract:** Advocating for digital archives and long-term access is something that archivists are getting better at doing with our stakeholders and outside funders, colleagues, and administrators. However, there is still a great need for education and advocacy of what we do for digital material with our librarian colleagues. This presentation will discuss a recent workshop aimed at library colleagues that talked about Tools for Understanding Your Digital Files, with the subtext of educating the attendees in the basics of archival context, function, and digital archives management. The poster session provide an opportunity to engage with Research Forum attendees who may provide feedback and suggestions for both improving the message and delivery and informing my approach. This is a poster at the start of a research process to gather feedback from the community. The information gained during the interactive session will be incorporated into my approach to an iterative applied research (or research-based practice) process the results of which will be made available for public consumption through the MIT Institute Archives digital archives blog.

## **About the author:**

*Kari R. Smith* joined the staff of the MIT Institute Archives and Special Collection in December 2011 as Digital Archivist where she is establishing process and procedures for acquiring and managing born-digital content. Previously she was the Head of the Visual Resource Collections and Media Services at the University of Michigan Department of the History of Art. Kari led the VRC through its ongoing transition from a predominantly slide library and image archives to a collection of digital image resources. She has been an instructor for the Digital Preservation Management workshops since 2008. Kari's research interests include intellectual and long-term access to cultural material especially through interoperable metadata of digital objects. Kari earned her B.A. in International Relations from George Mason University and her M.S. in Information from the University of Michigan School of Information.

*Engineering the Future, Digital Archives at MIT* is her blog discussing the work and research into establishing and managing digital archives at MIT. <http://libraries.mit.edu/sites/digital-archives/>