

Public Draft - Extracts from
A Survey of Information Technology Vendors
Prepared for: **The Digital Preservation Coalition**
by:

Philip Lord
The Digital Archiving Consultancy

28th October 2002

©Digital Preservation Coalition 2002. All rights reserved. **Management Summary**
Background

This study was conducted between late July to early October 2002 in furtherance of the Digital Preservation Coalition's (DPC) aim of working with industry, and followed a forum held in June 2002 with a cross section of industry on future research and development for digital asset preservation.

Objectives

The survey's objectives were:

- Establish the extent of industry's awareness and perception of its need to become more aware of / engaged with issues of digital longevity; and their views on how the DPC can interact with industry, improve awareness, and foster partnerships.
- Their interest in sponsorship, membership, or alliances with the DPC, including estimating the demand for such activities, and identify areas which may be of particular interest to industry.
- Make recommendations to the DPC board on potential DPC conditions/criteria for industry sponsorship or collaborative projects with the DPC.

Methods

A cross-section of 35 large, medium and small companies was approached with an e-mailed questionnaire sent out under Lynne Brindley's name, and which contained an invitation to proceed to a telephone interview. Twenty one (68.6%) companies completed the e-mail questionnaire, and seventeen (48.6%) were subsequently interviewed by telephone.

The survey was limited to suppliers of information technology products, specialist consultancies and professional and trade bodies. Consumers of IT products and services were not surveyed.

Findings

The following summarises the major findings:

- The overall response rate was good, but there was a lower level of response from suppliers of specialist software and from some of the professional and trade bodies approached.
- There was a perception among those responding that there was insufficient awareness of the digital longevity problem in industry, though most claimed to pay attention to it in their own products or services.
- About half had already heard of the DPC; nearly all expressed an interest in knowing more about its work.
- When asked about measures to promote wider understanding of the issues, the holding of seminars and workshops and use of the press were the preferred means; however a wide and original range of individual suggestions was forthcoming and should be reviewed.
- It was emphasised that companies respond to market requirements: promoting awareness amongst the public and vendors' customers was therefore one of the most effective ways of influencing the vendors themselves.
- Regarding using public money for academic research into the question the majority were in favour, though a minority view that this would not be effective was strongly expressed. It was generally felt government money should not be spent on repeating work done elsewhere in the public and commercial sectors. More than one reference was made to the Dutch government's work, which was felt to be a model in this area.
- The idea of a digital curation centre to be set up in an academic setting in the UK was felt to be worthwhile, and suggestions were made that selection, management and economic issues would be fruitful areas to pursue. Again a minority felt strongly that commercial considerations would dominate, and the centre would be marginal to their interests.
- Customers of these vendors do not, in general, seem to be demanding digital longevity except in areas subject to specific pressures (e.g. regulatory or legal), or in specific markets. There is however a perception that customer awareness is increasing.
- Regarding participating in the DPC's work there is a lot of goodwill to do this, though there are some questions about the DPC's role and objectives in relation to industry. A theme emerging was the need to see some benefit in collaborating, such as access to potential customers. It was noted that the current economic climate is not favourable to cash sponsorship.
- Overall the findings point to in-kind collaboration rather than membership. There was interest in sponsorship of events where there was an opportunity to meet potential customers.

Looking forward

- There is support for the ongoing work of the DPC in organising seminars and workshops, and for pursuing publicity raising in the general and specialist press. If budgets permit perhaps the targeted seminar work could be extended, possibly with sponsorship from industry. Press

articles could be encouraged from people not directly associated with the DPC.

- The individual suggestions on awareness raising should be reviewed with a view to utility. Educational settings and use of the World Wide Web may, for example, be fruitful avenues to explore.

- Further attention needs to be directed to software companies and trade/professional organisations. The former are producing many of the products which will be at the centre of longevity problems in the future, and these are well placed to make a difference in the future if profitably engaged in the issue. The latter may be key to raising awareness and meeting these companies. This might not be an easy task, and may require innovative approaches. SMEs are a neglected group and merit attention.

