Should I stay or should I go?

What to do when your beloved software is no longer supported?

Update it yourself!

Caitlin Nelson, LibraryHost LLC
Anne Salsich, Oberlin College
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Open source software

- Free! - but needs a responsible project steward

- Requires frequent updates to remain compatible with operating systems

- Security issues if not properly updated

- Potential for customization and improvement

- Anyone can contribute to open source software / collaborative development

Few systems support archival finding guides

- ☐ **Archon** (open source from the University of Illinois)

- ☐ **Archivists Toolkit "AT"** (open source)

- ☐ **ArchivesSpace "ASpace"**(open source with paid support option)
  (merger of Archon and AT functionality with new features)

- ☐ **ICA-AtoM/AtoM** (open source with paid support option)

- ☐ **CuadraSTAR Knowledge Center for Archives** (fee-based)

- ☐ **Eloquent** (fee-based)

Archives / special collections requirements

- [ ] Collection-level description

- [ ] Representation of a hierarchy

- [ ] Representation of items in groups

- [ ] Representation of biographical/administrative histories, scope and content notes, series descriptions, inventories

Archon prior to update project

- Archon great for small to medium sized archives

- Small but committed user community

- No longer under active development by original developers (U. of Illinois) as of Jan. 2014; last version released in 2012

- Dependent on old version of PHP

- Falling behind current technology standards

Commonalities of Archon Stability Update project team

- [ ] Knew the system well, had already ingested finding guide data

- [ ] In smaller colleges and universities in the Oberlin Group of libraries

- [ ] Not inclined to migrate to ASpace: little focus on front end user, heavy focus on administrator tools, high costs

- [ ] ASpace had not had enough testing time for our comfort

- [ ] Archon requires little technical expertise and no coding skills

Forming a collaborative

- [ ] Agreeing on project scope and timeframe

- [ ] Agreeing on goals, short and long term

- [ ] Memorandum of Understanding

- [ ] Selecting a vendor, committing to sharing costs

- [ ] Making decisions about releasing code to public, a support web page and where hosted

Archon Stability Update project partners

Sasha Griffin, Denison University (lead)

Rachel Vagts, Berea College

Daniel Weddington, Berea College (now at U. of Kentucky)

Nat Wilson, Carleton College

Hayley Jackson, Luther College

Ryan Gjerde, Luther College

Anne Salsich, Oberlin College

Matt Gorzalski, Southern Illinois University Carbondale

David Malone, Wheaton College (now at Calvin College)

Archon Stability Update project goals

- ☐ Update software to be compatible with more modern server architecture

- ☐ Security Improvements: Web Application Firewall

- ☐ Security Improvements: Security Audit

Project Status: What We Did

☐ Phased testing: Internal testing, and tested with various partner institutions

☐ Updated the Archon code to be compatible with PHP 5.6 (supported through 2019)

☐ Performed security audit and made recommendations for future work (including temp use of ModSecurity)

☐ **Code will be released by the end of March 2017**

Where do we go...from here...

☐ Success! The product is updated!

☐ Ongoing concerns: Who "controls" the code? Does the vendor continue to be responsible for updates? When will we have to do this again?

☐ How to work collaboratively with community needs, including those who may not be able to pay for contracted work

☐ "Archon Day" - community engagement

☐ Make presentations on the project at conferences

"Archon Day"

☐ **"Archon Day"**
Demonstrations and discussions hosted by project manager Sasha Griffin

☐ Denison University on May 22.
Registration capped at 60; contact Sasha at griffins@denison.edu

Lessons learned

- [ ] Great project leader who will oversee from beginning to end is important

- [ ] Choose a developer / vendor that you trust

- [ ] Assume overage in both time and cost, plan accordingly

- [ ] Think beyond the outcome toward continued maintenance

- [ ] Carefully define a limited scope.

- [ ] Strength in numbers so no one partner is burdened with cost