Developing Digital Asset Registers: A New Toolkit

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What is a Digital Asset Register?

“a tool for gathering information about digital content to support an understanding of what is held by an organization, and to facilitate efficient management of its preservation.”
The “Why” and “How” of Developing the Toolkit
The Origin Story Begins…

- Toolkit conceived of by The National Archives (UK) Archives Sector Development Team
- Have an archives sector leadership role
  - Evaluation of previous digital capacity building strategy “Plugged In, Powered Up”
  - New strategy “Our Digital Century”
- Issued an invitation to tender
  - DPC bid accepted
The DPC Perspective

• Compliments existing DPC models and toolkits
  o Rapid Assessment Model
  o Competency Framework and Audit Toolkit
  o Business Case Toolkit
  o Preservation Policy Toolkit
  o Procurement Toolkit
  o Documentation Guide

• Aligns with the Novice to Know-How: DP for Beginners training
Aims for the Toolkit

• Reflect good practice for the development of DARs
• Offer practical, implementable guidance
• Be relevant to a wide range of organizations
• Particularly consider those who:
  o Have limited resources available
  o Are relatively new to digital preservation
Research: Focus Groups

- 18 practitioners in 3 groups
- Range of organization types

Covered:
1. Motivations for developing a DAR
2. Methods for information capture
3. DAR format and structure
4. Update processes
5. How the DAR is used
6. Lessons learned

- Findings Report produced
Research: Analysis of DARs

- Looked at 14 real world DARs
- Frequency of information elements
- Common heading names
- Format of information
  - e.g. free text, controlled list, yes/no, numerical
- Produced a list of core recommended elements
  - Also, a list of possible additional elements
Toolkit Development

• Drafted January/Early February
• Multiple rounds of review:
  o DPC Good Practice team
  o The National Archives (UK) colleagues
  o Focus group participants
• Developed accompanying templates and guidance
• Created a short course
  o Updated N2KH DAR module
What’s In the Toolkit?
Contents

1. Introduction
2. What Makes a Good DAR
3. Step by Step Guide
4. Template for Building a DAR
5. More on Information Gathering
6. Useful Resources
7. Appendices

• **Who:** anyone wishing to gain better intellectual control of the digital content they manage
  ○ Creating a DAR or reviewing and enhancing

• **What:** a tool to record info about digital content to support management, decision making, and advocacy

• **Why:** the benefits of having a DAR
  ○ Great way to “get to know” digital content
More on Why…

• Helps with management of digital content by:
  o Capturing info in one place
  o Acting as a finding aid
  o Info for planning & prioritizing processing and ingest
  o Facilitates retention decisions
  o Establish clear responsibilities for management

• Aids with advocacy by:
  o Helping make digital content “seen”
  o Stats provided can be used in business cases etc.

• Also aligns with good practice
  o UK Archive Service Accreditation and DPC RAM
What Makes a Good DAR?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What makes a good DAR?</th>
<th>What makes a bad DAR?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A well-scoped DAR that captures information on a clearly defined set of digital content (e.g. all born-digital content held by the archive).</td>
<td>A poorly scoped DAR that captures patchy information about an indiscriminately selected set of digital content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum required information is captured about all digital content.</td>
<td>Detailed information is captured on only a few groups of digital content, with many others undocumented in the DAR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columns with headings whose purposes are clearly described and documented (this may be in an accompanying document to keep the DAR tidy).</td>
<td>Columns with vague headings that are not described and documented, or where it has been done poorly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information that is captured in well-structured formats and is processable where possible (e.g. numerical data or yes/no).</td>
<td>Long blocks of textual information of varying quality that is hard to interpret or process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information captured directly supports the DAR’s proposed uses.</td>
<td>A large number of columns, many of which contain extraneous information that is never used.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step by Step Guide

1. Identify Your Motivations
2. Setting the Scope
3. Make a Plan
4. Gather and Add Information
5. Using Your DAR
6. Updating Your DAR
7. Reviewing Your DAR
Template for a DAR

