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## Findings from our Digital Continuity survey

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# Introduction

- What is the Digital Continuity project?
- Our survey objectives
- What we found
- What next?



Can I access data from  
the last outbreak of  
foot and mouth?

digital information **matters**



# What is the Digital Continuity project?

- Delivering a shared service that enables central government to make sure essential digital information remains readable and useable over time.
- A combination of guidance, standards, tools and services – flexible and value for money.
- Assess risk; take appropriate action.
- Aim to have service set up by end 2010; fully operational 2011.
- Scope for wider rollout to the public sector and local government.





## **Our survey objectives: what we asked**

1. Are you doing anything to address digital obsolescence?  
Please list any projects or initiatives and any other actions you are taking.
2. What supplier/partners are you working alongside to solve this issue?





## What we found: high level figures

- 57 responses, including 14 archival organisations, 8 local government and 5 academic institutions
- 22 based outside the UK
- 26 are doing something to address digital obsolescence
- 21 aren't
- 7 are actively involved in relevant research
- 18 said they had a produce or policy to address digital obsolescence – 7 convert to TIFF, 8 convert to PDF/PDFa
- DJVU, PCD, JPG, WAV, BWF, MPEG, HTML, XML, ODF, PNG and RTF also used
- 20 wanted to be kept informed of our work in this area



## Key issues raised

- Need a long-term preservation reference model
- Need a standards-based system, especially for CAD documents and GIS
- Storing Excel, Visio, Access databases, Auto Cad drawings, proprietary software products, slides and videos
- High cost of digital archive solutions
- Need a system that knows when to convert file formats
- Need a system that knows when to make new copies of discs
- Capturing records created on portable media
- Whether long-term preservation needs to be digital



## Projects/research mentioned

- The MEMORIES project by MEMNON
- futureARCH
- The National Archives of Scotland's Digital Data Archive
- PROTAGE
- Open source normalising software developed by the National Archives of Australia, Xena, along with their workflow tool, DPR
- A 'future-proof' website for sharing information and tips about preservation





## **Approaches of those who are ‘doing something’**

- Many retain source files in original format, to ensure no data is lost
- Many regularly review and migrate files to new formats and data structures if the formats look as though they’re becoming obsolescent
- Migrating to, or even starting with, free, open source formats where possible (ISO 26300 for ODF, ISO 19005-1 for PDF/A, fonts that are freely available)
- Limiting formats available to an organisation, and/or establishing agreements with other departments to do this
- Don’t put all your eggs in one basket – avoid standardisation to one concept of digital storage
- Store on office server, gold layer cds, 16mm or 35mm silver halide microfilm



## Other interesting comments

- “Every 3 years we employ a consultant to review our archiving procedures. Media is migrated to new technology if the consultant’s report indicates that this is appropriate.”
- “Kodak’s Infoguard gold dye cds appear to be standing up quite well to ageing. I hope my successors will sue if the ‘100 year guarantee’ proves ill-founded!”



## Next steps

- We will use the information from our survey to inform the appropriate TNA department
- Engage with projects in our wider stakeholder engagement
- DCP setting guidance and standards for wider community to use.
- Thank you to all who took part





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