

# OCLC Distinguished Seminar Series

December 8, 2005

## A Personal Digital Dark Ages: Assessing the Fate of Our Digital Belongings

**Cathy Marshall**  
Senior Researcher  
Microsoft Corporation

**9:30-11:00 am**  
Presentation and Q&A

**11:00-11:30 am**  
Reception

**OCLC Online Computer  
Library Center, Inc.**  
Kilgour Auditorium  
6565 Frantz Road  
Dublin, OH 43017-3395

You are welcome to attend this presentation.

Registering in advance allows us to plan sufficient refreshments and to alert you if for any reason the lecture needs to be rescheduled.

Please RSVP, either by email to [disbrowk@oclc.org](mailto:disbrowk@oclc.org) or by calling OCLC Research at (614) 764-6073, and indicating your name, affiliation, and telephone number.

Advance registration is encouraged, but not required.

Most of us engage in magical thinking when it comes to the long term fate of our personal digital belongings. This magical thinking may manifest itself in several ways: technological optimism (there will be a solution when I need it), radical ephemeralism (dust to dust, bits to bits), or simply a gap between principals and practice (I know I should, but...).

Cathy Marshall recently conducted a field study aimed at understanding the current state of personal digital archiving in practice. The study identified archiving challenges stemming not only from emergent technologies, but also from the exigencies introduced by home computer use and the genres and collections of digital materials that people value.

In presenting the results of this study, Ms. Marshall will also discuss her aims in designing a service model for the long-term storage and access of personally meaningful digital artifacts. In so doing, she will examine how personal archiving needs intersect with larger-scale digital archiving technologies such as institutional repositories and implementations of specific preservation strategies and policies.

Cathy Marshall is a Senior Researcher at Microsoft Corporation and an affiliate of the Center for the Study of Digital Libraries at Texas A&M University. Her research lies in the disciplinary interstices of computer science, social science, and the humanities. Previously, Ms. Marshall was a long-time member of the research staff at Xerox PARC. Since 1983, Cathy has been working on computer support for intellectual work from the multiple perspectives of designer, theorist, self-styled ethnographer, and writer. She has delivered keynote addresses at the WWW and Hypertext Conferences as well as at other library and information science venues and is currently serving as Program co-Chair for the 2006 IEEE/ACM Joint Conference on Digital Libraries.

### Background information

Cathy Marshall  
<http://www.csdl.tamu.edu/~marshall>

Maps available online at <http://www.oclc.org/about/headquarters/maps/>.



Distinguished Seminar Series lectures are available online as PowerPoint and MP3 files shortly after the lecture at <http://www.oclc.org/research/dss/>. Additional information about the Distinguished Seminar Series can also be found there.