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Review: Archive-It

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Archive-It

www.archive-it.org

Reviewed by Jillian M. Slater, Librarian/Archivist, University of Dayton Libraries

Launched by the Internet Archive in 2006, Archive-It is a subscription-based web archiving service that allows organizations to collect and preserve their digital content. According to the Learn More page on their website, Archive-It currently serves over 300 partner organizations including College and University Libraries, State Libraries, Museums and Art Libraries, Federal Institutions and NGOs, and Public Libraries.

Archive-It allows partners to capture and manage web published materials including websites, blogs, social networking sites and document, image, video, and audio files. The service manages web crawls, storage, and access for an organization's content. Partners determine the frequency and scope of crawls, and through a web interface, can customize Dublin Core metadata fields and generate reports. Archive-It is compatible with JSON API format, so extended customization is achievable for partners with local programming knowledge or support. For each web archive file, two storage copies reside at Internet Archive data centers on multiple servers. The service works with partners to have redundant copies for preservation. Additionally, Archive-It has partnerships with LOCKSS and DuraCloud. With the addition of one of these backup services, archivists could consider Archive-It as part of a trustworthy digital preservation program for web content.

For prospective partners, Archive-It hosts twice-monthly webinars that provide an overview and demonstration of the service. Additionally, organizations have the opportunity to run a trial version and discuss questions and concerns with a Partner Specialist. Archive-It offers a flexible pricing model and staff is willing to work with prospective partners to develop a plan that meets their web archiving priorities and budget.

Based on my recent experience on a conference call, the Partner Specialist was thorough as she walked our team through features, discussed customizable options, and answered questions specific to the web archiving needs of our organization. We initially became interested in the service for use by the University Archives, but recognized additional collection development opportunities. For example, the service would allow archivists at our organization to curate web content that supports the university's special collections on the American Catholic experience and the Virgin Mary. Other institutions have been using Archive-It in this capacity. For example, the University of Texas has been curating the Human Rights Documentation Initiative¹ and Georgetown used the service to capture Ukrainian Fragile Sites².

Perhaps precluding any serious deliberation of a specific web archiving service is the recognition that these activities require dedicated resources and collaborative planning to

¹ <https://archive-it.org/collections/1475>

² <https://www.archive-it.org/collections/967>

be a successful component of an archival program. Archivists should be familiar with digital preservation practices and have access to local technology support staff. Archivists and organizations that are positioned to begin a web archiving program would benefit from vetting the handful of comparable services, most notably, California Digital Library's Web Archiving Service. This service provides similar capabilities as Archive-It with the main distinction being the pricing model and more robust digital preservation strategies without the addition of a backup service.

Overall, Archive-It is a reputable, well-established service for capturing web content. Its advantages include the flexible pricing model and ongoing improvements based on user surveys and testing. Archivists working at organizations that are positioned to begin a web archiving program would be wise to consider Archive-It when vetting potential service providers.