- It is clear that some companies feel they cannot do much - the problem lies further down the chain with their suppliers of more basic components. This reinforces the need to engage the wider IT industry, and software vendors in particular. A key here might be to locate the key people in the (generally larger) basic IT companies. The view that business advantage will drive events indicates a need to look at the "IT consumer" side of the problem. Demand from the market would gain the attention of the producer companies surveyed.

- One theme which emerged and which the DPC could profitably act on is facilitating communication between groups with different perspectives on the problem. This might also be a way to furthering awareness. The one trade organisation who participated very usefully in this survey would be a good starting point.

- Regarding establishing a digital curation centre, this would have support, but would need to be seen to be doing new and relevant work (and to be able to generate results rapidly). Gaps identified were selection for preservation, what aspects of records to preserve, management and business practices, and the economics of digital longevity. It is the view of the author of this report that the proposed register of file formats and documentation would be a difficult enterprise to take on, though the DPC could act by supporting and informing bodies with the power to make this happen - presumably those with legislative muscle.

- Government may also encourage the cause by using its invitations to tender (ITTs) to emphasise the need for digital longevity.

- A number of leads were established in the course of this work that the DPC should follow up with a view to engaging these companies in collaboration.

- Clearly goodwill exists in favour of the DPC and its work, but there is also a need for the DPC to make its role and objectives clearer to industry. This survey and its findings should assist in this process.

- It would be beneficial for the DPC to consider a future survey focussing on industry customers of IT products and services.

- If the Coalition should seek sponsorship of DPC events or have separate "trade fairs" or vendor exhibitions it should draw up a set of guidelines. The ethical guidelines for sponsorship produced by the Museums Association [1] could provide an appropriate template for this. These are as follows:

1. Sponsorship, in kind or in cash, offers many benefits for museums but it is important to establish a clearly defined relationship with the sponsor. Museums need to recognise sponsors' needs and priorities but they should also safeguard their own needs, objectives and reputation.

2. The sponsorship agreement should be designed to avoid undue influence by sponsors on

museum activities. There must never be any editorial input by sponsors that would affect the contents or design of an exhibition, display, publication, etc, other than agreed credits and acknowledgements.

3. The agreement should specify the extent to which sponsors may display their corporate logo on museum premises and publicity, and the extent to which the sponsor may use the museum's name and logo. Some museums prohibit the association of the institution's name with the sponsor's products.

4. A museum should carefully consider the propriety of any permanent or temporary display of the sponsor's promotional material or products within the museum. Some museums prohibit the display of promotional material and products.

5. Public access to the museum should not be adversely affected by privileges granted to the sponsor. Note: Museums should be aware that sponsorship rather than donation may render the museum liable for VAT. For some museums the proceeds of sponsorship may be subject to taxation.

Introduction

The Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) was formed in July 2001 to raise awareness of the issues raised by the need to keep and to re-use for a decade or more digital assets and resources which institutions have created or purchased. The DPC co-ordinates concerted action to address these issues in the UK and internationally. It has over 20 major organisations as members ranging from the national libraries and archives of the UK, education and scientific research, other public bodies such as the National Electronic Library for Health, and industry trade bodies such as the Publishers Association. Further information on the DPC is available from its website (www.dpconline.org).

One of the aims of the DPC has been to work closely with industry to address technical challenges and support the development of market solutions. In June 2002 it held a one-day forum with a cross-section of industry and DPC members entitled "Future R&D for Digital Asset Preservation". A meeting report and presentations from the day are available from the events page on the DPC website (www.dpconline.org/graphics/events/rdfuture.html). At the forum the DPC undertook to follow up the discussion on future research and development with a cross-section of industry. It was also agreed to explore the level of industry interest in further engagement with the DPC and its work. As a result this survey was initiated, and was contracted to Philip Lord to conduct on its behalf.

Objectives

The objectives of this survey were:

- Establish the extent of industry's awareness and perception of its need to become more aware of / engaged with issues of digital longevity; and their views on how the DPC can interact with industry, improve awareness, and foster partnerships.
- Their interest in sponsorship, membership, or alliances with the DPC, including estimating the demand for such activities, and identify areas which may be of particular interest to industry.
- Make recommendations to the DPC board on potential DPC conditions/criteria for industry sponsorship or collaborative projects with the DPC.

