

What's new ...

Digital Preservation Coalition | Digital Curation Centre Issue 23, 1st March 2010

In this issue:

- **What's on and What's New**
- **Editorial:** We are the people – but who are we exactly? (William Kilbride, DPC)
- **Who's who:** sixty second interview with Lorena Zambrano, UK Data Archive
- **One World:** Adam Farquhar, British Library

What's on:

Independent Media Arts Preservation (IMAP): Digital Preservation for Video

San Francisco, 7 June 2010

<http://www.imappreserve.org>

Workshop topics include: basic digital file creation, preservation and access file formats and codecs, software, storage and trusted digital repositories, workflows for digitization, and technical and preservation metadata. In addition, participants will examine case studies of small and large-scale digitization projects in order to understand real-world applications of principles introduced in the workshop.

DL.org Summer School on "Digital Libraries & Digital Repositories: Interoperability Perspectives"

Pisa, Italy, 6-10 June 2010

<http://www.dlorg.eu/index.php/summer-school>

The EU-funded DL.org project is delivering the DL.org Summer School on "Digital Libraries & Digital Repositories: Interoperability Perspectives" from the 6th to the 10th of June 2010 in Tirrenia (Pisa), Italy. Participation in the DL.org Summer School will assist attendees in understanding how to address interoperability challenges, approaches and techniques within the context of digital libraries and digital repositories.

Digital Curation 101 Lite: How to Manage Research Data

Oxford, 16 June 2010

<http://www.dcc.ac.uk/training/digital-curation-101/digital-curation-101-lite-oxford>

Research Councils and funding bodies are increasingly requiring evidence of adequate and appropriate provisions for data management and curation in new grant funding applications. This one-day workshop delivered jointly by the Digital Curation Centre and the UK Data Archive is aimed at researchers and those who support researchers and want to learn more about how to develop sound data management and curation plans. The workshop is being run in cooperation with the Sudamih Project at the University of Oxford and will provide an introduction to digital curation, the range of activities and roles that should be considered when planning and implementing new projects, and an overview of tools that can assist with curation activities.

ULCC runs Web Archiving workshop

London, 28 June 2010

<http://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?hl=en&formkey=dFFQdjAyR3BaUGk0QmNuNy1ZTG84cWc6MA>

This half-day course on website archiving has developed out of the Digital Preservation Training Programme, delivered by ULCC since 2006. Website archiving is one very specialist strand of digital preservation that we thought had a place in the wider DPTP Course, which concentrates on explaining the Open Archival Information System model and aims to give practical advice and foster critical thinking in digital preservation. There has been a short module about web-archiving in DPTP for some time, and whilst not of interest to all DPTP students a majority found it a very popular module of the DPTP.

JANET Research Requirements Workshop

Chicheley, 23-24 June 2010

<http://www.ja.net/services/events/2010/ResearchRequirements/details.html>

JANET(UK) wishes to bring together a representative cross-section of the UK research community at a workshop to discuss research-driven requirements for the JANET network with a forward-look over the next decade. The workshop will be held for invited participants, with an upper limit of around 70 delegates, and JANET(UK) is making an open call for people to request invitations to attend.

Bloomsbury Conference on e-Publishing: Valued Resources: Roles and Responsibilities of Digital Curators and Publishers

London, 24-25 June 2010

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/infostudies/e-publishing>

This fourth conference in a highly successful series, this year co-sponsored by the UCL Department of Information Studies and the US Institute of Museum and Library Services, is centred on datasets and databases, on how scholars create and use them, on how librarians through repositories aim to organise, maintain and preserve the content, and how publishers are beginning to want to link their publications to these resources and also bring their own skills to bear on the processes involved. A central concept is digital curation, a concept that provides a comprehensive view of the creation and management of digital data.

UKeiG/BDA Knowledge Management meeting: Tipping the scales - tackling information obesity to ensure productive and sustainable information resources

London, 29 June 2010

www.ukeig.org.uk

The consequences of information obesity may be severe if left unchecked; it will lead to a decline in our ability to manage knowledge, both in our communities and our workplaces. As a teaching strategy, information literacy (IL) can partly help to combat the condition. However, as traditionally defined, IL does not address the ways in which the structure of organisations and our own innate cognitive biases prevent us acting as independent and self-aware evaluators of the information we find. This course will help participants understand these biases and how, through work at the community level, they may be overcome, in order that we start using information to sustain ourselves and our communities, and not just consume it unthinkingly.

