



[Click on image to download Mind the Gap \[900kb\]](#)

In 2006, the DPC published the results of a major Needs Assessment exercise aimed to gather and collate a picture of the status quo in the UK with regard to digital preservation; to assess and develop a clear way forward; and, last but not least, to communicate that message to a wide and diverse audience, including those who may not have considered that digital preservation was part of their remit. This needs assessment culminated three years later in a report, *Mind the Gap: assessing digital preservation needs in the UK*. The report was launched at the Houses of Parliament on 15 February 2006 by Andrew Stott, Deputy Chief Information Officer & Head of Service Transformation, E-Government Unit.

An interesting feature of the *Mind the Gap* report is its analysis of how different sectors approach digital preservation. For example, gaining funding for digital preservation for the commercial sector appears not to be a major issue providing there is a sufficiently strong business case. In contrast, the public sector often struggles for funding, even where there is a business case. Another area of interest is the regulated industries sector. Due to regulatory inspection, companies in the financial, pharmaceutical and food sectors have had to ensure long-term preservation of digital data by creating effective methodologies. For competition reasons many of these solutions are confidential and consequently not in the public domain.

The following needs and recommendations were highlighted in the report:

Organisations should continue to raise awareness of the impact of digital preservation beyond the current core of informed individuals and institutions.

Organisations should create long-term proactive information/knowledge management plans and assign responsibility for dealing with digital preservation issues. Regular audits should also be performed to assess and address digital preservation needs.

Training in digital preservation should be encouraged and programmes should be integrated into the training of professionals such as conservators, librarians and archivists.

Awareness of digital preservation issues should be raised at government level, both nationally and internationally, in order to influence relevant policy making.

An international collaborative 'market' for digital preservation tools should be created. Such a market should encourage the use of open file formats and standards and consider the long-term preservation needs of digital information.

Mind the Gap is intended to win the hearts and minds of a much wider audience and to encourage all who are involved in creating and acquiring digital information, to seize the opportunity to develop a practical, coherent strategy for responsible management of the vast quantities of digital information being created and used in the UK today. As the DPC Chair Lynne Brindley noted at the launch of Mind the Gap '... many of the needs identified in the report are not "rocket science", they rely on little more than common sense and good management to implement, but there is nevertheless a significant gap between where we are now and where we need to be...'. Mind the Gap poses a challenge to all organisations to take steps to manage their digital materials according to good practice so that it will be simpler and more cost-effective for others to continue to manage them for the future.

- The full list of recommendations from the 'Mind the Gap' report may be found in the [Recommendations Table PDF 245KB](#)
- [Members Only: Mind the Gap recommendations survey - qualitative comments \(Microsoft Word Document 54KB\)](#)

- [Members Only: Ranking of the Mind the Gap recommendations. \(Microsoft Excel Worksheet 24KB\)](#)
- [Mind the Gap: Assessing digital preservation needs in the UK. \(PDF 900KB\)](#)
- [Mind the Gap - Recommendations Table \(PDF 245KB\)](#)
- [Press Release 15th February 2006: Mind the Gap - Report reveals major gaps in long term management of valuable digital assets](#)

After the report: priorities and how to meet them

The 'Mind the Gap' report was published with 21 recommendations aimed at a range of stakeholders. To gauge which of these were the most important to the DPC community, members participated in a survey to consider the final 'Mind the Gap' recommendations. They voted on which recommendations would impact on their work and deliver the greatest benefit to the digital preservation community if achieved successfully.

The survey closed on July 3rd and the results showed that the Top 5 recommendations were:

- (R1) Given the results of the survey, there will be an ongoing need for awareness raising activity in the foreseeable future.
- (R7) The UK Government and funding bodies should promote further development of collaborative standards and methodologies in digital preservation for all parts of the digital preservation lifecycle. In particular, a roadmap of how to scale up a system while meeting standards is needed.
- (R4) Organisations should include long-term data retention as a criterion in the cost-benefit analysis of any project that will lead to the creation of a substantial amount of digital information.
- (R9) The UK Government and funding bodies should promote, through seed funding, the creation of more digital archives across relevant sectors and organisations. Promote collaborative regional or national repositories to meet the needs of small and medium size organisations. These can then be promoted as exemplars for other organisations to follow.
- (R2) Organisations should create a long-term proactive information/knowledge management plan. This should start with an information audit and then, once the problem has been appropriately sized, the task of creating a solution should be properly resourced. This should include the assignment of clear responsibilities.

April 2008: Invitation to Tender 'Mind The Gap' - Follow-Up Study

The value and success of the 2006 'Mind the Gap' report, both to its membership and the wider community, are recognised. In April 2008 the DPC commissioned a study to review and analyse the report's final recommendations and to produce a transparent action plan for the DPC, its members and the wider digital preservation community.

The full ITT, available to members, can be found at [ITT 'Mind the Gap' Follow-up Study \(PDF 57KB\)](#)

Both DPC members and a number of consultants were invited to tender for this proposal. However at the July 2008 Board meeting it was decided at this juncture not to pursue a follow up study to the Mind the Gap report, rather the valuable feedback and information which was collated from the survey would inform the development of a revised DPC strategy and provide input into future DPC activities.

June 2008

The Review Board for the ITT 'Mind the Gap' - follow up study reviewed responses to the ITT in mid-June. Whilst the Review Board found much to commend in the proposals it was decided not to award a contract at this time. The brief will be re-scoped to focus on actions for which the DPC or its members can take responsibility for and it will have a strong practical and achievable focus.