

Portico: A Collaborative Approach to Preservation

Research and teaching is not possible without reliable access to the accumulated scholarship of the past and secure preservation of the scholarly record. In the print world preservation responsibility was linked to ownership and was traditionally a function of the library. In the digital age, however, the link between ownership, preservation, and access is broken. Furthermore, the scale and complexity of the technology infrastructure, specialized expertise and quality control processes necessary to preserve electronic scholarly resources exceeds that which can be supported by any individual library or institutional budget, making collaboration essential. By supporting collaborative efforts such as Portico, libraries and publishers can together contribute toward a shared infrastructure which supports a mutually beneficial and valued goal – the long-term, robust preservation of scholarly literature published in electronic form.

Libraries and Publishers Work with Portico to Preserve Scholarly Content

Portico provides a trusted and reliable community-based archive and preservation infrastructure for the scholarly community. Portico offers a permanent archive of electronic scholarly literature, beginning with e-journals, that ensures electronic scholarly resources are preserved and accessible over the long term.

A Brief History

Portico began as the Electronic-Archiving Initiative launched by JSTOR in 2002 with a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The charge of the Electronic-Archiving Initiative was to build a sustainable electronic-archiving model. For more than two years, project staff worked on the development of necessary technology and engaged in extensive discussions with publishers and libraries to craft an approach that balanced the needs of publishers and libraries while generating sufficient funding for the archive. Portico was launched in 2005 with additional financial support from JSTOR, Ithaka, The Library of Congress, and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Portico's mission is to preserve scholarly literature published in electronic form and to ensure that these materials remain accessible to future scholars, researchers, and students. Both publishers and libraries cooperate with Portico in the preservation of important published scholarship, and Portico's community-based approach relies on active collaboration with these key constituents.

The Access Model

The Portico model recognizes that while access to e-journal literature today may not be a concern, librarians and their patrons must be confident in their ability to provide access to today's e-journal literature in the future. To meet this need, all libraries supporting the Portico archive will have campus-wide access to archived content when specific trigger events occur, and when titles are no longer available from the publisher or other source. Trigger events include:

- A publisher ceases operations; or
- A publisher ceases to publish and offer a title; or
- A publisher no longer offers back issues; or
- Upon catastrophic and sustained failure of a publisher's delivery platform.

In addition to these trigger events, both publishers and libraries have recognized that in some cases, after a library has terminated a license to an electronic resource, it may be necessary for that library to continue to have ongoing access to the content it had previously paid for and licensed. This is commonly known as perpetual or post-cancellation access. In some cases, publishers choose to enable post-cancellation access to a library through the Portico archive.



Portico Today

The very positive response that Portico has received in a short time from both publishers and libraries suggests that the community now embraces a preservation model that relies upon broad, collaborative support and enables wide-scale cooperative action to meet an urgent community need.

To date, more than 40 publishers have committed over 6,200 journal titles – approximately 10 million articles - for long term preservation in the Portico archive.

For more than 85% of these titles Portico has been designated by the publisher as one source of post-cancellation access.

Participating publishers range from commercial, university press, and professional society organizations. The full list of participating publishers and titles is available on the Portico website <http://www.portico.org/about>

Currently, there are more than 375 libraries participating in Portico. These range in size from small liberal arts colleges to large university systems. Approximately 25% of library participants come from nine countries outside the United States. The full list of participating libraries is available on the Portico website <http://www.portico.org/about>

[All statistics taken on 30 September 2007]

Archival Approach

The Portico archive, which is a centralized and replicated repository, is open to a scholarly publisher's complete list of journals, including those titles which may be published in electronic format only, or print and electronic formats, or which may have been 'reborn' from digitized print. Portico is focused on preserving the intellectual content of the electronic scholarly journal; Portico does not attempt to recreate or preserve for the long term the exact look and feel of the journal or the publisher's web site or delivery platform.

Portico's archival approach for electronic journals is focused on the publishers' e-journal source files – the electronic files containing graphics, text, or other material that comprise an electronic journal article, issue, or volume. Portico receives source files directly from the scholarly publishers who have agreed to contribute to the Portico archiving service. Portico has chosen migration as its primary long-term archival approach, as part of a managed preservation strategy. Migration involves transitioning content from one file format or technological platform to another as technology evolves and formats, hardware or systems become obsolete.

Supporting the Archive

The chief beneficiaries of the Portico archive – publishers and academic institutions – provide the primary sources of funding. Sharing the costs broadly across the community ensures that no one institution must bear the full force of the costs while enabling all parties to share in the savings that can be realized by accelerating the ongoing transition from print to electronic resources.

Publishers are asked to make an annual contribution to defray operating costs including publisher-specific content processing tools, storage infrastructure, content ingestion, and migration. Participating publishers' annual contributions are tiered and vary according to annual journal revenues (from subscriptions, licensing and advertising). Publishers also agree to supply electronic journal source files in a timely way.

Libraries are also asked to make an annual archive support payment to defray a portion of the archive's ongoing operational costs. Library payments are tiered according to a library's self-reported total library materials expenditures. Both publisher and library payments are detailed on the Portico website (<http://www.portico.org>).

Conclusions

Successful long-term preservation of electronic scholarly resources will require significant levels of cooperation and collaboration between all parties engaged in scholarly communication – libraries, publishers, and archives. Together with Portico, libraries and publishers can take collective action to successfully ensure that this increasingly significant component of the scholarly record is securely preserved. This approach, which distributes the costs of the archive very broadly across the community, is an especially effective means to respond to the significant scale and complexity of the archival challenge while enabling all parties to share in the savings that can be realized by accelerating the ongoing transition from print to electronic resources.