Managing Data in Difficult Times: policies, strategies, technologies and infrastructure to manage research and teaching data in a fast changing technological and economic environment

Edinburgh, 1-2 July 2010

<http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/events/jisc-cni-2010>

JISC and the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) are proud to announce the 8th International Meeting that will be held at the Barcelo Carlton Hotel, Edinburgh. The meeting will bring together experts from the United States, Europe and the United Kingdom. Parallel sessions will explore and contrast major developments that are happening on both sides of the Atlantic.

TEI @ Oxford Summer School 2010

Oxford, 12-14 July 2010

<http://tei.oucs.ox.ac.uk/Oxford/2010-07-oxford/>

The TEI @ Oxford Summer School is a three day course introducing the recommendations of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) for encoding of digital text. It combines in-depth coverage of the latest version of the TEI Recommendations for the encoding of digital text with practical workshops on related technologies. It includes an introduction to mark-up, explanations of the TEI Guidelines, and approaches to publishing TEI texts. Practical exercises expose you hands-on experience of a wide range of TEI customisation, editing, and publication.

DPC briefing day on Preserving Computer Aided Design

London, 17th July (details to follow)

1st Karlsruhe Summer School on Service Research

Karlsruhe, Germany, 18-22 July 2010

<http://www.service-summer.org>

Through lectures, tutorials and social events, the Summer School will provide a forum for participants to discuss and learn about Service Research. Participants can benefit from the expertise of the lecturers and share experience with fellow attendees. Furthermore, the Summer School will foster interdisciplinary research and collaboration opportunities among international students and researchers interested in the disparate fields within Service Research.

DPC / British Library Preservation Advisory Centre joint workshop

London, 27th July

Retrieved 1 June 2010 from: <http://www.bl.uk/blpac/digital.html>

7th International Conference on Preservation of Digital Objects (IPRES 2010)

Vienna, Austria, 19-24 September 2010

<http://www.ifs.tuwien.ac.at/dp/ipres2010>

The Austrian National Library and the Vienna University of Technology are pleased to host the International Conference on Preservation of Digital Objects (iPRES2010) in Vienna in September 2010. iPRES2010 will be the seventh in the series of annual international conferences that bring together researchers and practitioners from around the world to explore the latest trends, innovations, and practices in preserving our digital heritage.

What's New:

Version one of the Digital Curation and Preservation Bibliography is now available from Digital Scholarship

Retrieved 1 June 2010 from: <http://digital-scholarship.org/dcpb/dcpb.htm>

This bibliography presents over 360 selected English-language articles, books, and technical reports that are useful in understanding digital curation and preservation. Most sources have been published between 2000 and the present; however, a limited number of key sources published prior to 2000 are also included. Where possible, links are provided to sources that are freely available on the Internet, including e-prints for published articles in disciplinary archives and institutional repositories.

Digital Preservation and the JISC Digitisation Programme

Retrieved 1 June 2010 from: <http://www.dpconline.org/advocacy/digitisation-programme-digital-preservation-study.html>

Report now published with recommendations for funders and institutions.

ERIM data curation report released

Retrieved 1 June 2010 from: <http://opus.bath.ac.uk/18774>

The ERIM project has released a report entitled 'Review of the State of the Art of the Digital Curation of Research Data' which examines models and terminology already in use to describe digital curation, digital repositories, data lifecycles and data processing. It summarizes the guidance provided by research funders, data centres and curation specialists on curating digital data, alongside any requirements they impose. Finally, it provides a brief overview of standards and tools of particular relevance to the ERIM project, and draws lessons from the introduction of a new curation policy at the World Data Center for Climate.

Keeping Research Data Safe 2 - Final Report Available

Retrieved 1 June 2010 from:

<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/reports/2010/keepingresearchdatasafe2.aspx#downloads>

JISC is pleased to announce that the final report for Keeping Research Data Safe 2 (KRDS2) is now available from the JISC website. This KRDS2 study report presents the results of a survey of available cost information, validation and further development of the KRDS activity cost model, and a new taxonomy to help assess benefits alongside costs. The KRDS2 study was conducted by Charles Beagrie Ltd. and associates.