In order to limit the scope of the project and stay within the set budget it was decided only to approach **providers** of IT goods and services, not consumers of these.

Methods

The following process was followed when conducting the survey:

- A cross-section of 35 major vendors, SMEs and trade bodies with names of contacts was constructed from suggestions made from DPC sources and those known to Philip Lord. E-mail and telephone questionnaires were agreed with the secretary of the DPC.
- An initial e-mail questionnaire was sent to all targets by Philip Lord with a covering letter from Lynne Brindley. This questionnaire included a question asking whether they would be willing to take part in a subsequent interview by telephone to explore more fully their views on digital preservation and participation in the DPC.
- Those responding positively to the invitation for an interview were sent the questions a few days in advance of the interview.
- Interviews were conducted and written up. Typically interviews took 35 minutes to complete.
- Those not responding to the original questionnaire were followed up by telephone and with an e-mail reminder..

The survey took place between 24th July and 4th October 2002.

The Sample and Response Rates

Table 1 shows the breakdown of the types of companies approached. Half the companies were

software providers, as software is where many of the difficult issues of preservation issues lie rather than with hardware.

It was not always easy to ascribe a single characterisation of a company since they often have multiple product lines and activities, so Table 1 shows the best approximation to their main line of business so far as this survey was concerned. Four out of the five companies described as hardware suppliers were mainly in the business of supplying optical or microfilm storage and management systems. The specialist consultancies were all active in the preservation/records management area.

Table 1 Types of companies approached

| Table of types of companies approached. | Type | Number of companies |
|--|------|---------------------|
| Consultancy - specialist (in this area) | | 10 |
| Software - bespoke | | 4 |
| Software - packaged | | 1 |
| Software - specialist | | 7 |
| Software - records management, document and image management | | 6 |
| Hardware systems suppliers | | 5 |
| General systems and service providers | | 2 |
| Professional or trade body | | 5 |
| Service companies | | 1 |

Table 2 shows a breakdown of responses to the various stages of the survey. The proportion of total non-respondents was 31.4%, after telephoning and sending e-mail reminders to those who did not respond to the initial approach. The response rate was a little better than expected, and higher than in many surveys of this type. Nearly 50% of those approached completed the whole process, and information was gathered from 60% of the total.

It should be noted that for two of the larger companies more than one person was approached. In both cases they elected to respond via a single individual and all figures reported here are in terms of companies, not individuals.

Table 2 Breakdown of responses

| |
|----------------------------------|
| Table of breakdown of responses. |
|----------------------------------|

Response

| Number of companies | % of Total | Notes |
|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Sent first form by e-mail | 35 | 100.0 |
| Replied to e-mail | 24 | 68.6 |

Three of these answered but declined to fill in the questionnaire

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----|------|
| Completed e-mail questionnaire | 21 | 60.0 |
|--------------------------------|----|------|

Positive response to telephone interview

| | |
|----|------|
| 19 | 54.3 |
|----|------|

Two of these proved impossible to arrange interviews with before the study closed.

Interviewed

| | |
|----|------|
| 17 | 48.6 |
|----|------|

Table 3 demonstrates how the different industry sectors responded to the call to participate, showing numbers of companies from which no information was forthcoming and those completing at least one questionnaire.

Table 3 Responses by Industry Sector

| Table of responses by industry sector. information obtained least one questionnaire | Completed at | Type | No |
|--|---------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Consultancy - specialist (in this area) | | | 2 |
| Software - bespoke | 1 | | 3 |

Software - packaged

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | |
| Software - specialist | 6 | 1 |
| Software - records management, document management | 2 | 4 |
| Hardware systems suppliers | 1 | 4 |
| General systems and service providers | 1 | 2 |
| Professional or trade body | 4 | 1 |
| Service companies | 0 | 1 |

Though the numbers are small it shows less interest from the specialist software vendors (which included a wide range, from accounting software, database management systems to e-learning software). The trade and professional bodies were also hard to interest (with a notable exception). This is disappointing: it is the specialist software suppliers who one could consider as being at the centre of the problem and key to its solution, and the trade organisations could be vital in helping to turn round perceptions and initiate action in their sectors.

