

Sherwood Archive Project

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Established in June 2002, the Digital Archive of the Birth of Dot Com Era (DCA) has sought to identify, collect, and preserve a representative collection of born-digital business records and related digital ephemera from companies that sought to exploit the commercialization of the Internet during the 1990s.

In 2008, the DCA began a partnership with Sherwood Partners, Inc., a consulting firm located in Mountain View, California. Sherwood provides a specialized “private workout” service to failing companies as an alternative to public bankruptcy filing. During the private workout process a company assigns all of its assets, including its paper and digital records, over to Sherwood who carry out procedures to sell specific assets to pay off creditors and investors. In our presentation we will report on the research conducted during the Sherwood Archive Project since September 2009.

We will discuss completed stages of the project, including an assessment of existing records collection practices at Sherwood and the development of a selection criteria for failed business records, as well as the current stage of developing a workflow for the collection and transfer of records to an external repository for long-term preservation. In addition, we will highlight a number of the challenges related to the preservation of digital business records including ethical issues around preserving private records, as well as technical and organizational issues that we have encountered during the project.