Case Notes in Digital Preservation: new for May

Retrieved 1 June 2010 from: <http://www.dpconline.org/advice/case-notes/index.html>

The Digital Preservation Coalition, with ULCC and Portico, with the support of the National Archives and sponsorship from JISC is pleased to announce the release of the second in our series of Digital Preservation Case Notes. In this case note we examine the relationship between policy and practice in digital preservation.

Digital Preservation Award 2010 opens for nominations

Deadline for submissions: 30th July

Retrieved 1 June 2010 from: <http://www.dpconline.org/advocacy/2010-digital-preservation-award.html>

DPC prospectus 2010-11

Retrieved 1 June 2010 from: <http://www.dpconline.org/vendor-reports/download-document/451-prospectus-2010-11.html>

Published in May with details of forthcoming events and introducing a new category of individual membership.

Open Planets Foundation appoints Executive Director

Retrieved 1 June 2010 from: <http://www.openplanetsfoundation.org>

Bram van der Werf has been appointed as Executive Director of the Open Planets Foundation. Bram will take up his appointment on 1st June 2010. As Executive Director of the newly established Open Planets Foundation, Bram will work closely with the Board of Directors and members to define and deliver the organisation's strategic plan.

A time of transition: RIN annual review 2009

Retrieved 1 June 2010 from: <http://www.rin.ac.uk/news/time-transition-rin-annual-review-2009>

The RIN's second annual review has just been published and covers our project work and other activities during 2009, and gives you a preview of our work for 2010. The RIN supports the development of effective information strategies and practices for the UK's research community. Through conducting research, providing guidance and promoting innovation, we aim to meet the needs of researchers, institutions, funders, information professionals and everyone who plays a role in the research information landscape.

May issue of LoC Digital Preservation Newsletter

Retrieved 1 June 2010 from: <http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/news/newsletter/201005.pdf>

The May 2010 issue of the Library of Congress Digital Preservation Newsletter is now available.

Digital Information Management Podcasts

Retrieved 1 June 2010 from: <http://digin.arizona.edu/presentations.html>

The University of Arizona Digital Information Management (DigIn) certificate program recently hosted a series of talks by members of the program's national advisory panel. The resulting podcasts offer an in-depth discussion of critical themes we explore regularly in the DigIn courses as we help information professionals meet the challenges we face in the digital environment today.

Call for submission of abstracts for AHM 2010 – deadline extended to June 7 2010

Retrieved 1 June 2010 from: <http://www.allhands.org.uk/abstracts>

The ninth UK e-Science All Hands Meeting (AHM 2010) will be held at the City Hall, Cardiff, from 13-16 September 2010. The meeting provides a forum in which information on e-Science projects from all disciplines can be communicated and where the capabilities being developed within projects can be demonstrated. Authors are invited to submit abstracts of unpublished, original work of not more than 3 pages in length using single spaced 10 point size on A4 pages - including 2 pages of text and (optionally) 1 page of figures and tables.

D-Lib Magazine

Retrieved 1 June 2010 from: <http://www.dlib.org>

The May/June issue of D-Lib Magazine is now available. This issue is a special issue on the theme of Digital Libraries in China. The issue contains four articles, the 'In Brief' column, excerpts from recent press releases, and news of upcoming conferences and other items of interest in 'Clips and Pointers'. This month, D-Lib

features the collection Hedda Morrison Photographs of China, 1933-1946, held by the Harvard-Yenching Library at Harvard University.

Ariadne

Retrieved 1 June 2010 from: <http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue63>

Ariadne is a Web magazine for information professionals in archives, libraries and museums in all sectors. Since its inception in January 1996 it has attempted to keep the busy practitioner abreast of current digital library initiatives as well as technological developments further afield. Issue 63 is now available.

Planets Releases Market Survey White Paper

Retrieved 1 June 2010 from: <http://www.planets-project.eu/publications>

A White Paper summarising the findings of the Planets (Preservation and Long-term Access through Networked Services) Market Survey is available to download from the Planets website. The survey of 200 organisations worldwide and conducted by Tessella aimed to understand the requirements for long-term management of digital content. Contributors spanned libraries, archives, government, providers of digital library systems, museums and commercial organisations.

