

Digital Preservation Award 2010: shortlist announced

21st September 2010

The Institute for Conservation (Icon) and the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) are delighted to announce the shortlist for the Digital Preservation Award 2010.

‘Digital data is fragile so we have to think hard about what sort of digital legacy we want to leave behind,’ explained William Kilbride of the DPC. ‘Our generation has invested as never before in digital resources and we’ve done so because of the opportunity they bring. They have grown in volume, complexity and importance to the point that our children are baffled by the inefficiencies of the analogue age. Pervasive, fluid and fragile: digital data is a defining feature of our age. But it will take a co-ordinated effort of research and training to ensure that our digital memory is available tomorrow.’

‘That’s why we sponsor the Digital Preservation Award. It celebrates the excellence and innovation that will help to ensure our digital memory is available tomorrow. It is one of five awards which are collectively called the Conservation Awards, co-ordinated by a working party of the Institute for Conservation (ICON) and sponsored by us.’

‘This is the fourth time we’ve invited nominations for the award’ explained Kevin Ashley, chair of the judging panel. ‘We were greatly impressed by all the nominations this year and had a very hard job cutting the long list down to five. A few years ago we used to worry that we’d face a ‘digital dark age’ as current formats and technology became obsolete. The quality and range of this year’s nominations underlines the growing confidence with which we can face the future and it also puts the spotlight on some very important work which is not celebrated as much as it should be’

This year’s nominations include a US-designed solution and associated tools to browse seamlessly the current and archived web, a major programme of work to ensure continuity of government documents in the UK, a tool to help plan for digital preservation, a US research project to help preserve computer games and an international study into the economics of the

sustainable digital future.

The Shortlist

Short-listed for the Digital Preservation Award (in no particular order) are:

- The MEMENTO Project: Time Travel for the Web, from Old Dominion University and the Los Alamos National Lab in the United States

The Memento project, sponsored by the Library of Congress, has proposed, demonstrated, and promoted internationally an approach to integrate the current and past Web in a manner that is fully aligned with the Architecture of the World Wide Web. Memento's approach is based on a straightforward extension of the very widely used 'HTTP' tool that results in a way to navigate seamlessly current versions of web resources as well as prior versions which might be held by Web Archives and or embedded within wikis. Just enter a web address in your browser, set the time slider to a desired date and see the web as it used to be.

- Web Continuity: ensuring access to online government information, from The National Archives UK

The arrival of a new government – with new ambitions and new structures – could have been very disruptive for citizens trying to navigate the government's extensive web estate, had it not been for the Web Continuity project. The Web Continuity is a solution to broken links on government websites which helps provide access to millions of pages of archived government information and data. So, when a new government comes in with new policies and plans, the links to old pages are not lost. The redirection software enables users who try to a web page that is no longer live to be taken automatically to where the information is held in The UK Government Web Archive. The web archive, dating back to 1997, contains regular snapshots of government websites which are preserved for posterity.

- PLATO 3: Preservation Planning made simple from Vienna University of Technology and the PLANETS Project

Experience shows that there is not a single route to preservation: that different solutions have strengths and weaknesses depending on scenarios and institutions. Preservation planning is the process of evaluating potential solutions and specifying a preservation plan for a given set of objects. It is at the heart much digital preservation work but up till recently has been a manual, sometimes ad-hoc process. The planning tool Plato is a Web-based decision support tool that provides a planning process for evaluating actions and specifying plans. It accesses a range of preservation services and integrates a controlled environment for experimentation and measurement. In this way it enables trustworthy, evidence-based preservation planning, with actionable plans that meet the specific needs of an institution, set of objects, and different types of usage. Plato is one of the tools developed by the PLANETS project, now overseen by a new body called the Open PLANETS Foundation.

