

APTrust Strategic Plan and Core Principles

Version 2.0

Vision Statement

Collaborative stewardship and preservation of the digital cultural record.

Mission Statement

The Academic Preservation Trust (APTrust) is an innovative consortium that is committed to sustaining secure, diverse, open infrastructure to digitally preserve the scholarly and cultural record. Our members collaborate to overcome complex technological, sociological, and economic barriers to preservation.

Values

APTrust is a member of the Digital Preservation Services Collaborative, which has published a [declaration of shared values](#) in 2018. APTrust affirms its commitment to these values and makes the following statements on how APTrust manifests and demonstrates our commitment to these values.

- Collaboration - We work together and will collaborate with organizations that share the values set out in this statement. For example:
 - APTrust members collaborate with each other through interest groups, working groups, and committees. APTrust is a member of the Digital Preservation Coalition and the National Digital Stewardship Alliance and APTrust members regularly collaborate with other practitioners around the globe to further digital preservation.
 - APTrust staff and members create open-source solutions that are of immediate use to the community to facilitate digital preservation for any size or type of organization.
- Affordability and Sustainability - We endeavor to balance providing affordable services to the widest possible communities with sustainability of the content we protect.
 - While APTrust members pay an annual membership fee, APTrust members can add subaccounts for other cultural heritage organizations with which they collaborate, without having to pay their own membership fees, to lower the barrier for using APTrust digital preservation services.
 - APTrust also takes advantage of partnerships and technologies to minimize costs. For example, by using our Internet2 contract, there are no extra I/O costs and APTrust uses its own algorithms to minimize any egress fees that may arise due to use.
- Inclusiveness - We strive to adopt and promote inclusive practices in the partnerships we form, the collections we preserve, and the organizations we serve.

- While our official name is Academic Preservation Trust, we welcome any cultural heritage organization into our membership. APTrust members choose which collections they preserve, with the only limitation relating to the security of private information.
 - Our subaccount model was developed to provide access to any sized organization to enterprise-level preservation services by partnering with a sustaining member.
- Technological Diversity - We develop and deploy a variety of platforms and technologies to create a heterogeneous network that spans diverse geographic, technical, and institutional environments.
 - APTrust uses open technologies and commodity cloud services to build and provision its digital preservation system in multiple geographic regions.
 - APTrust adopts open standards (e.g. BagIt) wherever possible to promote the interoperability of its tools and systems as well as develops open-source tools such as DART, the Digital Archivist's Resource Tool to package and transfer content.
- Portability/Interoperability - We recognize that digital preservation involves moving data across systems and time. We design and maintain our services to maximize the integrity of the content and ease by which we transfer this content.
 - APTrust uses object storage industry standards to transfer digital content and verifies it's integrity with independent fixity checks. Our infrastructure is designed to work with any cloud provider.
- Openness and Transparency - We favor open technologies, standards, and protocols. We share information about costs and technologies openly.
 - APTrust uses open technologies and protocols, almost exclusively, and has contributed to standards development for digital preservation. (E.g. Beyond The Repository BagIt Profiles.) APTrust holds regular member meetings that are open to the community and shares our goals, progress, and financial details on our website and other places.
 - APTrust also maintains a full suite of technical documentation, governance and policy documents, as well as budget reporting--all publicly available.
- Accountability - We are responsible to each other and the broader community for employing ethical and transparent preservation practices.
 - APTrust has conducted its own self-audit of ISO 16363 and maintains an open wiki of documentation and policies that demonstrate conformance. All preservation practices are published for any community member to examine and challenge.
- Stewardship Continuity - We will collaborate to help identify new locations for content when one of the undersigned organization's stewardship cannot continue.
 - As a membership organization, APTrust had built a robust operational reserve. We care about the collections we preserve and have never deleted a member's content if they weren't able to pay their membership or storage fees. APTrust operational reserves also give us more than a year's time to wind down, should a decision to sunset ever be made, so that all collections can be moved to a new location. If a member chooses to drop their membership and work directly with the same cloud providers, APTrust can revert ownership and full control of their storage buckets.
- Advocacy - We aim to inspire stakeholders at every level to engage, invest in, and sustain preserving our collective cultural heritage and academic record.
 - Through our interest groups, APTrust members learn advocacy techniques from each other. APTrust participates in digital preservation research projects to advance sustainable strategies for distributed digital preservation.

- Empowerment - We encourage capacity-building in our partners, members, and the larger digital preservation community to sustain our shared goal.
 - APTrusts community of members is its largest strength. Members regularly learn from each other, whether it's a tactical strategy for digital preservation or strategies for getting through bureaucracy, members are regularly helping each other to improve. The regular linear growth in deposited collections demonstrates that by working together, we are able to do more.

Goals for 2021-2026

Goal 1: Build out our technology infrastructure to meet the changing needs of our membership.

Strategies

- **1.1** Maintain and update our preservation services to maintain high levels of service and usability.
- **1.2** Continue to develop, maintain, and extend the DART tool for the entire digital curation community to transfer digital content with integrity.
- **1.3** Explore adding alternative storage and compute Infrastructure-as-a-Service options to APTrust stack in order to add vendor and technological diversity and resilience to our services.

Goal 2: Improve communication with APTrust members and the broader community.

Strategies

- **2.1** Develop an integrated documentation strategy for APTrust.
- **2.2** Cultivate interest and working groups focused on the work of APTrust.
- **2.3** Engage the broader community through open meetings, reports, and documentation (e.g. website, wiki, GitHub).

Goal 3: Continue to advance and improve APTrust's services

Strategies

- **3.1** Develop ways for members to be able to define the core preservation service(s) right for their organization, and investigate potential or refine current business models.
- **3.2** Offer models for the business practices, policies, and workflows related to subaccounts in order to make it easier for APTrust members to extend services to community partners.
- **3.3** Create an internal review process for vetting APTrust's potential role in future research grants to align with the vision, mission, and values of APTrust and balance internal and wider community goals.

Version History

This document was originally called Mission and Goals, and drafted by Teri Goodall and Associates LLC after a May 5, 2014 meeting in Columbus, Ohio. It was approved by APTrust Governing Board March 19, 2015 and update added February 12, 2018 by Program Director Chip German. Current version adds “Core Principles” and this version approved by APTrust Board September 2021.

Version	Status	Date	Notes
1.1	Done	August 2020	Communications and Policy Group Approve
1.7	Done	September 2020	Advisory Board Approve / updated title
2.0	Done	October 2021	Board Approval and DOI uploaded