



Tech Tips for Every Librarian

► helpful hints from the mavens of libtech

Personal Archiving: A Guide to Software and Tools

AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE GROWTH OF PERSONAL ARCHIVING, LIBRARIES ARE EXPERIENCING AN INCREASING NUMBER OF USERS ASKING FOR HELP WITH SOFTWARE TO CREATE AND MANAGE THEIR ARCHIVING PROJECTS.

[This article is an abridged version of Chapter 4 of *Personal Archiving: Preserving Our Digital Heritage* (Information Today, Inc., 2013), edited by Donald T. Hawkins. —Ed.]

Although libraries and other cultural institutions have traditionally engaged in preservation activities, individuals are beginning to want to preserve their digital artifacts. We are seeing growing interest in personal digital archiving—the preservation of an individual’s digital heritage—which is being driven by the widespread use of digital cameras (especially those integrated in cellphones), large collections of unorganized photographs on users’ computers, heavy use of email and social media platforms, and a large increase in the number of born-digital documents. As a consequence of the growth of personal archiving, libraries are experiencing an increasing number of users asking for help with software to create and manage their archiving projects. In this column, I review some of the software products currently available for those who wish to undertake a personal archiving project.

Photo Archiving Software

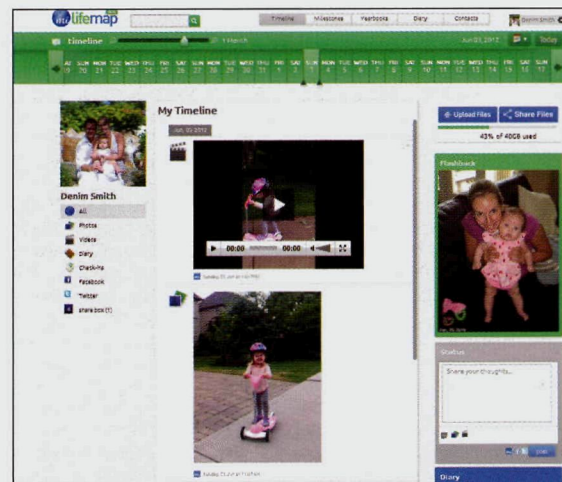
Lifemap (milifemap.com), launched in 2013, provides secure private storage

for photos, videos, and diaries (documents), as well as social networking postings. According to Lifemap’s website, although tablet computers have reinvented the family photo album, its service is “reinventing how to retrieve and display a lifetime of memories.” In contrast to Facebook, Lifemap concentrates on archiving and preservation of photos first, then sharing them. Some of the ancillary features currently in development include a shopping cart for other products based on users’ photos (albums, calendars, etc.) and facial recognition for efficient tagging, as well as scanning services (in partnership with other companies). Lifemap concentrates exclusively on memories and has no plans to add music, commercial videos, or chat.

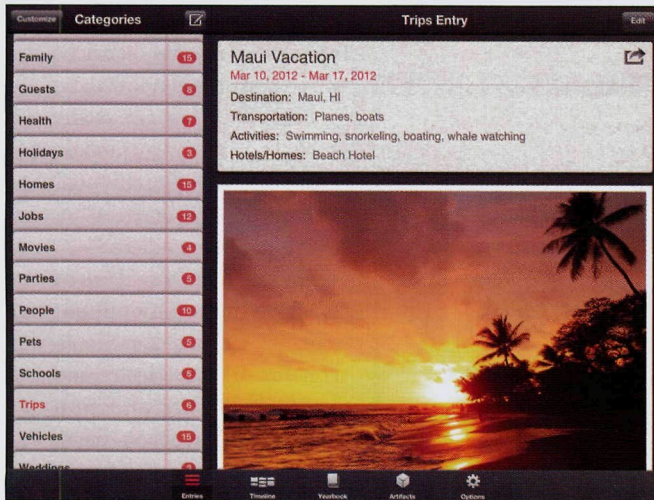
Lifemap has several unique features, including:

- *eBeneficiary*. By default, all stored user data is private, but an account owner can invite a trusted person to inherit the content after the owner’s death. This unique feature removes some of the significant roadblocks imposed by many services in accessing and transferring a deceased person’s account.

