Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication

Volume 1 | Issue 2 eP1054

I, Digital: Personal Collections in the Digital Era edited by Christopher Lee

Wilhelmina Randtke

Randtke, W. (2012). *I, Digital: Personal Collections in the Digital Era* edited by Christopher Lee. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication* 1(2):eP1054. http://dx.doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.1054

© 2012 by the author(s). This open access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution License, which allows unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, providing the original author and source are credited.

JLSC is a quarterly journal sponsored and published by Pacific University Library | ISSN 2162-3309 | http://jlsc-pub.org

ISSN 2162-3309 JLSC

BOOK REVIEW

I, Digital: Personal Collections in the Digital Era

Christopher Lee, editor

2011 | Society of American Archivists | 379 pages, softcover | ISBN: 1-931666-38-5 | U.S. $69.95

Within the discourse of electronic information, institutional records, such as business records, government records, and scholarly publishing, have received much attention. But personal records are also going digital at a rapidly increasing rate. Family photos are taken digitally and shared on Facebook. Diaries are kept in blogs. Personal correspondence is by email.

I, Digital, a monograph released by the Society of American Archivists in 2011, is a collection of individually authored chapters that address the challenges and opportunities for archivists curating personal digital archives. Chapters provide background on what individuals may be doing with digital artifacts and provides sample projects for assisting personal digital archiving. While the presentation of the material is academic, the monograph is intended for archivists working in the field.

Early chapters explore how personal archiving practices have evolved in the digital era. With digital correspondence, people now keep most email, which wasn't possible with paper. More people retrieve files with keyword search and no longer maintain a filing system. A little over a decade ago, relocating meant either saving, boxing up and storing or tossing out paper files. Moving to a new computer might be just as disruptive a relocation, but now users can copy all files over. Chapters provide perspectives on accessioning digital collections which are routinely massive, disorganized, and include the mundane with the significant.

Throughout the monograph, it is clear that the archivist's role is shifting to include a more prominent role in advising on digital information management. Archivists have traditionally focused on curating personal papers amassed over a lifetime, with core archival functions such as acquisition, appraisal, arrangement, description and preservation occurring to the collection after it is donated. Nowadays, collections may consist of digital items that may not last more than a few years, due to the inherent fragility and limited viability of digital content.

While the monograph focuses on the digital management practices by specific user communities and identifies projects that are developing tools for user communities, specific techniques or tools for curating or preserving digital content is not addressed. This resource is not intended to be a "how-to" on digital preservation, but instead brings to the fore the challenges and opportunities faced by archivists curating a "digital world."

Overall, the book is easy to read and follow for someone with archival training. "Boots on the ground" archivists should be aware that this is not an instructional manual, and it does not provide step-by-step directions on the care of digital collections. Instead, this resource will benefit archivists and other information professionals as a resource that provides an overview of issues related to digital personal archives. This resource is recommended for library and information science instructors, particularly those providing instruction or conducting research in the archival or digital information fields.

Wilhelmina Randtke *St. Mary's University (TX)*

© 2012 Randtke. This open access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License, which allows unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.