Informal estimates of presumed prior knowledge of the digital longevity problem seemed to be associated with a high interview rate; there was a hint that those with lower awareness did not respond as strongly to the invitation.

Most the people approached were based in the UK, but four of the respondents were based overseas. All of these answered both questionnaires.

The Findings

Results of e-mail questionnaire

The results of the Yes/No questions in the e-mail questionnaire are shown in Table 4 .

Table 4 Results of initial e-mail questionnaire (Y/N questions)

| Table of results of initial e-mail questionnaire (Y/N questions). | | Question number | Question |
|---|--|-----------------|----------|
| 1 | Do you believe there is sufficient awareness in your industry of the technical | 17 | |

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| 3 | Are you currently developing or supplying products which are relevant to long-term retention? | 20 |
| 4 | Have you previously heard of The Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC)? | 10 |
| 5 | Would you like to know more about its work? | 3 |
| 6 | Would you be willing to participate in a second stage of the survey, which would involve a telephone interview? | 2 |

The consensus coming from this questionnaire was that there was insufficient awareness in the industries of the respondents of the technical issues of long-term retention (but it may be that the respondents were actually answering in a broader context - industry as a whole - see below.) That being noted, nearly all the companies responding claimed to be supplying products which were relevant to long-term retention - presumably they were not counting themselves among the ill-informed they referred to when answering question 1.

Just over 50% of respondents had not previously heard of the DPC. Almost all the respondents that had previously heard of the DPC had attended the DPC's industry forum in June 2002. All respondents except three would like to know more about its work - including, with a single exception, all the companies with previous knowledge of the Coalition.

As noted earlier, 19 of the 21 e-mail questionnaire respondents elected to go on to the telephone interview, showing goodwill towards the process - or at least willingness to proceed further.

Question 2 of this initial survey asked "Do you have any comments you would like to make on these issues?" - i.e. those referred to in question 1. As might be expected given the cross section of companies, responses were rich and varied. Some items mentioned more than once were:

- The need to engage and train users in the issue, even suggestions this should happen in school.
- That media preservation was thought to be important, but not the complete solution.
- Defining what to preserve, what aspects of data to preserve, and organisational questions may be just as important as technical issues.
- Fragmentation of expertise and markets (both for users and suppliers)
- Costs and processes as central issues.
- Increasing awareness by industry.

Some useful quotes from a DPC perspective:

From a trade body:

"We are very interested in working with you to improve the amount and the quality of the dialogue between users and suppliers, to develop good practice and to promote successful implementation."

And

"very interested in collaborating with you on events, projects etc"

From a specialist consultancy:

"This is an issue for all users, and RM or IM staff must shift from Registry mode into Education and Support mode."

From a hardware systems supplier:

"We have been championing this cause for the last 5 years, convincing people about the inherent fragility of keeping information only in digital format without backing-up onto more permanent media. We would be delighted to discuss this further with you."

From a records management software company:

"Close tracking of initiatives such as DPC is important to establish relevance and impact on the provision of current and future services."

Results from Telephone Interviews

Nineteen respondents to the e-mail questionnaire agreed to participate in a 20-minute second stage interview by telephone. For two of these it proved impossible to find an interview date before the study closed. Results for the remaining seventeen are reported here. All interviews were one-to-one excepting one who organised an audio conference with four of their personnel.

The results are discussed question by question below.

Question 1:

Interviewees were invited to propose ways of encouraging awareness of digital preservation in their industry, and to comment as appropriate.