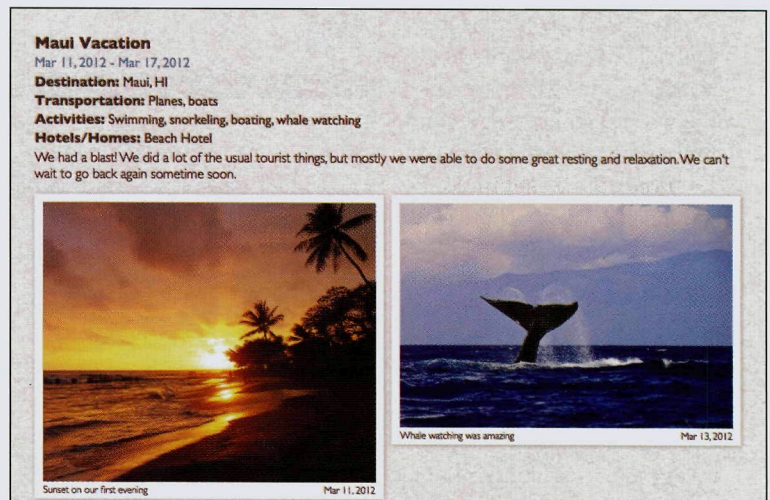
- *Subaccounts*. An owner can create a private subaccount and pass it on to someone else at a future time. For example, parents can create an account with milestones of their children’s lives and then give it to them when they are old enough to maintain their own accounts.
- *Timelines, milestones, and yearbooks*. All uploaded content is first put on a timeline where a user can add a title, location, or other tags, and then the user can easily jump to a specific date or date range, or use search to recall



Lifemap lets you put pictures on a timeline.



The Timebox interface lets you input, classify, label, and add notes to photos.



memories instantly. Milestones can be created from the best photos or videos from an important life event where someone would typically take many photos and build an album. Yearbooks are a subset of the timeline and collect the best photos and videos from special and recurring events each year.

- **Diaries.** If photos from an event are not available, a private searchable diary can be created, tagged, and set to any date in the timeline. Adding a personal narrative to an event to complement the photos is also possible with the diary.
- **Batch tagging.** After uploading a batch of photos into Lifemap, all photos in the batch can be tagged at once instead of individually as many other systems require, which can be a significant time-saver.

The sharing capabilities of Lifemap include creating a slideshow of selected photos and sending the URL to anyone for viewing. (Recipients do not need to be Lifemap users.) Lifemap is also available for the iPhone and iPad, and an Android version is in development.

Lifemap's vision is to become a "family's digital attic box of the 21st Century." Its founder recognized that typical families cannot be early adopt-

ers of every new product coming on the market, but they would value a sanctuary for their memories that they can control, without worrying that they are at risk because of a change in business philosophy or because their data might become unreadable due to advances in storage formats or even death.

Timebox (timeboxapp.com) offers a free personal history archive app for the iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch. At present, Timebox is primarily oriented toward photos, but the long-term vision of the company producing it (Pepper Networks, LLC in Kirkland, Wash.) is to add functionality for all types of digital materials. Photos can be downloaded from Facebook, as well as from a Mac computer (a Windows capability is under development) or an Apple smartphone. They can then be tagged and organized using the app's predefined categories or those added by the user. Stories and other additional details can also be added. Timeline, category, or yearbook views are available.

Although photos can be stored on users' devices, Timebox also provides 8 GB of cloud storage and synchronizing to multiple devices for a nominal fee. Photo collections can be shared via email, Facebook, or Twitter. In addition, PDF pages can be created and assembled into an ebook.

Recollect (recollect.com) backs up tweets, Foursquare check-ins, Flickr photos, and Instagrams from a user's accounts and stores them in a secure

archive. A user's archive includes comments, conversations, and anything else related to the stored data; the data are searchable and downloadable at any time. Recollect offers three price plans depending on the number of photos archived, the number of accounts per service, and the frequency of downloads. A unique code blog has some examples of interesting coding applications developed for the site.

Note Collection Systems

Note collection systems feature an easy method of writing notes or capturing information and then storing it for later use. They were originally developed as reminder systems to help users remember events and other important information. Although note collection services were not explicitly developed as personal archiving systems, they can be used as such because of their long-term storage functionality.

Evernote (evernote.com) is the market leader for note collection systems. The Evernote service is a robust and powerful multipurpose archiving system that can capture, store, and organize digital materials in virtually any format. Because the data are stored on Evernote's servers, it is accessible anywhere. Evernote runs on a wide variety of platforms, ranging from personal computers to smartphones. Items stored on the service are called notes and are collected into

