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## BROADCAST AND ARCHIVE: HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTATION IN THE EARLY DIGITAL AGE

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The Internet offers great potential for human rights work. Digital technology is firmly ensconced in the activist's repertoire through the rapid, economical medium of electronic mail. With the advent of the World Wide Web, the Internet potentially expands its utility, becoming a medium for storing and retrieving information in any conceivable format. It is now tempting to see the Web's multimedia capabilities as tantamount to a portable archive. The following essay examines the extent to which digital technology enables human rights work by describing the history and current state of digital access and preservation. It is a cautionary tale, filled with promise.

### Contents of an Activist Archive

One account of the foundation of a pioneering human rights cyber organization begins with the dramatic story of a 21-year-old Argentine man discovering his identity by surfing the Internet. (Katz-Lacabe and Lacabe, 2000) In examining documents posted to the Derechos Human Rights/Equipo Nizkor site, Javier "Vildoza" discovered that his purported father had been a leader of one of the most notorious concentration camps maintained by the military during the so-called *Proceso* ("Dirty War"). Further Internet research and a subsequent DNA test confirmed that Javier was the son of a couple disappeared from Buenos Aires in 1977. What better way to illuminate the power of digital space in the human rights struggle? In memorializing victims of the *Proceso* and

outing their repressors, this archive of digital documents enabled the reconstruction of a disrupted lineage and a reunion of Javier with his birth grandparents who had sought him for two decades. This brief, but powerful, rendition gives new meaning to “archive.” No longer obscure-- but vital, no longer far away-- but ubiquitous, no longer sequestered-- but open.

All archives document the activities of the individuals or groups that create and maintain them. When materials no longer serve the current operations of their creators, they are normally reviewed and discarded, or retained for historical purposes. National archives with holdings that reach back for centuries are the archetype of this process of review and discard or retain. However, most human rights archives do not conform to this model.

Activist archives have always existed at the institutional margin. Since human rights activism directly challenges the arbitrary censorship, incarceration and physical abuse that political regimes use to silence opposition, activist archives never received recognition from repressive regimes. Even the return to democratic government has not always integrated the alternative histories that activist archives promote. Because these repositories were created outside the archival establishment, their physical conservation has not benefited from professional care and their organizations are often sui generis. In addition, activist archives continue to support the missions and remain under the care of their creators who are reluctant to open them to professional scrutiny.

The holdings of human rights archives have three principal provenances: documents created by the repressors, those created by opponents of repression, and those collected from survivors of repression after their liberation. The third category falls

largely within the domain of writers and researchers and is the raw material for several recent studies from the Latin American region. Survivors' accounts include autobiographical classics such as Jacobo Timerman's Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number (1981) and Nelson Mandela's Long Walk to Freedom (1994). Collective accounts by social scientists, Ensalaco (1999), Koonings and Kruijt (1999) and Feitlowitz (1998), reconstruct the lives of the victims of terror and generalize from them. However, the materials created by the repressors, when they emerge from the shadows, and those collected by their opponents, are the stuff and substance of activist archives and the principal focus of this essay.

Record keeping seems pathological in state-sponsored terrorism. The Cambodian Genocide database <http://www.yale.edu/cgp/cgdb/cgdbmain.htm>, described elsewhere in this volume, illuminates the detail to which repressive regimes document their own ineffable acts. Though the Cambodian program may be unique in the depth of its revelations, research into the workings of repression after the demise of its perpetrators has revealed similar patterns of detail obsession elsewhere.

South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which maintains a web site <http://www.truth.org.za/>, holds a set of documents made public in the investigation of apartheid and continues to add to its archive as new materials come to light. The fall of communism in Eastern Europe led to similar disclosures, most saliently those that emerged from the archives of Stasi, the East German secret police. The painstaking work of the Gawk Authority, <http://www.bstu.de/>, which has organized and published parts of the Stasi archive, reveals a complex network of spies, spymasters, and the spied-upon that characterized the German Democratic Republic. It has also produced a wave of

confession and soul-searching, as former spies revealed their betrayals and their complicity with intelligence gathering. Further details will come to light as patient investigators paste together the remains of hundreds of sacks of documents, which Stasi operators shredded but could not bear to throw away.

