

# DPC Web Archiving and Preservation Task Force: Terms of Reference

## 1. Introduction

The Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) is a not-for profit membership organisation whose primary objective is to raise awareness of the importance of the preservation of digital material and the attendant strategic, cultural and technological issues. Its vision is to **make our digital memory accessible tomorrow**.

In 2009 UKWAC's work was considered achieved, with the organisations involved now in a position to take web archiving forward according to their individual needs. A different forum for information-sharing, however, was needed. A major conference was held to discuss what might constitute an appropriate legacy of web based resources and how this might be achieved. It was therefore proposed that the DPC establish a task force through which members could share and address policy and related issues pertaining to the collection, preservation and access of web based materials. This document constitutes the terms of reference for the task force.

## 2. Vision

The DPC Web Archiving and Preservation Task Force will allow members to share best practice to support their local priorities. It will identify, examine and review current policy in web archiving and preservation. It will provide a mutually supportive environment for continued policy development for members and a mechanism through which non-members can engage with web archiving policy.

In this way the Task Force will help to ensure that our generation can carve an appropriate legacy from the complexity and volatility of the web.

## 3. Audiences

- *Decision-makers and developers within participating agencies.* By sharing information about current policy and analysing strengths and weaknesses of current provision, it will be possible for decision makers within participating agencies to improve their own provision of services. (Primary audience)
- *Web-archivists and developers outside the participating institutions.* By accessing the proceedings of the Task Force they will be better able to offer and develop tools and services which complement or meet the needs of participating institution.
- *Decision-makers and professionals in allied fields.* By articulating a clearer message on behalf of a representative group we will be able to engage in an informed debate about our shared digital legacy, its significance, use and management.

## 4. Terms of reference

It is recognised that the rapid adoption of new technologies, the relative novelty of the problem and number of stakeholders involved inhibit the development of complementary policies for long term access to the Web. Without such a policy framework there is a risk that limited resources are not targeted appropriately and that historically 'significant' websites are lost.

The Task Force will provide a forum in which members can share their experience, establish common goals and inform their own policy development. Members will present organisational responses to emerging strategic challenges. Through discussion and negotiation they will support collaborative effort towards improved management of web archives. Focussed, energetic and informed, the Task Force will not develop policy but will provide the framework in which members can refine and develop their own approaches to web archiving and preservation through shared experience and knowledge transfer.

The Task Force will not take responsibility for service provision, will not attempt to create national policy and will not undertake tools or standards development, except to lobby for these as necessary. Members will be asked to articulate their responses to a number of shared challenges to discuss how these responses have

emerged and their operational impact. In this way it will be possible to identify more clearly gaps in provision, technology and policy. Areas of strength and weakness at an institutional and national level can be spotted – deploying our shared resources more strategically and constructing a more effective case for additional resources as required. Any recommendations that the Task Force makes are intended to inform policies and strategies with institutions.

## 5. Operation of the meetings

Papers will be produced in advance including a short position paper from each partner. Each meeting will produce a draft statement and analysis of the state of the art - agreed by consensus of the members. Each participant will then be asked to issue a formal response to the shared statement – an updated position paper. All these papers will be published.

The DPC will provide a secretarial function for the meetings and arrange logistics. Notification will be given in good time and papers will be distributed at least three working days before the meeting. Meetings will be chaired by a DPC board member and report to DPC board meetings.

Given the nature of the topics it will be important that participants are appropriately selected and delegated from their institutions. It is appropriate to bring more than one representative to any meeting and for representatives to vary between meetings. Facilitators or commentators will also be invited as required.

## 6. Roadmap 2010-2012

The Task Force is not a standing committee and will not have a standing agenda. Each meeting of the Task Force will have a specific theme, agenda and participants as required. Once it has exhausted useful work the Task force will be wound up. It is expected to operate between 18 months to 24 months and be wound up in 2012.