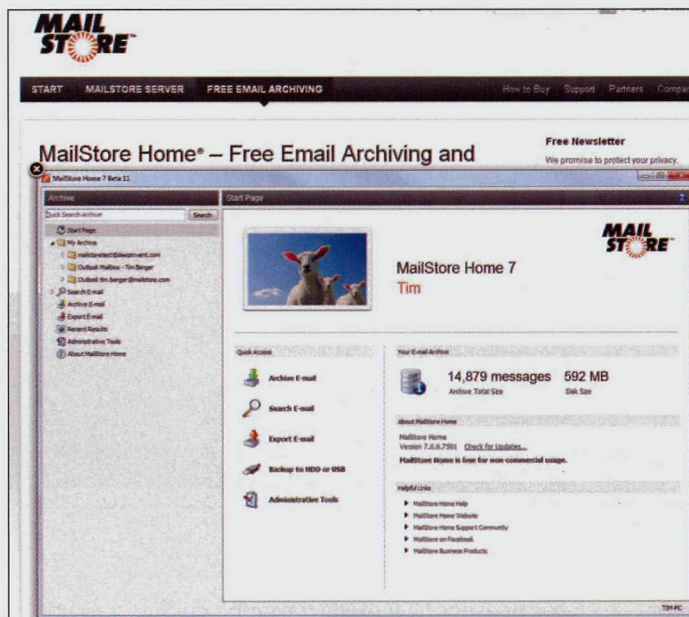
notebooks that can be retrieved by an embedded search engine that accepts keywords, tags, or even text from images as input. Users can easily share their notebooks with others by email or common social media platforms. Although the main focus of Evernote is on archiving and retrieval, a large suite of related products for special applications has been developed to enhance its main product, making Evernote one of the most robust personal archiving and retrieval services currently available.

Springpad (springpad.com) offers a web, iPhone, or Android app for creating, saving, sharing, and accessing smart notebooks that contain information important to users. One of its unique features is that when information is added, the system can retrieve information from the web and automatically enhance the notebook, thus providing actionable information to the user.

Diigo (diigo.com), an acronym of “Digest of Internet Information, Groups and Other stuff,” has functionality similar to the other systems of this type and supports storage of documents, notes, screen shots, and photos. Diigo claims to be differentiated from competing services by its emphasis on e-reading. Its web clipper permits users to add notes to a clipping that are saved along with the original webpage and appear when the user returns to that page. Tags added to notes can be publicly shared, creating a social knowledge community, and a user can search the tags to find “people like me” and communicate with them through the Diigo service.

Email Archiving

MailStore, a leading provider of email management and archiving services for businesses and other enterprises, also offers **MailStore Home**, a free version for personal use. MailStore can process messages from most of today’s



MailStore Home lets you archive your emails.

popular email clients. The user creates an archive profile for each source, and the profiles can be different from each other, if desired.

MailStore Home is available for download at mailstore.com/download.ashx?product=Home. Despite being a free system, MailStore Home is robust and can handle up to 100,000 messages without degradation of performance. It can be launched from a USB drive, and the messages can be hosted there if desired. Data processed by MailStore resides on the user’s PC and must be archived by exporting it to other media such as a USB drive. Once a message archive has been created, MailStore’s search facility is much faster than the native email client’s search function.

Home Movies and Videos

There appear to be few software packages especially designed for archiving

home movies and videos, but many commercial services will convert 8mm home movies to DVDs. They can easily be found with a Google search for “photo archiving,” “archiving home movies,” or “archiving home videos.”

Home Movie Depot (HMD; homemoviedepot.com) provides a service to transfer film, videos, and images to DVDs and to a customer’s Facebook page. HMD also offers an archiving service, My Online Memories, that will store a user’s movie files on a secure server for an annual subscription fee. Users can download their movie files from the server at any time

and as often as they wish.

Vimeo (vimeo.com) has created a video archiving community currently consisting of 5,880 publicly available videos and 83,500 subscribers. Community members can create groups and upload their videos that then become available for sharing. A robust set of user-controllable privacy settings is available. Many features of the Vimeo-community platform resemble those of Facebook, such as Like and follow. Videos are archived in perpetuity as long as a member logs in to the service periodically.

The Activists’ Guide to Archiving Video (archiveguide.witness.org) has recently been posted by WITNESS (witness.org). Although the guide was produced for activists involved with human rights, it contains information on a range of digital archiving issues and will be useful for anyone wishing to archive digital video. ●

Donald T. Hawkins is a freelance author, editor, and conference blogger for Information Today, Inc. (ITI) and The Charleston Group, LLC. During his career at ITI, he was the editor-in-chief of *Information Science & Technology Abstracts* and *Fulltext Sources Online*. Before joining ITI, he was a distinguished member of the technical staff at AT&T Bell Laboratories and pioneered the introduction of online retrieval in the AT&T Bell Laboratories Library Network. He holds a B.S., an M.S., and a Ph.D. from the University of California–Berkeley.

Copyright of Computers in Libraries is the property of Information Today Inc. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.