Many suggestions were forthcoming, in order of popularity:

- Seminars and workshops (5)
- Press articles and editorials (5)
- Advertising and Public relations campaigns (4)
- Publicising horror stories and scare stories (2)
- Talking at industry and government forums (2)
- Providing examples of best practice and pilot projects (2)
- Work in schools and colleges (1)
- Via the world wide web (1)
- Use of a video (1)
- Commercial evangelists (1)
- Engage professional bodies (1)
- Engage the commercial IT advisors (1)
- Engage interested institutions such as the Mellon Foundation (1)

- Lobby for research (1)
- Train/educate users (1)
- Use industry "jungle drums" (1)
- Global international (ISO) standards (1)
- Make it profitable for industry (1)
- Describe the benefits of doing it better (1)

Answering this question most interviewees interpreted the scope of the question beyond just their own industry segment, which the formal wording of the question indicated.

Some responses are worth noting for their innovative nature. The leader of a knowledgeable specialist consultancy in this area made a plea to engage young people, with specific ideas for projects.

Regarding scare stories, it was noted that commercial companies who have suffered from data loss over time may be reluctant to advertise the fact, being afraid to lose face and credibility. A head in the sand attitude was mentioned more than once.

This question provided an opportunity for interviewees to express further views on the problem as a whole and thereby elicited supplementary information to question 2 in the e-mail survey. Further themes which emerged were:

- There is a lack of awareness of the problem, and the perception is that this lack is greater in the commercial sector. However in the public sector awareness may be centred on a few institutions who are "in the know", though it was thought public sector awareness was increasing.
 - In the commercial world a link needs to be made to profits, or damage to the bottom line.
- There needs to be key drivers to get awareness started - such as "painful" (i.e. costly) problems, or a disaster, or similar. One respondent noted that industry is reactive rather than proactive.
- There is a need to get different groups talking to each other: the supplier and consumer sides of industry, those in the know with those who are unaware, for example.

Again it is worth singling out a few quotations (as recorded by the interviewer):

From a specialist consultancy:

Urgently: get into schools and colleges. Start projects which relate to pupil's personal records/communications. (E.g. e-mails, photos, diaries,). One idea is to get school children to record their peers', parents' and grandparents' anecdotes digitally and ask them how it is to be preserved."

From a records management systems software vendor:

They have had a few tenders for archiving systems (from government bodies) - they basically say, "over to you, we don't understand the problem". On the other hand suppliers are scared of the open-ended nature of the requests made to them.

From a hardware supplier:

(He) feels there is a responsibility in [supplier] companies to spread the word - but it is a difficult idea to sell, and the burden of proof is often thrown back to his company

From a hardware supplier:

If you want industry to take an interest in this issue then you have to demonstrate there is a profit in it. Can't see a sales opportunity here.

A few comments related specifically to the DPC:

From a supplier of bespoke software:

Noted that the things the DPC are doing are good, and its publicity campaign is pretty effective.

From a general systems and services supplier:

. . . but asked if the focus of the DPC was just on UK academia, and possibly the public sector, or a wider audience. Who is its audience, and what is its constituency?

Question 2.

This asked whether more should be done using public money to help industry address the issues.

Thirteen responded positively to this and four were against it.

The question provoked a lot of comment, some of it quite trenchant. Notable comments included:

- Government initiatives tend to concentrate on the larger players; more needs to be done for SMEs. This was mentioned more than once.
- Others, such as the Dutch, are doing more and are doing it better.
- Scare stories are best done under a government umbrella, as any publicity would be less pointed and damaging.
- Use (government) ITTs as exemplars.
- Look at what has already been done and try to join up islands of effort, rather than duplicate work already done.

Some of the bodies mentioned that might have a role were the BSI, The Treasury, DTI, PRO, MoReq (sic).

A few felt that government mandates on data standards were necessary.

Again this question encouraged further suggestions supplementing e-mail question 2 and the previous interview question 1. Thus:

- There is need for digital preservation enthusiasts (rather like war enactment enthusiasts in a historical context - "dressing up").
- A role for government in fostering communication between groups - such as pharmaceuticals with banks, the software industry with the public sector.
- The need for awareness raising - possibly government sponsored.
- The need for war stories highlighting the dangers and costs of **not** addressing the issue.

Again some quotations are useful:

From an hardware supplier:

"Not much government can do by shaking the trees"

From a bespoke software supplier:

The UK should do like the Dutch government is doing and have a program. The Dutch are doing more and doing it better.

