

**Summary of Preserving Classic Software Workshop
October 16 and 17th 2003
Computer History Museum**

The primary objective for this first meeting was to discuss how to preserve classic software.

In attendance:

Grady Booch - moderator
Chuck Bronstein
Sharon Brunzel
Simon Carless
Mary Cicalese
Lee Courtney
Edward Feigenbaum
Richard Gabriel
Eric Hahn
John Mashey
Bernard Peuto
Michael Powell
Len Shustek
Dag Spicer
Kirsten Tashev
John Toole
Mike Walton

Key Points At a Glance:

1. Need to Prioritize What/Who to go after first – Selection of artifacts
 - a. Pioneers are aging
 - b. Companies Dissolving/Being Folded into Larger Groups
 - c. Innovative Groups Disbanding
 - d. Software media-aging/disintegrating
2. Need to fine tune “collection” process/Things to collect and the process to gather desired information
 - a. Primary and Secondary Research
 - i. Discussion Guides
 - ii. Googling
 - iii. Collaboration with “like” initiatives/groups
 - b. How and when to leverage volunteers
 - c. How and when to leverage Domain Experts/Subject Matter Experts
3. Legal Issues
 - a. IP
 - b. Escrow
 - c. Prior Art

**Summary of Preserving Classic Software Workshop
October 16 and 17th 2003
Computer History Museum**

4. Creating Incentives – Encourage Participation
 - a. What will people contribute?
 - b. What's in it for them?
5. Presentation of Artifacts/Fostering a Collaborative Community
 - a. Software Room (physical)
 - b. Cyber presence
 - c. Community Itself
6. Establish Key Principles and Policies
 - a. Meta Principles
 - i. Why are we doing this – our mission statement
 - b. Guiding Principles
 - i. Identify a program/what is the interviewing/information-gathering process?
 - c. Museum Processes and Organizations
 - d. Organization/Roles and Responsibilities

Action Items from the Initial Meeting:

Action: Create Funding Opportunities
- John, Chuck

Action: Artifact Questions List Revision (Len's List)
- Len

Action: Artifact Candidate List Segmentation
- Grady

Action: Discover/Recommend Communities of Practice (and Repository Mechanisms)
- Dick and Lee

Action: Determine New Mechanisms/Processes - Leveraging Existing Ones
- Kirsten, Dag and Sharon

Action: Extract the Underlying Principles (Mission, True Goal)
- Dick

Action: Reach out to Professional Societies
- Ed

**Summary of Preserving Classic Software Workshop
October 16 and 17th 2003
Computer History Museum**

Additional Commentary/Points Discussed:

Group Consensus

Everyone in the group agrees that software is not just about the bits – it's also about the story that breathes life into the bits; the technique, design, success and even failure. Preserving and sharing this information will create a legacy for the software world. Time is against our side re: the age of tapes and the deaths of software source code creators. What happens to these creations and the stories behind them? Business and technologies also continue to change, what happens to software systems that are retired or refused?

How much to collect? What to collect?

The meeting was a successful one, yet there was disagreement about how to choose what to preserve/focus on first. One group believed that we should collect as much as we possibly can collect while another group believed that in order to be successful, there had to be careful choice on what we collect in the beginning to establish a few “quick wins”. It was established that there is no one concrete answer. The current plan is to create a list of ten possible software targets (i.e. FORTRAN) and create a plan to be successful with a few of the targets in a short time. Software close to extinction due to age and creator-death may take a higher priority. Additional discussion included setting up processes to get software – preserve it – and **then** create the stories.

What resources are needed?

It is clear that the staff at the Computer History Museum is already busy with the core Museum initiatives. It was decided that best leveraging existing resources while building out an adjunct group of volunteers to help manage the process and subject matter experts to provide ongoing input was seemingly the best approach. Bernard Peuto has volunteered to spearhead that effort.

What mechanisms need to be created?

Ideally, software will be preserved through interviews, videos and exposed on the Internet. By leveraging the “no boundaries” philosophy of the Internet, we can organize and publish information about software and its history to students and educators around the world (legal issues pending). It is apparent that it is going to take the team awhile to get to that point, so the process must be simply-engineered to help us be successful as quickly and efficiently as possible. Over-engineering a process this early on is too risky - we must learn from our successes and failures as we build momentum.

**Summary of Preserving Classic Software Workshop
October 16 and 17th 2003
Computer History Museum**

Physical Museum versus Cyber Museum?

The Computer History Museum recommends that we must do both.

The Internet can be leveraged as a mechanism to:

1. Market the business part of the museum
2. Create cyber-exhibits – something that has some level of curatorial judgment – some story with a museum voice
3. Set up cyber-collections – scanned images – bits and bytes – the raw materials – used for exhibits or by researchers –

The Physical Museum also offers up a series of in house lectures and discussions about the history of software. Ideally these can be recorded to share in a digital format (an online lecture series archive).

How do we deal with Privacy Issues?

The team will need to seek counsel on how to deal with territorial issues – commercial and academic, privacy and “prior art” issues.