A meeting in January 2010 established a topic roadmap for three meetings in 2010; in January 2011 a further meeting will review progress to date and (if required) establish a further roadmap for meetings in 2011. Consequently the roadmap for 2010 is as follows:

Meeting 1 (01/10, London)	Set up meeting to review and approve Terms of Reference
Meeting 2 (26 <sup>th</sup> May/ venue tbc)	Collecting policies for web archives
Meeting 3 (8 <sup>th</sup> Jul. / venue tbc)	Access (and take down) policies for web archives
Meeting 4 (12 <sup>th</sup> Oct. / venue tbc)	Quality Assurance and web archives
Meeting 5 (date, venue tbc)	Review, evaluation and update

The group agreed that user requirements and preservation should form part of the discussion at each of these meetings.

## 7. Outputs

The primary outputs from the group will be a set of documents in which each participating institution provides a description and analysis of its existing policy towards in response to a given topic. These will be distributed in draft form to participants and form the basis for a joint analysis which will explicitly identify strengths, weaknesses and gaps. Participants will be asked to give a short response to this analysis. All of these documents, along with a narrative account of meetings, will be published online

The chair of the task force will provide a short report to DPC Board meetings where it will have a standing agenda item.

## 8. Quality measures and evaluation

The ultimate goal of the task force – to support the creation of a coherent digital legacy by helping to shape policy cannot be measured directly. Proxy measures of success include

- Willingness of members to participate

- Quality and timeliness of documents produced
- Quality and focus of discussion
- Use of reports and papers outside of the Task Force
- Hits on appropriate web pages
- Interest from prospective members

The Task Force will evaluate its own success after 12 months and opt to wind up at this point or to continue for an additional period.

The Task Force will be evaluated as part of the DPC's three year evaluation (2009-2011) to be completed in 2011.

## 9. Values and constitution

The Task Force will be facilitated by the DPC as a working party of the DPC board. As a task force of the DPC, it will adopt the values and relevant parts of the constitution of the DPC. Consequently it will:

- Operate as a neutral body.
- Embrace a consultative, innovative and open approach.
- Engage in a collaborative manner with all stakeholders to comprehend and respond to their needs.
- Maintain sound stewardship of the Coalition's resources.
- Share best practice and knowledge transfer with our members to support their local priorities.
- Maintain vendor neutrality.
- Support developments of standards and generic approaches to digital preservation.

## 10. Membership

The Task Force will be open to all current members and associates of the DPC. From time to time and as the need arises, third party experts will be invited to contribute to and facilitate meetings. Should parties wish to join the Task Force that are not current members of the DPC then they should be directed to join the DPC as an associate or Board Member. The DPC Board will reserve the right to levy a subscription to non-members that wish to have a regular presence at the task force.

## 11. About this document

Version 1	Document initiated by WK and NG after consultation with UKWAC members and DPC Board	04/01/10	WK
Version 2	Distributed to task force members	07/01/10	WK
Version 3	Commentary and review by members	13/01/10	All
Version 4	<i>Updated, made operational and released</i>	23/02/10	WK

## 12. Appendix: Example scope

Early discussion of the terms of reference for the group was assisted by listing examples of topics which are within or outwith the scope of the Task Force. This has been superseded by the adoption of a roadmap for 2010, but is retained here for information.

The following were considered as examples of things that are within scope:

- gap analysis of web archiving and preservation services

- collecting, take down and access policies for web archives
- preservation planning for web archives
- interoperability of technical and organisational functions across partners
- awareness raising and agenda setting
- dissemination of good practice about web archiving
- knowledge exchange and training in web archiving and preservation
- joint dialogue with content creators and content managers regarding sustainability of web resources
- horizon scanning of web archiving and preservation challenges
- promotion of web archives

The following topics are examples of topics outwith the scope of the Task Force:

- service provision of web archiving
- collecting or negotiation for content
- standards development
- tools development
- national policy
- procedural or operational matters of any given web archive