Similar archives of repression have emerged in Latin America. As with the South African experience, truth commission investigations, such as those in Argentina and Chile, have unearthed varying amounts of the official record of state-sponsored terror. The evidence and testimony are well known to Latin Americanists, under evocative titles, such as that of the Argentine report, *Nunca más* (Never Again).<sup>1</sup> In Paraguay the sudden demise of Alfredo Stroessner's 35-year rule uncovered a mammoth repository of surveillance documents. Contents of the now-called "Archive of Terror," show the extent to which government agents tracked the most mundane activities of individual Paraguayan citizens' lives. The publication of a part of the archive in some six hundred double folio pages, gives a flavor of the nefarious details.<sup>2</sup> Further details will emerge, in electronic form, as the Paraguayan Supreme Court directs the filming and digitization of records in its Central de Documentación y Archivo de Derechos Humanos, <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/paraguay/index.html>.

Beyond official archives, NGOs in Latin America, as in other regions, have important collections (see, for example, Bickford 1999, 2000).<sup>3</sup> Even though brief, and limited to a single region, Table 1 illustrates the enormous diversity of the documentary store. Genres include: newspaper accounts, judicial proceedings, bureaucratic records and the documents prepared by various social service agencies—intake files, interviews, oral histories, psychological evaluations. Media are equally diverse, with documents

stored on paper, film, digital media, audio and videotape and art, including therapeutic drawings and large collections of arpilleras, the colorful appliqué that became a signature of women’s involvement in human rights movements.

Table 1: SAMPLE OF ARCHIVAL HOLDINGS OF SOUTH AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS, 1999

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Documentary focus</b>	<b>Medium of originals</b>	<b>Condition of documents</b>
SIDIS (Bolivia)	The lives of Bolivian miners	Paper, photos, audio tape, microfiche	4,300 fiche well preserved, others?
Derechos Chile	Chilean human rights, 1973-1990	Digital materials, only	No capacity for digital preservation
CINTRAS (Chile)	Mental health of Chileans affected by repression, 1973-90	Paper	Unknown
AFDD (Chile)	Families of the dead and disappeared in Chile, 1973-90	Paper, textiles (arpilleras)	Unknown
Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo (Argentina)	Mission children of Argentine “dirty war,” 1975-83	Paper, DNA samples	Paper deteriorating
MEDH (Argentina)	Anyone affected by “dirty war;” repatriation claims	Paper	Deteriorating
APRODECH (Peru)	The Internal conflict in Peru, 1988-93	Paper, audio tape	Paper deteriorating, audio?

Abbreviations: SIDIS: Sistema de Documentación e Información Sindical; CINTRAS: Centro de Salud Mental y Derechos Humanos; AFDD: Agrupación de Familiares de Detenidos Desparecidos; MEDH: Movimiento Ecuménico por los Derechos Humanos; APRODECH: Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos.

Human rights organizations, traditionally concerned primarily with activism and education, have begun to recognize the importance of documentation to their mission. This activity—Bickford (1999) has called it “historical memory” – refocuses attention from the present to the future, from immediate use to organization and preservation. While historical memory is not the heroic enterprise that activism has been, it is just as essential to the lasting contributions of human rights organizations. Only by preserving

and organizing the existing documentary heritage will the abuses of past regimes be convincingly conveyed to posterity. In South America historical memory has begun with a pilot project in Chile that intends to benchmark essential processes and their costs.

