<<DATE>>

Attention: Executive Committee XXX

Dear XXX

**Enhance distinctiveness, competence and competitiveness by safeguarding your digital assets.**

As a <<SENIOR EXECUTIVE>> with an eye for opportunity, you want <<INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME>> to be at the cutting edge of innovation, design, technology and expertise. You want to be known for investing in these areas and in your teams, because it makes good business sense to retain good people with good skills, so that you can focus on growth, sales and success.

Here's the thing: your business is underpinned by data.

But digital materials - and the opportunities they create - are fragile even if they also have the capacity to be durable through replication. Digital platforms change, and the long chains of interdependence are complicated and fluid. Their longevity and utility are threatened where contents or contexts are lost: engagement and exploitation are enabled when digital materials endure.

**But what does that really mean for you?**

As a sector leader, you’ll know how quickly technology is updated, improved and expanded. It’s straightforward enough, albeit costly, to keep pace with technological change, but what about the digital material that is created by and for legacy systems, and gets left behind?

[**What are the consequences?**](http://dpconline.org/handbook/digital-preservation/preservation-issues)

Well the short answer is, if due care and attention is not paid, your data becomes lost or unusable. Legacy data is essential for innovation, research, development and remaining at the cutting edge of your field. It could mean that the bits and bytes making up your digital information degrade over time, rendering them inaccessible. Or the bits and bytes may be intact, but you simply don’t have the means to understand, interpret and re-use them: your hardware may be obsolete, so you are unable to read the data, you may no longer have the software to render the data or there may simply be insufficient contextual information (metadata and documentation) to understand the information and for it to be useful. Simply securing or backing up all of the digital information ever produced by your organization, without the correct metadata, may mean you are unable to locate the digital ‘needle in the haystack’ of bits and bytes when you come to need them. Any of these cases may be defined as data loss.

Data loss also means ‘confidence loss’, it means safety and security could be compromised. As a leading manufacturer maintaining a clear audit trail and complete transparency depends on sustained access to your digital information.

*<<INSERT RELEVANT STATISTIC>>*

The volume of this digital information is only set to increase, and with it, the costs.

*<<INSERT RELEVANT STATISTIC>> e.g*

*“If …industry projections continue, by 2020 disk costs per byte will be between 130 and 300 times higher than they would have been had Kryder's Law continued.” Beagrie, CESSDA Costs Factsheet*

[*https://www.cessda.eu/eng/content/download/1430/20402/file/03\_Costs\_Factsheet\_final.pdf*](https://www.cessda.eu/eng/content/download/1430/20402/file/03_Costs_Factsheet_final.pdf)

*DSHR:* [*http://blog.dshr.org/2016/12/the-medium-term-prospects-for-long-term.html*](http://blog.dshr.org/2016/12/the-medium-term-prospects-for-long-term.html)

*<<INSERT RELEVANT STATISTIC>> e.g*

*“From 2005 to 2020, the digital universe will grow by a factor of 300, from 130 exabytes to 40,000 exabytes, or 40 trillion gigabytes (more than 5,200 gigabytes for every man, woman, and child in 2020). From now until 2020, the digital universe will about double every two years.”*

*IDC View, ‘THE DIGITAL UNIVERSE IN 2020: Big Data, Bigger Digital Shadows, and Biggest Growth in the Far East,’ December 2012*

The greater the importance of digital materials, the greater the need for their preservation: digital preservation protects investment, captures potential and transmits opportunities to future generations and our own.

Digital preservation refers to a complete series of managed activities necessary to ensure continued access to digital materials for as long as necessary. Digital preservation is not backing up, it is not storage, it is not digitization. It is planning and strategizing, it is careful and informed appraisal and selection, it is processing data for preservation, it is ongoing checking, administration and management, it is keeping up with changes in the shifting technological landscape through training and development, it is liaison with data creators, data users, solution providers, IT departments, records managers, marketing teams, policy makers and more. It is a team effort.

And the reason why it needs to be a team effort is because the need for sustained access to reliable, useful and useable data is felt by an entire business.

**In practice, this means: <<INSERT RELEVANT STATEMENTS>> e.g.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Accountability | Sustained access to your digital information enables your organization to present a clear and robust audit trail, safeguarding <<INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME’S>> reputation. |
| Reputation | Enabling sustained access to legacy designs and plans enables <<INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME>> to demonstrate a process of iteration, review and update to remain in line with the latest regulations, earning the trust of consumers. |
| Corporate / Cultural Memory | For your shareholders, data embodies a financial potential, but for <<INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME>> your digital information can be used to optimize the way it conducts its core remit. Legacy data is a strategic asset that allows <<INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME>> to gain or maintain sector leadership. |
| Costs and Revenue | Digital preservation tools create an opportunity for de-duplication and compression, reducing <<INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME’S>> storage requirements and costs. Data reuse may also lead to the creation of new revenue streams. |
| Technology | Reducing <<INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME’S>> storage requirement also reduces the carbon footprint generated by data centers. |
| Compliance | Enabling sustained access to legacy designs and plans enables robust and trusted iteration, review and update to remain in line with the latest legislation and regulations, earning the trust of consumers and safeguarding <<INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME’S>> reputation. |
| Security | Managing and monitoring your digital information means <<INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME>> can keep track of unauthorized changes, copies and access – keeping your digital information safe. |
| Business continuity | Resilient processes and information mean that <<INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME>> can withstand hardware and software updates, upgrades, obsolescence, failures and stoppages – meaning no interruptions to service. |

In the context of burgeoning digital resources, a determined effort to identify, document and retain data of enduring value means that the right data is available to the right people at the right time in the right format: it brings efficiencies of scale and scope to corporations, agencies and individuals. It enables planned disposal and deletion. Digital preservation enables the consolidation of legacy systems: without it, agencies are forced to maintain and repair a profusion of redundant systems which add cost and reduce effectiveness. In the last decade we have learned that digital preservation is not simply an investment in data: it is an investment in distinctiveness, competence and competitiveness.

And there are manufacturing organizations doing this and getting it right.

*<<INSERT RELEVANT CASE STUDY QUOTE>>*

**To achieve this success, digital preservation requires just three things:**

* People – invest in your capacity, training and development to create a competent and responsive workforce ready to address the challenges of digital preservation.
* Procedure and Processes - identify and develop good practice and standards that make digital preservation achievable, supporting efforts to ensure services are tightly matched to shifting requirements.
* Resources - there is no ‘one’ technological solution to the digital preservation challenge. Maintain high quality and sustainable digital preservation services by understanding the shifting technological landscape, the options available and the costs and benefits of each.

As the head of a company like <<INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME>>, you have a responsibility. Your employees, your board, your directors, your competitors, your supply chain will all look to you, listen to you and be inspired by you. And all you need to do is something. Not nothing.

Share with your stakeholders the importance of sustained and continued access to digital information, help others to understand, empower your employees to act, support and value what you have.

Embrace the opportunities data create.