

Directions:

Read the following four texts. Answer the questions after each text by choosing A, B, C or D. Mark your answers on the **ANSWER SHEET**. (40 points)

Text 4

Visit any antiques store and you'll encounter artifacts from the past: photographs, letters, a brochure detailing the Sinclair dinosaur exhibit from the 1964-65 World's Fair, the ephemera of history. Yet these objects aren't truly ephemeral, because they're still here, decades, even centuries later. Why? Because they're tangible.

Have you pondered the life cycle of intangible formats, digital information, given that those who produce these artifacts seldom make provision for their long-term preservation? For millennia, we've known what we've known due to artifacts that have survived, often despite their original creators' neglect. The thing itself is the medium that delivers the information. At the time of creation, no attempts were made at intentional preservation, yet analog materials have a chance of surviving and serving as the historical record that biographers, historians, and novelists rely on. Libraries and archives have traditionally shouldered the responsibility of organization, preservation, and access to information. Librarians digitize the tangible so that researchers the world over can quickly search and access their holdings. The result is an embarrassment of historical riches, which brings its own needle-and-haystack problems.

Librarians' selfless devotion can act against us when users point to universality of access by holding up a cell phone and saying, "it's all in here" as evidence that libraries are less vital for researchers today. Yet how was that universality of access made possible and, perhaps more importantly, how is it maintained? Who curates what is preserved? When it comes to born-digital information, the terrifying answer can be: if not librarians and archivists, then no one. Digital information requires a great deal more care than analog.

Even when a digital object is preserved, it may only be the carrier that's saved, not the information itself. As technology advances and a format becomes obsolete, the object is useless. Have you ever stared helplessly at a ZIP disk, thinking: how do I get the files off this? Without constant migration of digital assets, a nightmare about the foreseeable future is what keeps historians up at night: a historical record that abruptly stops when digital replaces analog.

As a librarian whose day job revolves around special collections and digital assets, I share the night terrors of historians, and I'd be lying if I said a comprehensive preservation solution currently exists. Yet researchers can take some comfort in the fact that there are a multitude of librarians devoted to discovering, organizing, and preserving digital information for researchers current and future. While future researchers may find the digital realm a challenging place to ply their trade, they won't find it an impossible one.

36. The author mentions the artifacts from the past to _____.

- [A] introduce the collection of antiques
- [B] contrast them with everyday items
- [C] bring up the issue of preservation
- [D] comment on their historical value

37. Compared with digital objects, tangible artifacts _____.
[A] are less subject to their creators' neglect
[B] convey information in a more direct way
[C] require more intentional preservation
[D] are less likely to suffer serious damage
38. According to Paragraph 3, librarians' work may result in _____.
[A] oversupply of materials
[B] undervaluation of libraries
[C] researchers' underperformance
[D] users' overreliance on technology
39. The "ZIP disk" is cited as an example to show _____.
[A] the hazard of retrieving files through unusual means
[B] the infeasibility of constantly migrating digital assets
[C] the possibility of losing information in obsolete formats
[D] the inconvenience of storing information on analog devices
40. Which of the following statements best summarizes the text?
[A] Hard work should be done to preserve artifacts.
[B] Contributions of librarians should be recognized.
[C] Accessing databases is essential to researchers.
[D] Keeping digital historical records is a challenge.