From a specialist consultancy:

Government needs to take a "light, enabling role"

From an hardware supplier:

"The DPC can make this a national issue"

From a bespoke software supplier:

It is difficult to get the attention of industry. "A project of this size - meaning the DPC and survey - will engage attention"

Question 3.

"Proposals are currently being considered to develop a Digital Curation Centre based in the UK higher education sector to support R&D into digital preservation. What areas of publicly funded research and activities in digital preservation do you think would most usefully support industry efforts and competitiveness in this area?"

On the whole this was said or implied to be a good thing, with only four companies dissenting.

One respondent (in favour of the proposal) clearly articulated a doubt that academic research would prove to be valuable in a commercial context, and pointed out that different archive solutions are needed in different contexts. Others noted that management processes are just as important as technologies, but that the USA does that sort of research better than the UK; this same respondent suggested that work be undertaken in the context of the Grid. In a similar management-orientated vein a respondent suggested economic models as one area of research. Another suggested promoting work on the selection of materials to preserve and the purpose of retention.

A useful suggestion was made that such an initiative could be an opportunity for joint funding

between industry and the public sector, and would provide a bridge between academia and the commercial world.

Existing centres such as the University of London Computer Centre and the Data Archive at the University of Essex were mentioned by a few as possible starting locations.

There was a strong feeling among some that commercial drivers will dictate what happens regardless of what theoretical work takes place. A few quotations from both sides of this debate:

From an hardware supplier:

It would be good to see a UK effort - for example based around the Grid. Possibly we should have at most two focussed efforts in two first division universities.

From a specialist consultancy:

He would divide it up into two:

1. A university based centre for digital curation, and
2. Centres where it is practiced -such as the Data Archive at Essex, and PRO, ULCC.

From a records management software systems vendor:

Publicly funded research is fine but technology will not wait and commercial drivers are going to dictate what happens. We do not have the luxury of time for it to happen.

Question 4.

This question asked respondents what they felt they could contribute to a register of information on file formats etc.

There was a big "yes" to the concept (13 for, 3 against and 1 don't know). Comments revealed the following suggestions on their companies contributing.

- Experience and intellectual input.
- Communication facilitation.
- Existing work they are doing on the issue.
- Educating the market.
- Providing systems (to manage the information) and related expertise.

The dissenters pointed out:

- Not their area.
- No power over data standards (de facto these are driven by a few large software companies).
- The problem lies down the supply chain with their suppliers.

Perhaps significantly, no respondents offered to submit their own file formats to such a register; most offers were on peripheral services; or they claimed, probably with justification, that they were not in control of this information. Companies who are producing software were reluctant to contribute, as commercial ownership and competitive advantage are obstacles. However one company suggested that contributing to a register with a five-year "moving wall" would be acceptable, where formats over five years old were contributed; five years is a long time in the software business and such formats would be effectively out of date.

Intellectual property issues were raised as a concern in environments where software and content were not easily separable, such as in e-learning. It was implied that it may not be just a vendor decision, but may involve vendors, customers and content providers.

There is a feeling on the interviewer's part that companies were really saying "Yes - this is a fine idea in principle, but in practice it would be hard for companies to cooperate".

A quotation is worth giving:

From a hardware vendor:

The real formats are the property of the monopoly supplier. They have strong commercial reasons to keep these formats to themselves, and it would be a doomed effort. Government mandating of open standards would help but would be followed by massive lobbying.

Question 5.

Does your company factor long-term retention in to its products?

The following summarises the results:

| Table of summary of results for Question 5. | | Answer | Number |
|---|----|--------|--------|
| Yes | 12 | | |
| No | 2 | | |
| Maybe/depends | 2 | | |
| Not applicable | 1 | | |

Broadly companies are saying they do take longevity into account, but there was a wide variety of comment and views, and a range of interpretations of the question depending on the business they were in. Companies were looking at it from their own perspective (naturally enough) - thus hardware vendors claiming long media life or software vendors storing their own code.