The Foundation for the Protection of Children Endangered by the States of Emergency-- know by its Spanish acronym, PIDEE, and described in its website [www.pidee.web.cl](http://www.pidee.web.cl)—was founded early in the Pinochet regime to address the needs of children affected by the repression. PIDEE maintains a substantial archive of its activities at its suburban Santiago headquarters. Following their participation in Ford Foundation human rights conference in 1999, PIDEE administrators prepared a proposal for organizing and preserving its archives. The proposal provides a description of the scope and organization of holdings and lays out a workable plan for revising the files, applying basic conservation procedures and microfilming them to archival standards.<sup>4</sup> After a preliminary reading, the proposal was subsequently divided into two parts—revision/basic conservation and microfilming—each of which was financed by two small, granting agencies. In working with the PIDEE documents, project staff will test several unknowns, principal among them: the local availability of supplies and human capital, e.g. acid-free paper, microfilm, micrographics expertise, and how to establish protocols and procedures for documents that must be processed on site and those that may be removed for more efficient processing in laboratories

#### A Brief History of the Internet and Human Rights

In human rights activism, speed saves lives. Electronic mail, which enables rapid communication across and around international borders, quickly became an activist ally.

Researchers have identified early e-mail applications, dating to 1985, when Peace Net and the Public Eye Network established digital bulletin boards for human rights announcements. (Brophy and Halpin, 1999, 355-56; Abbate, 1999, 202-03) In 1987 Amnesty International established its Urgent Action Network, the prototype rapid response system, to distribute its time and politically sensitive messages to the membership. AI's recent launch of FAST (Fast Action Stops Torture), visible at the agency's homepage [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org) brings rapid action networking to the World Wide Web. The extension of high-speed infrastructure to much of the world and the development of inexpensive encryption software further extend the potential of the Internet in the human rights community.

Some observers have seen Internet communication as emblematic of a postmodern world in which unified, central authority gives way to a wide range of organizations and agendas. (Abbate, 1999, 218) One manifestation of this brave, new vision is the use of the Internet to distribute information designed to discredit or deceive the opposition. The term "social netwar" subsumes several forms of digital conflict. Brought to notoriety by the Zapatista uprising in southern Mexico, netwars aim to establish uncensorable opposition to government positions, published in the media. Another tactic is the "swarm" or "electronic sit-in" in which multiple, simultaneous requests to a computer hosting opposition information attempt to disrupt its operations and ultimately take it off-line. A Rand Corporation study of the philosophy and tactics of netwar make clear the potential of using the Internet to destabilize regimes and to direct the activities of loose coalitions that assemble for action on demand, this last a signature of modern human rights organizations. (Ronfeldt, et.al. 1999).

As file transfer developed as an Internet networking tool, human rights organizations began to archive their messages and to place important documents on sites open to public use. In 1992, seven international human rights organizations, including AI, PEN, and Human Rights Watch pooled their resources and documents on a gopher service that archived action alerts, newsletters and selected reports. The advent of the World Wide Web as a file transfer medium in the mid 1990s, created further possibilities. Today human rights organizations, from the best known to those whose activities are confined to relatively narrow issues and spaces, have established home pages. These sites publish and archive information from the supporting institution and provide links to similar organizations. They are accessible through search engines, such as Alta Vista and Google, as well as several browseable directories.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the theoretical attractiveness of digital human rights archives, their technical enablement and their documented use in instances such as reestablishing identity in Argentina, Human Rights Organizations—beyond the large multinational ones—have not fully incorporated them. Pacheco (2000) reports that the results of a survey commissioned by Amnesty International show the primary use of the Internet by responding institutions was e-mail, followed by using browsers to locate information archived in digital repositories. (p.108). The survey found that only a few HRNGOs published their own information and cited respondents' perceived lack of technical knowledge, computer hardware and privacy issues as the most important restraints. Katz-Lacabe and Lacabe extend the chilling effect of privacy concerns to large human rights organizations, as well. Citing arguments familiar to watchers of digital copyright debates, the authors point to the loss of control of information, once it is posted to the

Internet, as “scary.”(Katz-Lacabe and Lacabe, 2000, p.70) A last objection to the use of digital archives is a vague reluctance on the part of activists to rely on what they see as an essentially passive medium. Pacheco urges his readers to use the Internet as an active agent, for publicizing and recruiting, rather than for archiving. (p.113)

### The Internet as Broadcast

In human rights, digital technology has achieved its greatest utility as a dissemination medium. Since the early 1990s, most of the world’s nations, though, certainly, not most of its localities, have computers connected to the Internet. Given the traditional importance of rapid response networks in human rights work, e-mail was immediately recognized as a quick, economical and flexible means of spreading information, formerly circulated by post and fax. The use of mailing lists, bulletin boards and chat became standard means of publicizing human rights abuses in any locale. Activist accounts offer several examples of the successes of e-mail in launching successful campaigns.