MetaArchive TRAC checklist published

Retrieved 1 June 2010 from: <http://metaarchive.org/resources>

Since 2005, the MetaArchive Cooperative, a community-owned and community-operated initiative, has provided low-cost, high-impact distributed digital preservation services to help ensure the long-term accessibility of the digital assets of universities, libraries, museums, and other cultural heritage institutions. The Educopia Institute is pleased to announce the release of a preservation self audit conducted by the MetaArchive Cooperative between June and December 2009, using the Trusted Repositories Audit & Certification: Criteria & Checklist (TRAC). We are pleased to report that the MetaArchive Cooperative's distributed digital preservation network conforms to all 84 criteria specified by TRAC and operates according to the standards of a trustworthy digital repository.

Editorial:

Editorial: We are the people – but who are we exactly? (William Kilbride, DPC)

A colleague recently asked me for the collective noun for people-involved-in-digital-preservation. It wasn't a trick question (though I'm looking forward to publishing the best suggestions via the comments form at the bottom of the page). Like a lot of digital preservation there's not an answer yet. But there's bound to be a working party discussing it; a diagram will emerge from their deliberations; a concerted effort to explain the diagram will surely follow. That's how we work.

I don't know what to call us yet so here is a simile that fills the gap in the meantime. Working in digital preservation sometimes feels like playing the bass guitar in a rock band. The boom-and-bust adulation of the lead singer is almost entirely out of our reach (surely the crowd-pleasing work of the front men in search and presentation?). Bass guitarists don't generally get those elaborate prog-rock solos that leave the audience impressed but confused (perhaps that's techies in the 'linked data' domain but it'll be something else next month). No: bass guitarists set up the sound system when their mates are in the pub and they pack it away again while the others sign autographs. If they're not completely dependable in terms of rhythm and performance the effect is disastrous, but they still don't go on to successful solo careers when the band splits. Rock bands need bass guitarists but it's hard to name them. Playing the bass is not the glamorous end of rock stardom but it's mainly better than being the drummer (metadata specialist?).

Does it matter that we don't share the limelight with our rock star friends? Does it matter that this community doesn't have a name? It depends on how you view things.



Here is a saying that remains pretty constant: people-that-work-in-digital-preservation have diverse interests and backgrounds. Just click through the back issues of this bulletin and you'll see that profiles of a film researcher, an archaeologist, a programmer, a records manager and an ancient historian ('ancient' qualifies the noun 'history' not the noun 'historian'). Many of you will know – and some of you remember – that I was a not-terribly-good archaeologist in a past life. Much better former archaeologists include Neil Beagrie, Seamus Ross, Adrian Brown, Patricia Sleeman and Marcel Ras. Leaders in the community include librarians, archivists, records managers and good few academic researchers who got deflected into preservation because of the need to manage large and complex scientific data sets. We rely on experts who were once programmers, lawyers, publishers, conservators, museum curators, engineers, artists, musicians, auditors and economists. I've not had the time or audacity to corroborate this I am told that one major contributor to the discipline trained as a stage magician.

Such diversity means there's bound to be doubt as to what we're called. In 2006 the DPC's ['Mind the Gap' report](#) had a whole section calling for the 'new discipline of digital preservation' to be better supported. That sounds like a professional boundary being erected but a closer reading of the document reveals that it was in the context of developing expertise in existing professional practice: for example it argued that 'digital preservation training should form part of the professional training for conservators, archivists and librarians'. Do we need a profession?

The DPC has long toyed with the idea of establishing a professional or personal category to complement our organisational membership structure. In fact it's already written into the constitution. You can see arguments on both sides. From a strategic perspective, it would be advantageous for experts in digital preservation to access the DPC's programme of resources and events without having to depend on the whims of organisational budgets. That would help the DPC and it would help the new members too. It's clear that the UK is more likely to make progress in digital preservation if it can develop a committed, flexible and knowledgeable work force which has a common forum to share ideas, innovation and opportunities. It would suit employers if they could more easily distinguish snake oil sales men from genuine experts by reference to a professional body; and the emerging standards frameworks for certification assume appropriate staffing. But a professional body is an awful lot of work and there are already quite a few professional bodies in the many disciplines in which we work: the trend is for consolidation not proliferation. From the managerial perspective, a large personal membership could create a new and diverse income stream: but it's not clear whether there really is a market for such a membership and all the advice we've received suggests that any additional revenue would be instantly sunk into administering the new work load. Then there's the disruption to an existing and enduring membership structure.

