

State libraries and archives have traditionally managed, preserved, and provided access to significant government information in paper and other traditional formats. More and more, however, this information is created in digital form. Much of it has short-term value, but a considerable fraction must remain available for many years, in some cases, permanently. Unfortunately, states are finding their current preservation capabilities do not extend from paper to digital formats. All signs point to continued growth in the volume and complexity of this information, yet library, archives, and records management professionals are hampered in their efforts to respond to this growth by a host of resource gaps. These gaps include a lack of comprehensive program strategies, personnel and funding, as well as a lack of technology infrastructure and appropriate and sufficient skills.

Partnerships have emerged as the most viable strategy for securing the resources necessary for preserving state government digital information. Whether these partnerships span units within a single agency or multiple state and local governments and in some cases the federal government, their development requires knowledge of capabilities and priorities to be shared among potential partners. This report provides the baseline knowledge necessary to launch these critical partnership development efforts. Baseline data on state government digital information preservation capabilities and activities was collected in five key areas:

1. Institutional Roles and Responsibilities
2. State Government Digital Information Preservation Activities
3. Training Needs for Digital Preservation
4. State Government Digital Information Currently At-Risk
5. Engagement with Enterprise Architecture

Six observations about the challenges facing state government digital preservation initiatives emerged from the baseline data:

1. Capability for preserving state government digital information is low.
2. There is no consistent approach to addressing “at-risk” information.
3. Authority for setting standards and responsibility for providing digital preservation services is dispersed.
4. Executive, legislative, and judicial agencies operate parallel digital preservation efforts.
5. Digital preservation and Enterprise Architecture initiatives are not well-connected.
6. Efforts to develop strategic digital preservation programs are hampered by problem focused practices and funding and staffing models.

The challenge to library, archives, records management, and information technology professionals, agency executives, elected officials, and many others at all levels of government, is to use this baseline information to build digital preservation partnerships. The following recommendations are offered to assist in that task:

- Identify and build on existing knowledge and expertise.
- Build digital preservation partnerships within and among states.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities between and among state library, archives, records management, IT, and other interested and responsible parties.
- Use state Enterprise Architecture efforts to establish the centrality of digital preservation to enterprisewide information management.
- Continue to invest in knowledge sharing initiatives across the digital preservation community.