# Bibliobloggers' Preservation Perceptions, Preferences, and Practices

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## ABSTRACT

The biblioblogosphere comprises the personal, typically professional-oriented publication of blogs by information and library science practitioners, researchers, and educators. This poster presents preliminary findings from a descriptive study examining bibliobloggers' attitudes and preferences for digital preservation, and their respective blog publishing behaviors and blog characteristics influencing preservation action. Findings will be compared to those from an earlier study of blogging scholars from the fields of history, economics, law, biology, chemistry and physics. When considering their dual role as publishers contributing to the scholarly record and, in reflection of their professional roles, work relating to stewardship of this record, bibliobloggers present an exceptional case to extend and better understand the phenomenon of blogging in academe and implications for long-term stewardship of this form.

## Categories and Subject Descriptors

I.7.4 [**Document and Text Processing**]: Electronic Publishing.
H.3.7 [**Information Storage and Retrieval**]: Digital Libraries.

## General Terms

Documentation, Human Factors, Legal Aspects

## Keywords

Weblogs, bloggers, digital preservation, scholarly communication

## 1. PROBLEM AREA

Several neologisms have emerged to reflect academics' blog publications, including bloggership in the legal scholarship realm [1] and blogademia for academe in general [2]. The field of information and library science (ILS) has its own: the biblioblogosphere. This neologism, first introduced by Schneider in 2004, as cited by Stephens [3], comprises the institutional publication of blogs of libraries and the personal, typically professionally-oriented publication of blogs by practitioners and ILS-aligned researchers and educators.

While it was recently found that there has been a decline in the number of active blogs within the biblioblogosphere, publication via posting was found to remain stable [5]. But, will these biblioblogs remain stable and available into the future? As noted by Borgman [6], "digital communications leave a trace," but when considering the nature of the blog form as well as the technical, regulatory and social frameworks in which blogging takes place, for how long?

Blogs, as a co-produced medium, represent a mix of code, content and co-producers, comprised not only of bloggers, both the known and the anonymous, but also their readers, service providers, and other contributors. In consideration of the goals of digital preservation – summarized by Caplan [4] as acquiring, describing, interpreting, securing, authenticating, accessing and performing – this multiplicity of co-producers and variety in form and content complicates effective and ethical blog preservation actions. Without deliberate personal or programmatic approaches to the long-term stewardship of these digital communications, the biblioblogs of today may be unavailable into the future.

There has been much work in recent years to meet this need. Research and development in web archiving, such as the Memento project (http://www.mementoweb.org/), and blog archiving in particular, such as the BlogForever project (http://blogforever.eu/), is an active, ongoing activity. Further, there are many examples of operational blog archiving programs (e.g., The Internet Archive's Way back Machine; the Library of Congress' Legal Blawgs Web Archive), as well as free and fee-based blog back-up services, such as Backupify, BlogBackupr, and BackupMyBlog.

A full treatment of these activities and services is beyond the scope of this short paper. They are referenced here to demonstrate current work in blog preservation, as well as the need to continue to investigate the behaviours and preferences of content creators to further inform and advance programmatic and personal blog preservation activities. This need for blog preservation services was evidenced in an earlier study by one of these authors of 153 scholars' blogging in the areas of history, law, economics, biology, chemistry and physics [7]. Most (80%) agree their blogs should be preserved for public access and use into the indefinite future. It also points to a critical need for guidance, as a majority (61%) report taking some personal action to save all or parts of their respective blogs, though the extent and effectiveness of their approaches varies.

While work is ongoing, there have been no studies to date that specifically examine, in tandem, the blog publishing and preservation behaviors and preferences of bibliobloggers.

Bibliobloggers both contribute to the scholarly record and facilitate stewardship of the scholarly record, whether from an active, hands-on role as library professionals, as educators, preparing the next generation of library professionals, or as researchers, examining compelling issues related to the information use environment. A specific look at bibliobloggers will advance understanding to inform blog preservation activities, and allow a comparison between this particular class of bloggers and those scholars represented in the earlier study.

## 2. METHODS

Through a mixed-methods approach utilizing qualitative and quantitative data collection activities, this study in progress examines the practices, perceptions, and preferences of select members of the biblioblogosphere – blogging librarians and LIS researchers and educators – and their respective blogs. While the overall study is larger, this poster will report select findings in regard to two specific research questions: 1) how do bibliobloggers perceive their blog in relation to long-term stewardship and, subsequently, who, if anyone, do they perceive as responsible as well as capable for blog preservation; and 2) how do blog characteristics and blogger publishing behaviors and preferences impact preservation action? Findings are drawn from two units of analysis – bibliobloggers and their respective blogs – and three data collection procedures – questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and blog analysis. Data collection is currently ongoing, anticipated to be completed in early to mid-September 2012.

### 2.1 Sampling

Bibliobloggers and biblioblogs are identified through purposive sampling. The sampling frames are compiled from two biblioblogs directory listings, LIS Wiki Weblogs and LISZEN, and through a review of faculty listings and websites at all American Library Association accredited graduate programs.

### 2.2 Data Collection

Bibliobloggers listed to the blogger sampling frame are invited to participate in the questionnaire stage of the study. The questionnaires are comprised of primarily closed-ended questions and organized into ten sections: 1) background; 2) scholarly publishing history; 3) blogging and scholarly communication; 4) blogging activity, identity, and audience; 5) blog publishing behaviors and preferences; 6) blog revision history; 7) blog preservation behavior; 8) blog preservation preferences; 9) other blogging activities; and 10) demographics.

Interview participants will be identified from respondents' returning completed questionnaires. The semi-structured interview schedule, anticipated to take between 20 to 30 minutes to complete, is designed to clarify and further understanding of findings from the questionnaire phase of the study.

For the blog analysis stage, a random sample of blogs listed to the blog sampling frame will be drawn at a 50% sampling ratio. The coding system captures data points across seven categories: 1) authorship; 2) blog elements and features; 3) rights and disclaimers; 4) authority and audience; 5) blog publishing activity; 6) post features; and 7) archiving.

### 2.3 Analysis

The overall goal of this study is to describe attributes, perceptions, preferences and practices of this particular group of bibliobloggers. Additionally, select findings will be compared to those from the earlier study of other blogging scholars [7]. Quantitative analysis from the questionnaire and blog analysis stages of the study will rely heavily on descriptive measures. Qualitative data from the interview portion of the study will be analyzed using manifest and latent coding techniques, with the goal to identify themes emerging from responses through consideration of frequency, direction and intensity.

## 3. INTENDED IMPACT

Multiple audiences should benefit from the results of this study, including: 1) bibliobloggers interested in personal preservation of their blog content; 2) organizations with current, piloted or planned digital preservation initiatives who are considering the medium; 3) organizations without planned digital preservation initiatives, in order to inform future, strategic collection policy decisions; and 4) developers and researchers working on the area of web and blog archiving. Findings from this research are intended to inform decision-making, today, on selection and appraisal of biblioblogs for access and use into the future.

## 4. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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