For Latin Americanists, the slaying of rainforest preservation advocate, Chico Mendes, in 1988 serves as a landmark case. Within an hour of Mendes’ death, in the Acre region of the Brazilian Amazon, information reached newspapers in Rio and São Paulo and Ibase, a Brazilian NGO and one of the seven founding members of APC. Staff at Ibase used an e-mail connection to PeaceNet in California to disseminate news of the killing around the globe and instigate worldwide denunciation to Brazilian officials. This campaign resulted in the indictment and conviction of two local landowners for murder and conspiracy a year later. By rapid dissemination of information, the Internet allowed

local human rights NGOs to publicize abuses and bring international pressure to bear on authorities for whom international standing was critically important.

A second Latin American case, this one from the Zapatista rebellion in southeastern Mexico, beginning in 1994, demonstrates the amplification of Internet human rights activities in a brief period of time. While Zapatistas continued to use e-mail communiqués to state their positions and counter government monopoly of traditional print and broadcast media, they also found new ways of digital expression. In 1999, they managed an online conference to publicize their differences with the Mexican government. And from its inception, the EZLN has inspired supporters outside Mexico to establish websites that presented their views and organized support beyond the reach of national authorities.<sup>6</sup> This period-- 1988 to 1994, or Chico Mendez to Zapatistas-- marks the transition of the Internet from broadcast to archive in human rights activism.

### The Internet as Archive

File transfer (FTP), the most advanced of the Internet protocols, enables the storage and retrieval of digital files across a computer network. First on Gopher servers and then through the wonders of the World Wide Web, human rights organizations have placed larger and larger corpuses of digital documents in cyberspace. The happy correspondence of Internet growth with republication of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998 made this essential document almost universally available in the year of its half centenary. The Internet has also facilitated the work of organizations dedicated to lifting the veil of official secrecy.

International recognition of the concept of *habeas data*, which declares an individual's right to access information—including digital information—concerning her, coupled with national legislation, such as the U.S. Freedom of Information Act, provide the legal basis for disclosure. A prime example is the National Security Archive, which works with petitioners under Freedom of Information Act to clear classified documents from U.S. government archives. In recent years this organization has assembled collections of formerly sequestered documents on the Tlatelolco massacre of 1968, U.S. involvement in the 1973 overthrow of Chilean president Salvador Allende, and the activities of one of the principals in Guatemala's political assassinations of the 1980s and 90s on its web site.<sup>7</sup>

While posting documents to the Internet and retrieving them through FTP are relatively simple procedures, issues collateral to them are not. Confidentiality and authentication loom large. Will access to digital documents be provided to all or to subscribers or researchers only, and, if universal access is not provided, how will credentials be verified and fees collected? Authentication systems currently rely on matching a user's or a computer's individual registration against a list of authorized users or a range of IP addresses. This is an inexact system. For instance, current devices cannot recognize authorized users when they attempt to communicate from computers outside of subscribing IPs. The use of intermediate technologies, such as password/countersign and the so-called proxy servers that address the problem cited above, are expensive and difficult to maintain. And though preservation of digital resources falls primarily within the archival domain, and will be covered later in this

essay, transferring digital images implies that the resources are available, which can only be assured by regular maintenance of the database.

The multimedia characteristics of the World Wide Web, its ability to integrate text, graphics and sound, make it a medium well suited for human rights education. As projects such as Equipo Nizkor demonstrate so well, specific objectives—in this case combating Anti-Semitism—can be introduced within the universal message of the importance of human dignity by employing the linking capabilities of digital technology. Nizkor references associated documents, such as biographies of Hitler, to its own pages that treat the menace of anti-Semitism in Argentina. Other outstanding examples of human rights sites that serve an educational mission include Derechos Chile <http://www.derechoschile.com>, which offers essential historical background to the intensely publicized events of General Augusto Pinochet's prosecution.

