

Direct Advocacy and Public Policy Consultations: DPC Policy

1. Introduction

Since January 2009, the DPC has contributed to a number of consultations to ensure that matters pertinent to digital preservation are properly embedded within public policy. This 'direct advocacy' is characteristically expressed as written submissions to specific questions from policy makers. It is recognised that an 'ad hoc' process is not sufficient where there may be disagreements.

This document provides a series of principles to frame our involvement in public policy and in public policy consultations. It outlines a set of practical assumptions for approving these contributions. This policy document was **discussed and adopted** by the DPC Board in July 2010.

2. 'Agenda setting'

The Strategic Plan identifies the Coalition as an 'agenda setting body within the digital preservation world'. Between the adoption of this new strategic plan in January 2009 and the adoption of this document, the Coalition provided commentary to seven policy consultations and contributed to a number of high-level meetings with policy makers in relevant areas. In most cases, involvement was prompted by Board members and, although it is hard to measure impact, the Coalition's involvement has clearly been useful. The DPC provides an independent, meticulous and authoritative analysis of micro-policy and it alerts members to emerging changes in the regulatory environment. Both of these help to deliver the key strategic goal of ensuring that our digital memory is accessible tomorrow and it continues and completes the Coalition's early awareness raising work.

Digital preservation is governed by devolved, centralised and supra-national administrations and is almost always a small element of a wider debate. Consequently, the horizon scanning required to deliver this element of our strategic plan is very large and the resources to undertake it are small. Consequently, although this work is undertaken diligently and is effective, it will tend to be responsive rather than proactive and it will tend to be partial rather than comprehensive. It competes for time and resource with other priority actions.

3. General Principles: the Values of the Coalition

The following values are stated explicitly in the strategic plan and as such they should govern policy statements from the Coalition. The DPC 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.

4. Assumptions underpinning our responses

The following assumptions will govern our participation public policy debate. The DPC will

- Respond to all public policy consultation identified by a member of the board or by the directorate, provided they are identified more than three weeks before the final submission date and provided that the relationship to the work of the coalition is clear.
- Give board directors at least one week to comment in preparation of a submission, and allowing directors to declare a conflict of interest or other grounds for recusal.
- Give board directors at least one week to comment on a draft submission.
- Give all members at least one week to preview a submission from DPC.
- Consult associates and other partners as required to support the submission.
- Publish our responses on the DPC website.

In addition,

- Each full member will have the right to participate in drafting and commenting upon submissions.
- Responses will not embarrass or contradict the purposes of members.

- When proposing or commenting on text, directors act primarily as agents of the Coalition.
- Where differences of opinion cannot be resolved the chair (or vice chair) shall be invited to moderate discussions and will resolve the issue on behalf of the whole membership.
- Differences of opinion may be signalled within our formal responses to consultations, making clear which elements the Coalition are agreed on.
- Conflicts of interest and recusals will be noted as required.
- Where appropriate, directors will be encouraged to submit their own responses. The Executive Director will give clear guidance in good time to anyone that wants to pursue this course of action.
- Contributions will be submitted to the relevant authority in good time by the Executive Director on behalf of the Coalition.

5. About this document

Version 1	Document initiated	01/06/2010	WK
Version 2	Proof and approval	22/02/2010	CJ and RO
Version 3	Distributed to board	26/02/2010	WK
Version 4	Discussed, amended, adopted	01/07/2010	Board
Version 5	Operational	01/07/2010	WK