This Day of Digital Archives is a rare chance to pause for remembrance and thanksgiving. I thank

1. Jerry McGann, who in 1992 took me aside in the lobby of some nondescript building at Texas A&M during a conference, Textual Technologies—the first time I ever heard the word “hypertext” and even went to some artist’s demonstration of how it might work—and described a new . . . something—at the University of Virginia designed to put computer people and humanists together to solve the problems of the latter. And he wondered if creating electronic versions of Blake’s illuminated books might not be a right kind of problem. I said I didn’t know, but I’d talk it, whatever it might be, over with Bob Essick and Joe Viscomi, with whom I was happily collaborating on a volume—in print—of *Blake’s Illuminated Books.*
2. Bob Essick and Joe Viscomi, who, in the garden of the Brooklyn brownstone of the late Karl Kroeber in the summer of 1993, patiently, bravely, and skeptically chewed collectively on our raw, ignorant ideas about an electronic Blake—which would somehow have something to do with what computers could accomplish.
3. John Unsworth, who as the just-appointed first director of the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities at UVa, drove up from North Carolina in the summer of 1993 to meet with the three of us, who drove down from Brooklyn to Virginia to discuss with him what electronic form the works of William Blake might conceivably take. Nobody, as far as I remember, mentioned the World Wide or any other Web. But I not sure I’d remember it even if I had heard about it.
4. The World Wide Web, which appeared like a vision in a cloud called Mosaic in 1993. I didn’t have it much less use it and neither, I think, did Joe or Bob. But having it there, wherever there was, made all the difference in the long run. By the time it got to us, it was Netscape.
5. The Getty Grant Program, which thought the William Blake Archive—more name than plan—might at least be good as a test case for the applications that were beginning to flood in asking for real money to do electronic things with art. The program actually gave IATH real money for us to get something going in three years, 1995-1998.
6. Digital Archives Day 2012. Still here. Still wondering at least once a week where, how, or if the Blake Archive will be in 2025 or 2112.