'Working in digital preservation sometimes feels like playing the bass guitar in a rock band. The boom-and-bust adulation of the lead singer is almost entirely out of our reach.'

Our last planning day looked again at the issue and established a review group to look at a range of options associated with membership. It reported in March and last month we announced a new proposal for private members: personal membership is going to be trialled for a year from August 2010 so that individuals without an organisational affiliation can apply for grants, attend specialist events, obtain priority access to publications and collaborate on work streams which have previously been restricted to institutions. This new class of membership is intended for sole traders, recently-graduated students and consultants who wouldn't otherwise be able to participate formally in the coalition. In the first year, fees will be fixed at £120 and places limited on a first-come-first-served basis to a maximum of twenty five applicants. A review towards the end of the year will put personal membership on a longer term footing within the coalition.

This modest offer has already received quite a bit of interest. Without too much effort in promotion and without even having an application pack, we've already received an encouraging number of enquiries and we're now reasonably confident that we will be close to our target number of 20 personal members before the year is out. That will allow a more exhaustive analysis of the relationship between organisational and personal membership, based on evidence rather than instinct and comparison.

Perhaps by then we – the-people-that-work-in-digital-preservation, the bass guitarists of the digital age – will have a collective noun too.

Who's who:

In this section we invite a DPC member working on digital preservation to introduce themselves and their work. It will help us build connections between staff working on similar issues, will help promote the work of members, and will help identify priorities for the development of shared tools or services This time we hear from ...

Lorena Zambrano

UK Data Archive, University of Essex

Where do you work and what's your job title?

I work for ESDS Qualidata, a specialist service of the Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS). ESDS Qualidata provides access and support to a range of social science qualitative datasets preserved at the UK Data Archive. The service's focus is on encouraging the deposit of digital data from current ESRC funded research and older non-digital 'classic studies'.



ESDS Qualidata is located on the University of Essex Colchester campus, in the recently built Social Science Research Centre (SSRC) building, shared between UK Data Archive and ISER.

My job title is Data and Support Services Officer. My current role involves many tasks to do with collections preparation and digitisation; including the sorting of original paper collections; their classification (following conservation standards), digital conversion using the appropriate equipment and software for proper digital preservation and, when required, XML mark-up of digital files for web dissemination. Some additional duties include ESDS Qualidata website maintenance, liaison with ESRC new award holders, and assistance in the creation of audio and video promotional clips for the website.

Tell us a bit about your organisation

ESDS is a national data service funded by the ESRC. It provides access and support for the secondary use of data to the research, learning and teaching communities. The lead partner for ESDS is the UK Data Archive, an internationally-renowned centre of expertise in data acquisition, preservation and dissemination. The Archive is the curator of the largest collection of digital data for the social sciences and humanities in the UK. It is funded jointly by the University of Essex where it is located, the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) and JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee of the Higher Education Funding Councils). The Archive was founded in 1967, and now houses more than 6000 datasets of interest to researchers in all sectors and from many different disciplines.

How did you end up in digital preservation?

Although my background is in film studies, I have developed a career within the UK Data Archive, encompassing a range of skills and lines of work. Initially I started as a Scanning Assistant, subsequently I was appointed as an Acquisitions and Information Assistant, and most recently as a Data and Support Services Officer. Over this period I have developed skills and expertise in digitisation. Currently, I am becoming familiar with the processes of data management, in particular the management of qualitative datasets. From my experience working at the UK Data Archive I can certainly say that digital preservation is a key part of our day-to-day working life.

What projects are you working on at the moment?

ESDS Qualidata mainly concerns itself with archiving and supporting the use of recent digital research; however various papers from classic social science collections such as Thompson's 'The Edwardians' and Pahl's 'Household Work Strategies' have been preserved by us in the past so that we can create digital versions.

