

Launch of the guide to digital preservation documentation

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Digital**Preservation**Coalition

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Why did we start working on this?

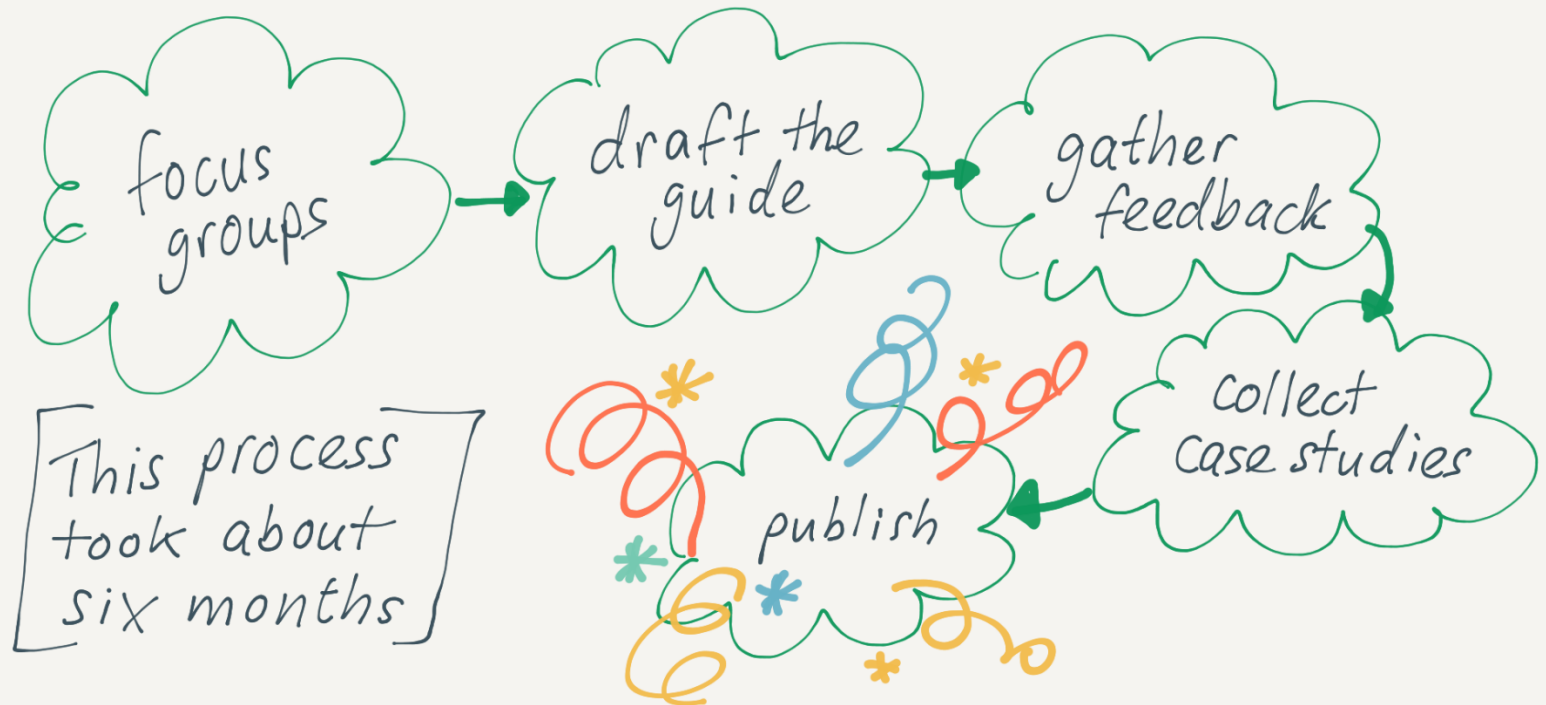
- DPC Members had mentioned documentation as an area where more guidance was needed:
 - Specifically, it came up as a discussion point in our RAM Jam sessions – RAM asks for a level of documentation ...but how to do this well...?
- So, our 2022-2023 prospectus included a commitment to carry out work in this area

Digital Preservation Documentation

DPC will consult with Members and review publicly available documentation to gather and share good practice tips and guidance for the creation of digital preservation documentation.

April 2023

The process



...we couldn't do it alone

lots to think about!

...and you thought you couldn't get people to talk about documentation for 2 hours...

Really useful session
and look forward to the
next steps

Thank you, this
discussion was
great!



The guide - scope

First exercise within the focus groups was to agree the scope of the guide:

- Documentation that is important for the day-to-day operation of digital preservation within an organization, for example recording how digital preservation tasks and procedures are carried out and how systems are integrated and configured.
- Out of scope:
 - Digital preservation policy and strategy documents
 - Documentation that helps to make individual records or datasets understandable
 - Preservation Metadata

...which became

Features of good documentation	Features of bad documentation
Gathered in one known location that can be accessed by those who need to access it - easy to locate/discover - sits within logical documentation structure	Is impossible to find or distributed across many locations
It has a clear purpose and audience and contains the appropriate level of information targeted to their needs.	Doesn't take into account its audience - e.g. is overly technical, or assumes an unrealistic knowledge base. No consultation with audiences to see if it meets their needs.
Up-to-date and well maintained. Clear which version it is.	Out of date, lack of versioning information.
Concise, simple and clear language. Easy to understand. Precise with no ambiguity. Terms are defined where necessary.	Too long and too much jargon. Too technical and hard to understand.
Clear who owns it and is responsible for maintaining it. Clear who to contact with questions or comments.	Uncontrolled governance. No one knows whose responsibility it is to update it or who to go to if they have feedback.
Well organized. Text is clearly formatted with numbering and bullet points. Includes step by step points with screen grabs and diagrams where appropriate.	Poorly organized, with scattered information, dense paragraphs of text and no images.
Clear how it relates to policies and other relevant documents. Part of a wider framework of documentation which forms the bigger picture	Doesn't take into account other organizational guidance and workflows. Unclear references, external links or dependencies.
Tested for completeness (no missing steps).	Inconsistent level of detail - step by step descriptions, but with gaps in the process.
Uses standard template or house style for consistency.	No consistency in style or conventions used.
It is possible to see what has changed over time	New versions are overwritten without any record of what has changed and when
Clearly dated. Date of next review also clear	Undated with no review schedule

The guide



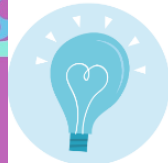
Introduction

An introduction to this guide, including audience and scope



What, Why and Who of Documentation

What should be documented? Why is it important? Who is it for?



The Good and the Bad of Documentation

What does good and bad documentation look like?



Creating Documentation

Tips for creating documentation, in style guides and the importance of



Revising and Maintaining Documentation

How to update, manage versions and communicate changes



Preserving Documentation

Does your digital preservation documentation need preserving for the long term?



Interviews and Case Studies

A selection of written interviews and presentations from community members discussing their documentation practices



Further Resources

Additional sources of information on documentation and helpful examples

Thank you!



<http://doi.org/10.7207/documentation-23>