

Archiving from Below: Preserving Aerospace Industry Trade Periodicals of the 20th Century

Megan Prelinger, Prelinger Archives & Library

This paper addresses a contemporary and near-future deficit in the digital historical record created by low rates of retention and digitization of mid-20th century aerospace industry trade periodicals. These publications contain essential records of industry news from the first half-century of spaceflight. They have already proven essential for understanding the cultural frames around this period in history, and they possess the capacity to reveal hidden narratives anew for decades to come. Institutions wishing to preserve the history of spaceflight are confronted with several challenges posed by trade periodicals, including their physicality and the the question of their status as public domain or in-copyright titles. This paper explores these issues through the lens of one title, *Missiles and Rockets*, which has been recently digitized by Internet Archive. It proposes goals for the future recasting of these periodicals as valued historical resources that have the potential to be digitized and opened up for future research.