

DPC 2003 Survey of Members

Background

The DPC commissioned a survey of its members as the first stage of a UK Needs Assessment exercise. Duncan Simpson undertook the survey, which received an excellent response rate. It was decided to offer DPC members the opportunity to comment on the preliminary results of the survey and to contribute to discussion on the next stage. Representatives of NOF and HLF were also invited to attend the workshop, which was held at the HEFCE offices on 4th November 2003. Prior to the Workshop, DPC members and other workshop participants were sent a copy of the preliminary results of the survey, and preliminary recommendations. The latter were grouped into three categories, those requiring action by DPC member; those relating to expanding the information already gathered; and those requiring a new initiative. A Powerpoint slide prepared by Duncan Simpson, outlined the proposed timeframe and deliverables. The following report summarises discussion of the recommendations.

Report on outcomes of the DPC Survey Workshop on 4th November 2003

Recommendations requiring action by DPC Members

Recommendation 1:

DPC members should ensure that their corporate, planning and strategic documents include clear reference to digital preservation and its importance, and that their public statements, on websites and elsewhere, are consistent with this.
[from question 1]

Workshop Outcome: Endorsed by workshop participants

Recommendation 2:

DPC members should note their membership of the DPC on their websites, displaying the DPC logo if possible. *[from question 1]*

Workshop Outcome: Endorsed by workshop participants and noted that DPC logos are available from the members page of the DPC website.

Recommendation 5:

DPC members should give more consideration to their selection policy for the preservation of digital material, and in particular whether they need a formal

policy statement, defining what their organisation selects for preservation and why. *[from question 4]*

Workshop Outcome: Endorsed in principle by workshop participants. It was suggested that the link between ingest, policy, and preservation needs to be made more explicit and that a reference to lifecycle management in the Handbook on Digital Preservation Management might be helpful.

Proposed revision of Recommendation 5:

DPC members should give more consideration to their selection policies for the preservation of digital materials and to ensuring that lifecycle management is made explicit in them, reinforcing the fact that long-term maintenance is most cost-effectively handled at ingest.

Action Required:

1. DPC members and workshop participants to provide comments on modified recommendation 5.
2. DPC members to follow up on recommendations, as appropriate.

Recommendations relating to enriching the data gathered from the survey
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[These recommendation can be achieved either within current allocations as part of phase 2 of the national assessment project, or with small additional DPC expenditure]

Recommendation 3:

That the DPC carry out follow-up work with members on the projects list, to ensure consistency (e.g. level of detail) and to fill gaps from members who did not complete the survey. This to be done by phone, e-mail, or meeting as appropriate. *[from question 2]*

Workshop Outcome: Endorsed in principle, noted that only selected members will be approached and the work needs to proceed quickly.

Recommendation 4:

That the DPC carry out follow-up work to define more clearly what volumes of digital material for long-term preservation are likely to accrue over the next 5-10 years. This to be done initially by use of external existing sources, looking more widely than DPC members. Then as necessary by working with members by phone, e-mail, or meeting as appropriate. *[from question 3]*

Workshop Outcome: Endorsed in principle, as for recommendation 3. In addition to data volumes, further information on the range and number of formats is also important.

Recommendation 6:

That the DPC carry out follow-up work with members to clarify the scale, likely cost and timing pressures of their digital preservation activity, to see if these can be more clearly defined, and if not, why not. This to be done by phone, e-mail, or meeting as appropriate. *[from questions 5 and 6]*

Workshop Outcome: Endorsed in principle, as for recommendations 3 and 4, and noted that this is likely to vary between sectors.

Recommendation 13:

That the national assessment of need project develops and includes in its outcomes a clear statement of the benefits digital preservation can bring. *[From question 7.4]*

Workshop Outcome: Endorsed in principle.

Actions:

1. DPC members and invited workshop participants are invited to support the recommendations.
2. Prepare and implement an action plan for follow-up activities resulting from the recommendations— MJ/DS

Recommendations suggesting new initiatives mostly requiring additional funding

Recommendation 7:

The DPC should develop an ITT for a consultancy to develop a training package and workshop, possibly using the Cornell NEH funded online tutorial and workshop as a model. *[from question 5]*

[Members to discuss/advise on potential grant/sponsorship]

Discussion: There are two requirements. An immediate need is for intensive staff development able to meet a variety of demands, ranging from staff development, to providing a source of guidance for funding bodies to recommend to fund recipients. The model of a Cornell/educational partnership was accepted as being a useful means of achieving this need. A longer term need faced by all organizations is the need to recruit staff who have knowledge and, preferably, some practical experience of digital preservation. The latter will require a longer term strategy, most likely of encouraging universities and/or professional

development providers, to include digital preservation/digital asset management modules or whole courses/qualifications.

Potential funding sources for a Cornell/educational partnership: The following were canvassed as possible sources:

HLF (as part of project management); Resource (possibly as part of their Workforce Development Strategy); JISC; DCC (noting that the immediate priority of the DCC, when established, would be on training to use the tools); Research Libraries Network; DTI; private sector.

