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Article: Actions for Preserving Digital Photographs (Abstract)

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## **Abstract: Actions for Preserving Digital Photographs**

**Millard Wesley Long Schisler**

*Presented at the 2013 AIC & ICOM-CC Photographs Conservation  
Joint Meeting in Wellington, New Zealand.*

We have been discussing the problem of preserving digital information, which includes the enormous amounts of digital photographs, for over 10 years. Much has been said and written about this topic. Unesco is preparing for the event this year in Vancouver, *The Memory of the World in the Digital Age: Digitization and Preservation*. In the preparation of this upcoming event they state that “*despite the adoption of the UNESCO Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage in 2003, there is still insufficient awareness of the risks of loss of digital heritage*”. The problem resides not only in the lack of awareness, but also the lack of implementation of preservation actions of those that are aware.

The challenges of preserving digital photographs for long term access are straightforward and simple on one hand, but complex when trying to implement because they involve changes in the way we do things, and the creation of new workflows, expenses and activities in our personal and institutional lives, already cluttered with the daily activities of survival. Many photographers that do try to achieve the preservation of their own work talk about the amount of time and energy put into this effort, and lack of certainty in their actions.

My presentation will be divided in three parts. The first part will give a brief outline of what the *digital dilemma* means today for digital photography. The second part will be an evaluation of some cases studies I have been working on, from NGOs, Museums, photographers and people from different social groups. The third part will talk about actions that are necessary for us to move forward. This last part is where we need to concentrate our energy!

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