A promising development in the archiving capabilities of digital human rights documents is the emergence of sites that host human rights organizations and publish their materials. Derechos <http://www.derechos.org>, a human rights organization located in California, mounts documents from several Hispanic organizations, including Nizkor, Desaparecidos, Comité Latinoamericana y el Caribe para la Defensa de la Mujer and Serpaj. Thus, an organization in the developed world provides technological savvy, machine power and a safe location to human rights organizations in Latin America. Although use of Internet archives is only incipient in scholarship, there is some evidence that umbrella sites, such as Derechos, provide the most accessible tier of access. Two studies recently published in Human Rights Quarterly cite texts archived in Derechos, although the same materials are available in other locations, as well. (Wilson 1999; Hoht-

Arriaza and Gibson 1998) I suspect that this is more than coincidental and that taking a cooperative approach to digitizing archival material merits more attention in research and in practice.

Despite considerable attention and a number of expert studies, human rights archives, and digital technologies in general, have yet to surmount several issues critical to preservation and access. One issue is the sheer quantity of information. As the Argentine documentalist, Patricia Ibasca, points out for her country, the production of human rights literature has outstripped traditional systems of bibliographic control. (Ibasca, 1999) We must somehow derive systems that provide adequate access to burgeoning documentation.

One possible solution is the embedding of metadata in digital records. Metadata, descriptions of the content and structure of data, has become a critical issue in the formation of digital documents. While the term “metadata” is new in the information vocabulary, it has a long history in practice. For instance, metadata, coded in MARC and ISIS formats, summarize the bibliographic characteristics of information resources and allow their exchange and manipulation by networked computers. Similar summaries, yet to be fixed, will hold information necessary for preserving and accessing an object, e.g., specifying its color, producer, compression standard, as well as a way to verify its authenticity—whether it has been changed or falsified.

For the present, digital archives have taken a conservative approach to attaching metadata to files. As they wait for the adoption of proposed standards, such as the Dublin Core, they are creating MARC records for digital materials.<sup>8</sup> Even though MARC was designed for, and seems better adapted to, describing the electronic versions of paper

formats, e.g., books and journals, libraries and archives, which rely on their catalogs as the principal portals to their collections, currently use MARC for all digital formats. Materials traditionally described as “archival,” manuscript collections, pamphlets, photographs, all pose serious problems for current cataloging. Someday they will migrate to a more compliant standard, but they have not done so yet.

Another area in need of attention is the elaboration of a common lexicon. Given the highly technical vocabulary of human rights, one influenced by both legal terminology and regional argot, establishing a common classification scheme would aid research across disciplines and world areas. Scholars and documentalists have each called for the compilation of a human rights thesaurus that would aid both definition and access. (Metzl 1996, Brophy and Halpin 1999) Access depends upon the use of a common vocabulary. It also depends upon the adoption of a common record structure.

As with all computer-based technologies, digital archives depend upon common standards of information exchange. Encoding standards, such as the SGML/HTML dyad that currently rules the World Wide Web, must evolve for a variety of formats. One archival project, the British Arts and Humanities Data Service, has adopted and published a list of acceptable formats for a variety of media, including video, databases, GIS and virtual reality. (Beagrie and Greenstein 1998). Whether this list will reach the nirvana of “standard” remains to be seen, but at least one other digital archive has adopted similar guidelines. (Kenney, 2000)

Preservation of digital files poses the best-known obstacle to the establishment of digital archives. In an articulate summary of the issues, Abby Smith asks Why Digitize? and concludes that, for the time being, “digitization is not preservation.” (Smith 1999)

For, as she and others point out, digital information, the media that hold it, and the technologies that make it intelligible are all subject to decay and obsolescence.

