Being an 'a11y': Increasing Accessibility in Born Digital Preservation

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Being an 'a11y'

- You will see a11y or #a11y.

- Pronounced 'ally'.

- Abbreviation on Twitter for the word accessibility and accessibility ally.

Accessibility

- For me, accessibility means that **everyone**, including people with disabilities, should have access to born digital material, whether online or in archival storage.

KEEP CALM AND INCLUDE EVERYONE!

Born Digital Preservation

- Processing born digital files (ie: this PowerPoint), converting and/or migrating them into preservation / access files and then storing all files (ie: server, hard drive, etc.).

- This is <u>long term preservation</u>.

Do We Consider Accessibility in Born Digital Preservation?

- In the long term born digital preservation process, do we consider accessibility?

- Not yet.

Why Haven't Archivists Worked on This Issue?

- It isn't because we are mean, uncaring people!

- We care, despite what the cat thinks!

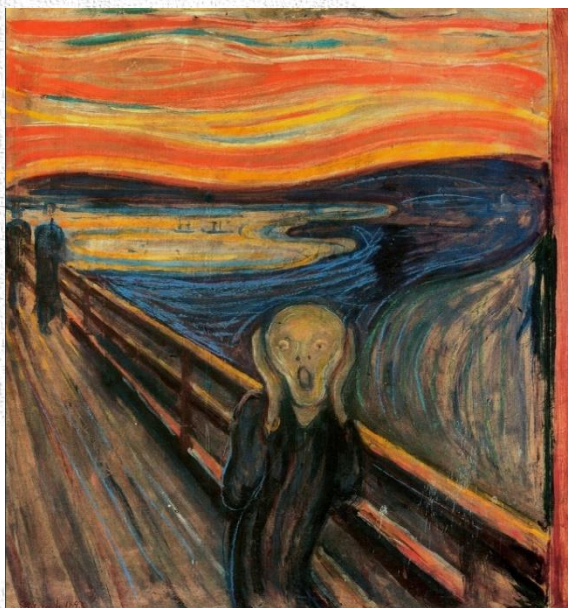- Here is why I think we haven't worked on it.

Online Access Has Been Around for 15+ Years

- We have provided online access to digital materials through websites, online exhibits, etc. since the late 90s.

- Accessibility guidelines and laws governing this online access have been on our radar since the late 90s.

- International accessibly guidelines, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 1.0/2.0, since 1999.

- Laws such as Section 508 for US govt. websites.

Preservation is Newer

- In contrast, preservation is relatively new for most archivists.

- We are still grappling with many major preservation issues. Enough to make one scream!

Now is The Time!

- We have been trying to figure out so many issues with born digital preservation, that accessibility hasn't even been considered.

- I want to change that!

Let's Look At Accessibility & Born Digital Preservation

- I am focusing on one aspect.

- I am looking at whether we should be using the PDF/A format for our preservation file copies.

- For example, we convert an original PDF into PDF/A for our preservation copy.

The Question

- The question I am asking is:

- Can we increase accessibility by using PDF/UA instead of PDF/A?

- ***Note:*** *We are talking about PDF/UA-1.*

PDF/UA Is Focused On Accessibility

- PDF/UA was created specifically for accessibility. UA=Universal Access.

- It is based on international website accessibility guidelines, WCAG 2.0.

PDF/UA Will Hold Up Over Time

- I believe that PDF/UA files may last longer and be 'better archived'.

- **Why?**

- They are designed to be strict, and this is what makes them so accessible.

- I equate this to archiving accessible websites.

- Accessible websites (with strict code/standardized code) are 'better archived', or more fully and accurately preserved, and thus hold up over time.

LOC Likes PDF/UA For Archiving!

- Library of Congress says:
"Since an unencrypted PDF document compliant with PDF/UA may also comply with requirements for PDF/A, *files that conform to PDF/UA in addition to PDF/A are considered a preferred format for page-oriented content by the Library of Congress*."
(Library of Congress PDF/UA Formats Page)

The Problem With PDF/UA

- We can likely only use PDF/UA on textual documents.

- Digitized material (if not OCR'ed), images, videos, sound files, etc. are still problematic.

Is PDF/UA One Solution to Increased Accessibility?

- I need to do more testing to see whether PDF/UA can increase the accessibility of born digital materials that we are preserving for the long term.

Thank You

- Thank you for listening!

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