Currently we are completing the digitisation of a classic 1950s study by Peter Townsend called 'The Last Refuge'. This is a study of old peoples' homes and includes 216 extensive interview transcripts, reports and photographs.

Another major web based project is 'Pioneers of Qualitative Research'. This study consists of a series of interviews with pioneering social scientists of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. These interviews were conducted by the oral historian Professor Paul Thompson and cover each scholar's family, social background, intellectual development and key influences.

For this project we have created a website where the user can find interview transcripts and summaries in pdf format, thematic audio extracts from the interview, and bibliographical data about the pioneers.

The website for this study can be found at: <http://www.esds.ac.uk/qualidata/pioneers/>

Another current project aims to digitise and widen access to research data by Ray Pahl that examined aspects of life on the Isle of Sheppey in the 1970s and 1980s. The Sheppey collection of studies (see links below) examine the way in which households in a selected local labour market deployed their collective time, energies and resources to get work done. For this current project we are working in conjunction with the Living and Working on Sheppey project team who are reusing Ray Pahl's research data on Sheppey.

- [SN 4876 Social and Political Implications...](#)
- [SN 4867 School Leavers Study, 1978](#)
- [Living and Working on Sheppey project web site](#)

What are the challenges of digital preservation for data services such as yours?

We have to deal with challenges all the time. Some people think that digital archives are simply about collecting digital files, but we also have to digitise some of the material before we bring it into the digital repository. We receive data in many different digital and non-digital formats, including photographs, audio, videos, and transcription. Paper transcriptions alone can present major challenges for digitisation depending on the condition, quality and size of the paper. Variations in the type of printing – font, dot matrix printer, manual typewriter can also have major implications. We need to make decisions to ensure these materials are properly preserved as digital files, and that we do not lose important records due to digital obsolescence.

Most of our digitisation work is with textual data and the most critical consideration is whether files should be created, stored and disseminated as simple scanned images or whether they should be converted to fully searchable text.

Some criteria for what is appropriate for our digitisation include:

- the suitability of the material for digitisation (paper condition; colour; size; quality; type face; content; etc.)
- the size of the paper collection to be digitised
- the extent to which text should be made machine-readable (i.e. choose some level of OCR or simply scan as image files)

A very good example is our largest collection, 'The Edwardians' — SN 2000: Family Life and Work Experience Before 1918, 1870-1973. I had the opportunity to co-ordinate the digitisation work for this project. I managed the tracking of over 453 interviews throughout successive digital iterations from paper, to PDF, to readable PDF and finally RTF files. This major project involved the co-ordination of a local team as well as a team of subcontractors based in India.

Increasingly we are also now archiving audio data and this in itself is bringing a fresh number of challenges for deposit, processing and dissemination. However projects such as the Pioneers website and the slow growth of research collections containing audio data in the Archive catalogue show it is possible to archive text and sound material effectively.

What projects would you like to work on in the future?

In line with my own personal background and continued interest in film, I am keen in becoming involved in solving the problems and challenges of audio-visual digital materials, for example anonymisation, restoration, file formats, etc.

What sort of partnerships would you like to develop?

We are always interested in working with qualitative researchers and other qualitative archives. In particular we will continue to develop our links with the long-established Finnish National Archives, the emerging Australian Qualitative Data Archive (AQUA) and other new budding national archives. In addition, we continue to work successfully with The Sound Archive at the British Library.

We are also keen to develop new partnerships with research projects, such as those we currently have with the Living and Working on Sheppey project team and Timescapes, a qualitative longitudinal project based at The University of Leeds (<http://www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk/>).

If just one tool or standard could be brought into existence that would make your job easier, what would it be?

I would really like to have some efficient software to create error-free batch conversions. For example when we create OCR (optical character recognition) files, they need to be manually and laboriously proofed. Alas that is ever so time consuming, and to be honest, tedious.

If you could save for perpetuity just one digital file, what would it be?

Wow that is a difficult question, only one file ... What about mentioning an important collection? One of the aims of digital archives is preserving important complete datasets for further research, isn't it? My favourite is 'The Edwardians' — SN 2000: Family Life and Work Experience Before 1918, 1870-1973 — which was the first national oral history project done in the United Kingdom. It is a collection of life story interviews that examine the social life and social change of Britons born before 1918. The richness and the amount of information you can find in this collection are both amazing and fascinating. Personally this is one study I am very pleased to know is safely preserved at the UK Data Archive for every future generation to enjoy.