To date, the principal digital preservation strategies rely on the concepts of migration and translation. Migration entails copying the digital information, i.e., the “bit streams,” often enough to insure that the bits themselves and the medium that carries them does not deteriorate. Current estimates suggest that information stored to magnetic tape would need yearly migration. Optical disks require migration every thirty years. However, those who have used computers for only five or ten years will have experienced the frustration of finding files unreadable when word processing software was changed or upgraded.

Translation attempts to address this problem either by rendering digital information to forms that are independent of the software that created them or by extending the life of the creating systems. There are so many obvious problems with both these approaches that Norsam Technologies has derived an analog solution. Using nanotechnology, lasers etch atomically-tiny characters on nickel disks. Reading the disks entails knowledge of the etched language and an electron microscope. (“Come Up and See My Etchings” 1998) Although they are not yet established, it seems safe to assert (since they have some many commercial applications) that an agreed-upon set of technical standards will soon direct the preservation of digital archives. But, again, this remains to be done.

Preservation and Access in the Early Digital Age

Human rights activists sometimes describe themselves as documentary protagonists. Their claim to “be” the archives carries multiple messages, from “we know how to use the papers that we have assembled” to “we will bear witness.” (Hutchinson 1999) But the validity of these claims weakens with the passage of time, and the claimants recognize it. In the case of many of the heroic human rights struggles of the twentieth century—the Holocaust, anti-Apartheid, the Pinochet regime—both the human witnesses and the physical materials they assembled are nearing the end of their lives. With the struggle to rewrite official history far from over, what is to be done?

Quite simply, the documents must be read, as widely as possible. To achieve this end, the documents must be organized (to facilitate their access) and preserved (to secure them for reading now and in the future). But the devil is in the details. Reaching agreement on the degree and timing of access and on how to assure their continued accessibility are matters of significance and debate.

Access to human rights documents is a particularly sensitive issue. Even with the return to civil societies in many areas of the globe, distrust of official institutions, including state archives, remains strong among the documentary protagonists. The intimate and professionally confidential nature of some of the materials, especially the psychological evaluations, heightens privacy concerns. Only diplomacy and empathy will resolve the ultimate disposition of these precious documents. However, current practices from the archival and library communities offer some guidance.

Archivists deal with issues of confidentiality as a matter of course. Bruce Montgomery, another contributor to the volume, has long stressed that a major challenge in convincing human rights organizations to release their files to professional

management is the “intense confidentiality concerns” that originating institutions feel. (Montgomery 1996) His archive at the University of Colorado has negotiated agreements with human rights organizations that specify that ownership remain with the originators. A recent study commissioned by UNESCO suggests further safeguards. In their compilation of recommendations for organizing “sources of repression,” Antonio González Quintana and his collaborators maintain that victims’ rights always supercede those of investigators. They propose privacy safeguards, such as one that offers individuals named in such sources the right to have papers concerning them sealed for a reasonable period of time. (González Quintana 1997)

Although it is sometimes difficult for human rights activists to recognize (or documentalists to admit), not everything can be preserved. Selection of materials for preservation and access has a long tradition in information science. Recent literature on selection employs the metaphor of a document’s life cycle in which decisions on institutional value determine which files are acquired, cataloged, and preserved. Atkinson identifies items of intrinsic value, items of high use, and items of low use as a way of dividing the documentary universe. (Atkinson 1986) Items of intrinsic value would be preserved as artifacts and have surrogates prepared for consultation. High use items merit a commitment to keep their content and arrangement available over time. Low use items, for which future use may be anticipated, are candidates for cooperative projects that would describe the document and insure the survival of its content, though not necessarily either its arrangement or its location at its original location. Atkinson’s work makes the realistic assessment that neither capital nor labor will be available to insure preservation and access for every document that currently exists. It also implies

that the first stage in insuring the survival and use of materials is their review and arrangement by informed professionals.

Informed professionals must also make decisions on appropriate preservation techniques for the changing information landscape. For though they are mortal enemies in paper-based informatics, the goals of preservation and access potentially entwine as digital technologies. The past decade has witnessed a series of projects designed to test the possibilities of digital imaging as a method for reformatting a range of paper materials. These studies, despite their use of a terminology as arcane as that of any science, establish a body of essential information on the size, quality transmission and conversion of digital files and report emerging consensus on a set of best practices for digital preservation and access. One of the most important elements of that consensus appears in the term “hybrid approaches,” a combination of digital and analog technologies that combines the virtues of each. (Chapman, Conway and Kenney [1998]).

