Conclusion

The intent of the previous chapters is to provide you with a road map of how to move from the extensive corpus of digital preservation theory and standards into a practical set of workflows for your institution. Remember, digital preservation is iterative. Building out these workflows is only the first step. Every time you use a workflow, you may unintentionally modify it to work better, so be careful to track any consistent deviations you take from the workflow and build those new pathways in. A workflow that does not adapt to your current circumstances is of no use at all. Remember to document everything: what is done at each step, who is taking the step, and what tools are used to complete the step. Be careful to include any handoffs as their own step. It may be obvious now that when the content includes oral histories, the digital archivist will contact the oral historian to begin the processing workflow after the materials have been stabilized. What happens if the digital archivist was recently hired and therefore does not know oral histories require different expertise during processing?

Creating and maintaining these digital preservation workflows will act to do more than document existing practice. The process of creation will bring your team together and help build and maintain crucial relationships and shared understanding. In creating this documentation, you will learn how various types of professionals use language. I can say from experience that a digital archivist and an information security specialist have very different definitions for the term *archive*. Having a common understanding of terms in documents that have to be shared across professions is crucial to the success of your efforts. These documents create a common understanding of programmatic needs and will help different departments simultaneously advocate to administrators for critical technology, staff, and monetary resources to maintain and improve your digital preservation ecosystem. The end result of all of this effort is being able to provide digital cultural heritage materials to users now and in the future, so the process is worth the outcome.