

INVITATION TO TENDER

Taking Forward the Mind the Gap Report: Recommendations into Action

The Digital Preservation Coalition¹ (DPC) wishes to commission a short consultancy to take forward its 2006 Mind the Gap² report. The study will review and analyse the Mind the Gap's final recommendations and use them to produce a coherent, prioritised action plan with appropriate supporting documentation. This should include, where possible, cost estimates, associated risks, action owners and target timeframes. The information will be presented succinctly and cogently, so that it will have resonance and clarity with a breadth of stakeholders across all sectors.

Background

The Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) is a cross sectoral organisation which undertakes a number of activities in support of its mission which includes the goals:

- Instituting a concerted and co-ordinated effort to get digital preservation on the agenda of key stakeholders in terms that they will understand and find persuasive.
- Acting in concert to make arguments for appropriate and adequate funding to secure the nation's investment in digital resources and ensure an enduring global digital memory.

A major outcome of this activity was the 2006 'Mind the Gap' (MtG) report. This was the culmination of 'The UK Digital Preservation Needs Assessment (UKNA)'³ study, the aims of which were to gather and collate information about the state of digital preservation in the UK; to assess and develop clear recommendations; and, to raise awareness of digital preservation to a wide and diverse audience. The report was a seminal piece of work which successfully raised the awareness of digital preservation at the time. It continues to be used as a practical awareness raising tool both within and outside the digital preservation community.

The report concluded by identifying a number of needs that came to the forefront during the survey and recommendations aimed at addressing these needs. These are listed in the Annex.

Objectives

The principle objective of this study is to convert the wide ranging recommendations of 'The Mind the Gap' report into a transparent action plan for the DPC, its members and the wider digital preservation community. The actions should be prioritised, taking into account the urgency of each requirement and other relevant factors such as feasibility and impact. They should be accompanied by an analysis which indicates timescales, responsible owners and costs associated with each action and also by a risk analysis. The development of actions from the original recommendations should take into account changes since the report was published; work has already taken place which goes some way towards meeting some of the recommendations, for instance. The study will test the continuing validity and relevance of the original recommendations in the current landscape particularly in regard to new and emerging stakeholders, tools and projects. It is intended that the resulting action plan will inform DPC activity in the coming year.

Deliverables

- A draft final report, to be delivered to the DPC Project Steering Group, by the 11th August 2008.
- A final report, to be approved by the DPC Project Steering Group, to be presented to the DPC Board at a date to be decided once the project commences.
- An electronic version of the final report, suitable for displaying on the DPC website, by the 22nd August.
- Monthly update progress reports and or meetings with the DPC Executive Director and selected members of the Project Steering Group.

¹ <http://www.dpconline.org>

² <http://www.dpconline.org/graphics/reports/mindthegap.html>

³ <http://www.dpconline.org/graphics/reports/index.html#ukneeds>

Management and Reporting

The appointed consultant will liaise and co-ordinate their work directly with the DPC Executive Director. The project will be overseen by a DPC Project Steering Group.

Proposals will be evaluated along the following criteria:

- A demonstrable understanding of the technical, policy, and strategic issues in digital preservation.
- Alignment of proposed methodology with the stated project objectives.
- Consultants' experience and expertise in digital preservation.
- Value for money.

Timeframe

- Proposals should be received electronically by the DPC, by 12.00 BST, on the 20th May 2008.
- The Executive Director will advise successful and unsuccessful applicants within 3 weeks of the deadline. It may be necessary to request a presentation if more than one applicant is considered potentially suitable on the basis of their tender. If this is the case then tenderers will be invited to a meeting on the 6th June TBC.
- The study is expected to begin no later than 13th June 2008 and be completed within a ten week period. The draft final report to be submitted to the Executive Director no later than 11th August.
- The final report will be presented to the DPC Board at the end of the project period, date TBC.

Methodology

All applicants must submit a proposal, including brief biographies for relevant staff who will be involved in the project. The bid should clearly indicate:

- The intended methodology.
- Proposed timeframe and milestones.
- The likely cost and the basis on which this was calculated.
- Relevant experience and evidence of successful completion and involvement in similar studies.
- Bids should be no longer than 5 sides of A4 (excluding any brief biographies and examples of previous work, if included) and should be submitted electronically to the DPC Executive Director, Frances Boyle, (fb@dpconline.org), by 20th May 2008.

The DPC has a budget ceiling of £12,000 for this work, inclusive of all expenses and VAT, if applicable.

Consultants' Specification

The successful consultant(s) will need to demonstrate that they have the following experience and knowledge:

- An understanding of technical, policy, and strategic issues in digital preservation.
- Previous demonstrable experience of leading and managing successful research projects.
- Excellent organisational, problem solving and analytical skills.
- Strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to network with colleagues within the digital preservation community.
- Excellent communication skills both written and oral, particularly experience of liaising with a range of stakeholders.
- Excellent time management skills and demonstrable success in meeting project deadlines.

Payment

Payment for the work would be on submission of an invoice at the end of the project.

Terms and Conditions

Intellectual property rights in the completed study will remain with the Digital Preservation Coalition.

Contact

To discuss the tender or for further information, please contact the DPC Executive Director, Frances Boyle.
Email: fb@dpconline.org or telephone 01904 435320.

Annex – The Mind the Gap Report Final Recommendations.

1. Given the results of the survey, there will be an ongoing need for awareness raising activity in the foreseeable future.
2. 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.
3. Organisations should perform regular information audits to measure (and continue to measure) their digital preservation needs, and to ensure that these are being met.
4. 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.
5. Funding bodies should support research into the long-term value of digital information and models of how that value may change with time.
6. Organisations should consider the long-term value of digital material when putting together plans and budgets.
7. 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.
8. This important work needs to be closely monitored and mechanisms for certification need to be developed by the digital preservation community.
9. 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. The overall aim should be to set up a network of trusted repositories.
10. Organisations should set aside a budget for training staff.
11. Options for subsidising intensive programmes such as DPTP should also be explored in order to help smaller organisations with a limited training budget.
12. Higher education courses for conservators, archivists and librarians should include digital preservation training.
13. Promote wider awareness and use of relevant resources available from the DPC, the DCC and others.
14. In formulating policies, the UK Government should take into account their impact on the digital information lifecycle. In particular, the sooner digital preservation activities can be carried out, the more effective and economical they can be.
15. The UK Government should ensure that programmes and policies are co-ordinated nationally and on a wider scale (especially within the EU).
16. The UK Government needs to work with the digital preservation community and the legal profession to establish clearer guidelines for ensuring that digital information is legally admissible.
17. The UK Government needs to ensure that an appropriate balance is struck between the legitimate rights of information creators and the desires of others to gain enhanced benefits from that information.
18. Regulatory bodies need to work within their sectors and the digital preservation community to map out a framework, which will allow organisations to store information in an exploitable form while retaining the ability to satisfy regulatory concerns.
19. All organisations need to encourage an international ‘market’ for digital preservation tools by linking up with other projects around the world and engaging with software vendors. This would deliver economies of scale and reduce risk for individual institutions.
20. Organisations should consider the long-term preservation characteristics of the formats they use.
21. Organisations should work together and with software vendors to encourage the development of open file format standards.