Two respondents quite explicitly said they didn't. One, a hardware vendor, citing difficulties with spare parts after, say, five years; the other, a specialist software company, saying the company was too young and had other priorities at the moment. It would have been useful to have the candid views of more specialist software companies to this question.

A few respondents felt they would need to refer to others more aware of the issue in their organisations.

Overall the positive replies show some attempts at tackling the question, but these only address fragments of the overall problem. The question of integrating all the pieces into a whole solution was left unanswered.

Question 6:

Are customers increasingly asking for long-term retention features?

This question elicited the following responses:

| Table of summary of results for Question 6. | | Answer | Number |
|---|---|--------|--------|
| Yes | 9 | | |
| No | 7 | | |
| Don't know | 1 | | |

In most cases it was clear that the answers really referred to the absolute value, not to **changes** in customer behaviour. Looking at the question in that light there is a pretty even split between those who see longevity being requested and those who do not.

Looking at the results in more detail it appears that demand is driven in specific sectors or by specific drivers, and the answers reflect familiarity with these sectors: Some of the specific situations cited were:

- A need for legal admissibility, implying longevity.
- Regulatory push, as for pharmaceuticals and financial institutions.
- Some public sector situations, where there is an explicit long-term need. The e-Government initiative helps drives this.
- Insurers are asking for it.
- Some markets which are more developed in this respect, such as Australia.

Even those companies saying "no" made caveats. The need may be expressed in requirements documents they receive, but it is not stressed at all.

An e-Learning company noted that the need is not expressed now, but there is a feeling it will emerge soon.

An extreme view was that customers have always been asking for long data life - but it was not stated if the view reflected implied assumptions by purchasers, or explicit wishes; I suspect the former.

Some quotations are interesting and illustrate some of the dichotomies expressed:

From a general systems provider:

Except in specialist areas the demand does not exist (or need is not recognised), though interfaces with legacy systems is often asked for.

From a hardware vendor:

They are doing this without prompting. - He gave example of a customer, a well known financial institution which is trying to retrieve data off an old optical disk system. The data needs to be kept for 40 years, and they do not want to repeat these rescue operations every 10 years or so.

From a packaged software supplier:

No, there is no increase, they have ALWAYS done this.

From a hardware vendor:

No - generally the opposite! - the company suggest it [longevity] to them. It may be requirement buried in a specification, but is not emphasised.

Question 7.

Participating in DPC work.

By far most respondents showed a willingness to participate or cooperate with the DPC. The only person replying with a direct "no" was based in the USA and was working in a large corporation. Another US-based respondent expressed doubt. A few thought it was a good idea but said they would need to refer the question back to others in their companies. There is an action point for the DPC to follow up these leads.

These answers show a high measure of goodwill towards the Coalition.

A number of companies clearly indicated that they would require something from any collaboration, notably introductions to (potential) customers. Two companies mentioned they would need to assess each DPC event on its merits on a case-by-case basis.

A theme from many was payment in kind rather than a cash subscription, such as offering

printing and scanning services, supply of editorial materials, case studies, intellectual input etc. This is obviously a financially tight time for the IT sector -one interviewee characterised his company as now "being a not for profligacy company".

Question 8

Asked for further contacts.

Only a few suggestions were made. Where they fitted the criterion of being a vendor or relevant trade body, they were followed up and asked to participate in the survey. The DPC may want to take an action point to follow up on the others.

Question 9.

Any other comments?

A few asked whether they would see the final report. One respondent made a strong plea for anonymity.

Some mentioned the need to clarify the DPC's role.

Lastly a number asked to be kept in touch with, asked that their sector not be lost sight of, and to hear about the outcome of the study.

A few quotations of value to the DPC:

From a supplier of bespoke software:

The DPC is doing useful work and has made a good start. Would like to know more regarding its long-term aims, and suggest it moves away from a "for the librarians" image.

From a hardware vendor:

He is very pleased the subject is being taken seriously now.

[1] **See:** Museum Association, Ethical Guidelines 3: Trading and Commercial Activities.
Accessible from <http://www.infosite.co.uk/masite/ethics.htm> **NB: 24/08/2004** this web
page no longer available - please see
[Museums Association statement](#)