(Over)simplified, the hybrid approach argues that if preservation means retention of form and structure in the long term, only microfilm, produced to archival standards currently fills the bill. That is “... microfilm remains the preferred preservation reformatting strategy even as digital imaging has assumed a prominent role in enhancing access to such materials.” (Chapman, Conway and Kenney 1998: 2) Digital technology, then, becomes a broadcast medium. Here its capacities for wide, simultaneous use, automated detection of textual and image qualities (word occurrences, illustrations) and its malleability (the ability to quickly correct errors, for instance) are optimized.

Important to the formulation of hybrid approaches is the verification of practical strategies for the conversion of digital files to analog formats (film or print) and vice-

versa. Studies done at Yale and Cornell universities show that either medium can engender the other, making it feasible to archive film as an enduring record while producing derived digital images for distribution over a computer network. (Kenney 1997).

### Conclusion

The use of the Internet as a broadcast technology has become part of the human rights canon. Activists throughout the world disseminate and gain information, establish affinity groups and chat over e-mail links. The use of the Internet as archive, while compelling, is not yet technically feasible.

As repositories examine strategies for preservation and access, digital technologies offer the prospect of a single procedure, e.g., scanning, for dual use. However, the current development of these technologies circumscribes the practical possibilities for simultaneous broadcast and archive. There can be no doubt that posting documents to computers connected to the Internet offers the prospect of making human rights materials available for cross-activism and distributed research. For instance, a human rights metarchive would enable scholars without access to expensive and bulky print collections to consult relevant documents from the public domain.

It is also clear that, although the documentary community is hard at work on establishing understandings, standards and protocols that will make long term digital storage a reality, its labors will continue for several more years. In order to insure the preservation of the past in the present, c.a., 2000 AD, the old technologies—acid-free paper and silver halide microfilm—remain the most reliable media. When budgets or

other obstacles prevent the use of hybrid strategies to the challenges of preservation and access, administrators of activist archives will be forced to choose. Currently, there is no single, best approach.

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<sup>1</sup> Nunca más : informe de la Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas (Buenos Aires: EUDBA, 1984). An English-language version appears as Nunca mas: the report of the Argentine National Commission on the Disappeared (New York: Farrar, Straus & Girou in association with Index on Censorship, London, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> Testimonio contra el olvido, reseña de la infamia y el terror (Asunción, Paraguay: Comité de Iglesias para Ayudas de Emergencia [1999]).

<sup>3</sup> Bickford's findings (1999,2000), as well as a package of documents circulated at a conference he organized under Ford Foundation auspices are the basis for the following summary of human rights documentation. The conference was Preservación de la Memoria Histórica: documentos y archivos de derechos humanos en el Cono Sur. Santiago de Chile, April 25-28, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> PIDEE. "Proyecto: preservación de archivos." 28 November, 1999. Photocopy.

<sup>5</sup> See especially, Steven Hansen's quarterly Directory of Human Rights Resources on the Internet <http://shr.aas.org/dhr.htm> and UT Lanic maintains an up-to-date compilation of Latin American sites at <http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/region/hrights/>.

<sup>6</sup> Examples include Ya basta! <http://www.ezln.org/>; Acción Zapatista <http://www.utexas.edu/students/nave/> and Zapatista Organization Homepage <http://www.zapatistas.org/>.

<sup>7</sup> Digital materials from the National Security Archive are available in two "flavors." The public site <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/> offers a changing potpourri of recently declassified documents and selections from collections assembled by NSA staff. The "Digital National Security Archive," a collaboration between NSA and the commercial firm, Chadwyck Healy, offers paid subscribers access to the full text of a dozen collections, over 30,000 documents, from various regions of the world.

<sup>8</sup> For a description of the Dublin Core, see its home page <<http://dublincore.org>>