Action: DPC to contact the Cornell people to discuss partnership, or use of their material as a starting point. Depending on the outcome of this initial approach, a proposal to be developed for further work in 2004 on the first of the two requirements. DPC to retain the second for future discussion, or for a future DPC event which could update on progress and explore further work.

Recommendation 8:

That the DPC considers establishing a log of examples of loss of digital material in order to build up a clearer picture of vulnerability and to assist in strengthening the case for action. *[from question 6]*

[Potential consultancy exercise, with the cooperation of members; costs modest]

Discussion: As part of the work to support legal deposit legislation, the British Library identified and put together a log of electronic sources of information which had been lost or seemed to be in danger of being lost. However the meeting agreed that it was important to present positive examples as well, so good examples of proper management of digital assets, including provision for their long-term preservation, would be better than negative examples solely of loss. Also, the development of scenarios of how data might be lost and its potential implications, would be useful. These could also be supplemented by examples (e.g. from data services such as ULCC) of digital resources which have been difficult/impossible to cost-effectively manage long-term. The recent OECD report on Data Sharing was also suggested as a good model.

Action: DPC members will be invited to contribute ideas for scenarios, specific examples of data loss, and case studies illustrating the implications of inadequate management early in the lifecycle of a resource. A budget should be set aside from DPC reserves for a small consultancy to collate and present them.

Recommendation 9:

That the national assessment of need project include a strategic overview, a review of existing and emerging infrastructure developments (e.g. the Digital Curation Centre) and also an evaluation of gaps needing to be filled. *[From question 7.1]*

[Would require consultancy funded by grant-aid; members to discuss/advise on potential sources]

Discussion: This was part of scaling up the needs assessment as a whole. It was suggested that, for example, Resource might find it useful to have a document which draws attention to current activities and also where the gaps are. This would be a modest consultancy exercise but would need to be fully supported by DPC members.

Action: Ensure that the final stage of the assessment exercise includes an overview of what infrastructure already exists as well as an assessment of gaps.

Recommendation 10:

That a tightly focused and targeted advocacy campaign, accompanied by appropriate publicity material, be undertaken to draw the attention of key stakeholders to the emerging results of the assessment exercise. *[From question 7.1]*

[This is unlikely to be something for which grant aid could be found; DPC resources potentially include a PR allocation, though some additional allocation of funding may be needed]

Discussion: This needs to be a partnership between DPC members and the PR consultant. The latter can provide advice on how to achieve the messages we want to present, but the DPC needs to decide what the key messages are that it wishes to present, and to whom. A proposed launch at the House of Commons was agreed as an effective mechanism for publicising the results of the assessment, noting that organization of this will require a long lead time.

Action: In the short-term, the DPC Co-ordinator will discuss objectives and strategies for the launch of the report of the assessment with the PR consultant.

Recommendation 11:

That further work, including a sample survey of small, regional and local organisations be undertaken to assist in identifying what digital material they currently hold and what their needs are. *[From question 7.2]*

[Grant aid will be required; members to discuss/advise on sources]

Discussion: There was acceptance of the need to support smaller organisations and a range of mechanisms might be employed to achieve this. The regional agencies would be a useful starting point. The experience of others, in particular the NPO, would be useful in establishing a robust statistical methodology.

Sample surveys of funded digitisation projects to estimate longer term requirements for resources developed as part of this funding would need to be

done, as well as sample surveys of what digital materials which are already endangered are currently held by smaller organisations.

Potential Funders: This seemed to be the activity which most logically relates to the interests of Resource, HLF, and NOF.

Action: In the first instance, a meeting should be arranged with Resource, to discuss the most efficient and effective means of achieving appropriate funding to implement this recommendation.

Recommendation 12:

That the advocacy campaign (recommendation 10) includes targeting of relevant parts of the commercial sector, with a view to engaging them more closely in further work. *[From question 7.3]*

Discussion: This recommendation relates to an attempt to build bridges between the DPC and the commercial sector, highlighting that the assessment plan will need to take it further. The *Invest to Save* report provided a good overview of this area. The regional agencies might also be helpful here, as well as further DPC Board discussion.

Action: Undertake further discussion at DPC Board.

DPC Survey Workshop Participants

Judy Aitken (HLF)
Neil Beagrie (JISC)
Lynne Brindley (BL and DPC Chair)
Reg Carr (JISC and DPC Vice-Chair)
Lorcan Dempsey (OCLC)
Tim Folkes (CCLRC)
Maggie Jones (DPC)
Robert Kiley (Wellcome)
Denise McDonald (NOF)
Jo Marsh (ULCC)
Vanessa Marshall (NPO)
Laura Mitchell (NAS)
Peter Morgan (Cambridge)
Martin Nail (Resource)
Richard Ovenden (CURL)
Mared Owen (NLW)
David Ryan (TNA)
Duncan Simpson (DPC)
Gerry Slater (PRONI)
John Tuck (BL)
Richard Wright (BBC)