• General tips
  o e.g. security, usage of agreed terms
• Guidance on possible formats
• Where to store your DAR
• Recommended basic template:
  o Heading (and alt. names)
  o Suggested format
  o Description
• Appendix One – Other potential elements
### Excel DAR Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAR ID</th>
<th>Content Name</th>
<th>Transfer Year</th>
<th>Accession Type</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Data Owner</th>
<th>Number of Files</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSC/2024/001</td>
<td>Mary Soto Collection</td>
<td>2024</td>
<td>Purchase</td>
<td>Mary Soto</td>
<td>A collection of papers relating to the author Mary Soto, including drafts of her published works, cover designs, email correspondence, and business records (including contracts).</td>
<td>Archivist (Literary Archives)</td>
<td>5457</td>
<td>Text docs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORG/2023/021</td>
<td>Executive Board Papers 2022</td>
<td>2023</td>
<td>Internal Transfer</td>
<td>CEO’s Office</td>
<td>Papers, including minutes, from meetings of the organization’s Executive Board in 2022</td>
<td>Archivist (Institutional Records)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Text docs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORG/2020/007</td>
<td>Estates and Buildings Deposit 2020</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Internal Transfer</td>
<td>Estates and Buildings Department</td>
<td>Records generated by the Estates and Building department from 2014 to 2017, including contractor timesheets, architectural plans, and financial records.</td>
<td>Archivist (Institutional Records)</td>
<td>3841</td>
<td>Text doc. spreadshekJx database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCC/2022/001</td>
<td>North Camwood Community Group Records</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>Gift</td>
<td>Ruairi Carter, Secretary, North Camwood Community Group</td>
<td>Records of the community group’s activities in the local area from 2010 to 2020. Includes promotional materials, committee minutes, funding applications, budgets, and committee officers’ emails.</td>
<td>Digital Archivist</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>Text docs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSB/2022/002</td>
<td>Red Star Books Collection</td>
<td>2022</td>
<td>Gift</td>
<td>Yusra Kahn, Chief Editor, Red Star Books</td>
<td>Content relating to the outputs of Red Star Books publishers from 2012 to 2021. Includes manuscripts, illustrations, eBooks, and promotional materials. Business records have been retained by the organization.</td>
<td>Archivist (Literary Archives)</td>
<td>2297</td>
<td>Text docs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**info@dpconline.org**  
**www.dpconline.org**  

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Digital Preservation Coalition
Stats Dashboard

Summary of Content Amounts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Status</th>
<th>Accessions</th>
<th>Number of Files</th>
<th>Size in GB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessioned</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarantined</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pending</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3,419</td>
<td>123</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ready For Ingest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,220</td>
<td>727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Outside Repository</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12,952</td>
<td>1,811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingested into Repository</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals By Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Accessions</th>
<th>Number of Files</th>
<th>Size in GB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2024</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2029</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Files by Repository Status

Size of Content by Status

Number of Files by Year

Size of Content (GB) by Repository Status

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More on Information Gathering

• General guidance on selecting methods
• Tips for each key method
  o Pros and cons
  o Issues to consider
  o Types of info they can capture
  o Tools to use
• Appendix Two includes a set of example interview questions
Bonus Option: N2KH DAR Course!

Information Gathering Techniques

As part of your information gathering plan, you will need to consider which techniques will work best to gather the information you need. On the right are some of the possible information gathering techniques you might include.

Click on each of the examples listed on the right. As you work through them, think about what techniques you would use. You can also refer to the Toolkit which provides more detailed information on each.

You will need to visit all of these examples on the right in order to move on to the next section!
How it Fits With Other DPC Resources

- Rapid Assessment Model
- Competency Framework and Audit Toolkit
- Digital Asset Register Toolkit
- Executive Guide to DP
- Business Case Toolkit
- Novice to Know-How Training
- Preservation Policy Toolkit
- Documentation Guide
- Procurement Toolkit
- EDRMS Preservation Toolkit

Understand where you are and what you’ve got

Make the case for DP

Build capabilities and capacity
And Finally…

Many thanks to The National Archives (UK) Archives Sector Development team for this opportunity and their continued support for developing digital preservation practice!
Now Some Questions For You!