Finally, where can we contact you or find out about your work?

You can contact me or my team by email mlzam@essex.ac.uk / qualidata@esds.ac.uk and also have a look at our website for more information about our work <http://www.esds.ac.uk/qualidata/introduction.asp>

One World:

In this section we invite a partner or colleague to update us about major work on their home country that will interest readers. In this issue we hear from ...

Adam Farquhar

British Library and the Open PLANETS Foundation

Over the past four years, the EU co-funded Planets Project has made significant advances in digital preservation. It has produced tools, services, and advances in our understanding that are already helping organisations such as national libraries and archives to meet their digital preservation challenges and provide enduring access to their digital collections.

Organisations, such as the British Library, have begun to integrate the Planets tools into their own practice. For example, a video case study (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6NnFcSpAh8> or <http://bit.ly/bl8Jwd>)

discussed how the Planets Plato preservation planning approach has been applied to the British Library's newspaper collection.

Current repository systems and services provide bit-level preservation. The Planets tools and services augment repository services to enable content-level preservation. They have been designed to work with any modern repository system. The project has built adaptors for in-house systems, such as the British Library's Digital Library System, as well as open source repositories, such as the Fedora system, and commercial systems such as Tessella's Safety Deposit Box.

The Planets testbed helps the digital preservation community to learn more about how preservation tools actually behave. It provides an experimental workbench that enables researchers and practitioners to run tools on sample content, measure, and evaluate the results. The framework enables the results to be shared and ensures that they are repeatable.

The project has explored existing and developed new preservation tools. One important area has been to bring emulation capabilities more into the preservation main-stream. For example, Planets has demonstrated how we can use an emulator to implement a step in a more traditional migration workflow. This is done by placing a digital object into a virtual machine that runs an obsolete operating system and software application, executing the application to load the object, save it out in a more usable format, and then extract the resulting object. This is an important step to unlocking older content and is one of the strands being followed further in the EU co-funded KEEP project.



Planets has supported the further development of existing tools for characterisation identification, such as Droid and Pronom, but has also looked into alternative approaches. The Extensible Characterisation and Extraction Languages have provided a new framework for extracting and measuring the properties of digital objects.

The project has helped to advance our understanding of preservation policies and processes. This has included a careful analysis of existing policies, and recommendations for changes to the existing high-level description of preservation activities in the OAIS model.

The Planets project is now drawing to a close. Members of the Planets community and their organisations world-wide, however, have expressed a strong interest in ensuring that the results of the project can be sustained and further developed. In order to meet this need, we have established the Open Planets Foundation (OPF). OPF is an independent membership-supported not-for-profit foundation that brings together organisations that share a commitment to enduring long-term access to digital material. Its primary goal is to advance digital preservation and provide practical solutions to meet the needs of its members.

The high level of support for the new foundation and its international membership reflect widespread recognition of the importance of digital preservation and demand for practical solutions. OPF will provide stable hosted access to Planets services such as the on-line Testbed and preservation planning tools and enable members to build and test their digital preservation approaches before implementation. The Foundation starts with the legacy of the Planets project, but will move beyond this initial portfolio of software components, services, and techniques.



OPF will coordinate further development of the Planets services, tools, and technology by supporting and engaging the Planets Open Source community. It will also be able to provide technical support and training both for and through its members.

Bram van der Werf was appointed as Executive Director of the Foundation at its first members meeting in May 2010. Many in the DPC community will be familiar with Bram and his accomplishments as Technical Director for Europeana, where he worked to establish a strong production service.

Establishing, growing, and maintaining a vibrant membership community will be at the heart of OPF's success. If you would like to find out more about the community or become part of the OPF, please visit www.openplanetsfoundation.org. Recent information about the Planets Project, including the latest issue of the Planetarium Newsletter can be found at www.planets-project.eu.

Credits

What's New is a joint publication of DPC and DCC and is compiled by Kirsten Riley. Thanks to contributors. If you would like to feature in What's New or have a contribution to the news or events, then please contact us.

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