- The Blue Ribbon Task Force on Sustainable Digital Preservation and Access

The Blue Ribbon Task Force on Sustainable Digital Preservation and Access was an international, multi-disciplinary group convened to examine the challenge of economically sustainable digital preservation. Ensuring that digital preservation activities are provisioned with sufficient resources to achieve their long-term goals is an essential aspect of securing permanent access to society's scholarly and cultural record. The Task Force produced two substantial reports that provide a comprehensive examination of the economics of digital preservation, ranging from basic principles like the definition of economic sustainability in a digital preservation context, to practical recommendations for shaping effective economic sustainability strategies for digital preservation.

- Preserving Virtual Worlds, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign with Rochester Institute of Technology, University of Maryland, Stanford University and Linden Lab in the United States

Virtual worlds, video games, digital fiction, and other interactive media represent important aspects of the design and creativity of the late 20th and early 21st century's cultural heritage. They are highly complex so are at high risk of loss because the technologies on which they are based rapidly become obsolete. Indeed the gaming industry is hooked on new releases: it's how the market is structured and the result is a systematic obsolescence of previous releases. The Preserving Virtual Worlds project has explored methods for preserving representative case sets for this important class of digital materials as part of the Library of Congress's National Digital Infrastructure and Preservation Program. Major activities have included developing basic standards for description and representation and conducting a series of archiving case studies for early video games, electronic literature and Second Life, an interactive multiplayer virtual world.

All the short-listed projects will give a presentation to the Digital Preservation Awards judges on 21st October. The winners of the Conservation Awards 2010 will be announced at the Awards Ceremony at the Royal Institution on 1st December 2010.

The Judges

- Kevin Ashley, Director, Digital Curation Centre, Edinburgh University
- Adrian Brown, Assistant Clerk of the Records, Parliamentary Archives
- William Kilbride, Executive Director, Digital Preservation Coalition
- Pip Laurenson, Head of Time-based Media Conservation, Tate, UK
- Zoe Lock, Lead Technologist for ICT, the Technology Strategy Board, UK
- Eefke Smit, Director, Standards and Technology, International STM Publishers Association, The Netherlands
- Dave Thompson, Digital Curator, The Wellcome Library
- Matthew Woollard, Director Designate, the UK Data Archive
- Richard Wright, Senior Research Engineer, BBC

The Prize

The Digital Preservation Award consists of 4 elements: a cash prize (£2500); a bespoke glass trophy; a miniature of the trophy to be retained by the winner; a certificate which is retained by the winner.

Timetable and Judging

- Shortlist announced during IPRES 2010 in Vienna, Austria
- September 2010: first meeting of judges, shortlisted entries invited to presentation
- 1st October 2010: online voting for shortlisted candidates opens
- Mid October 2010: online voting closes
- Mid October: second judges meeting with presentations from shortlisted candidates, deliberation and decision
- 1st December 2010: awards ceremony in London (after DPC AGM / Board meeting)

The Winner

The winner will be announced at a prestigious presentation ceremony to be held at a The Royal Institution, London on the 1st December 2010. The winner of the Digital Preservation Award 2010 will receive a cheque of £2,500; a trophy which will remain the property of the DPC; a miniature trophy which can be retained; and a certificate. The winner will be invited to participate in press and advocacy activities to promote their work.

Previous DP Award Winners

- 2007 - The National Archives for the PRONOM and DROID projects
- 2005 - PREMIS - the Preservation Metadata: Implementation Strategies Working Group
- 2004 - The National Archives, The Digital Archive project.

For more information on the awards see:

<http://www.dpconline.org/advocacy/awards>

or

<http://www.conservationawards.org.uk/>

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Notes to Editors:

For further information, please contact:
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The Digital Preservation Coalition sponsors the Digital Preservation Award under the banner of the Conservation Awards, which are supported by Sir Paul McCartney and managed in partnership by key organisations in conservation, restoration and preservation management: Icon (The Institute of Conservation), DPC (Digital Preservation Coalition) and the Anna Plowden Trust.

The Digital Preservation Coalition was established in 2001 to foster joint action to address the urgent challenges of securing the preservation of digital resources in the UK and to work with others internationally to secure our global digital memory and knowledge base. For further information see the website at www.dpconline.org