

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

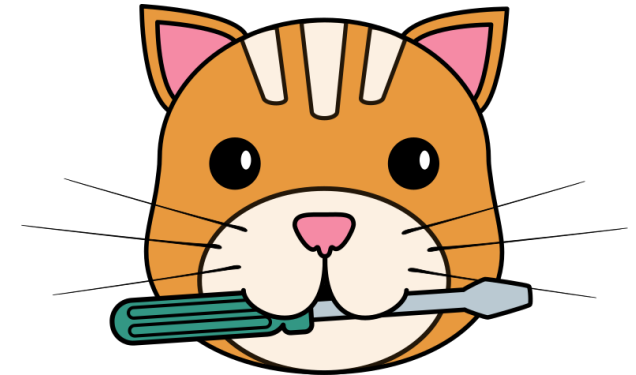
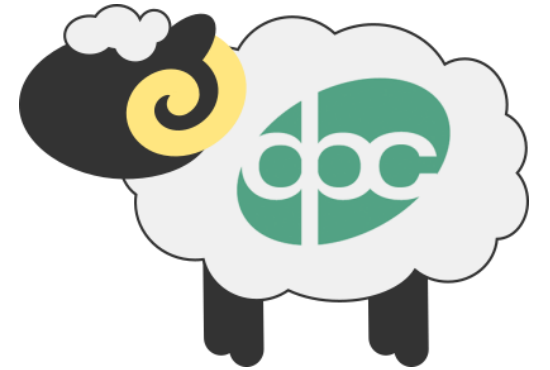
The Origin Story Begins...

THE	
NATIONAL	
ARCHIVES	

- 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
 - Rapid Assessment Model
 - Competency Framework and Audit Toolkit
 - Business Case Toolkit
 - Preservation Policy Toolkit
 - Procurement Toolkit
 - 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:
 - Have limited resources available
 - Are relatively new to digital preservation

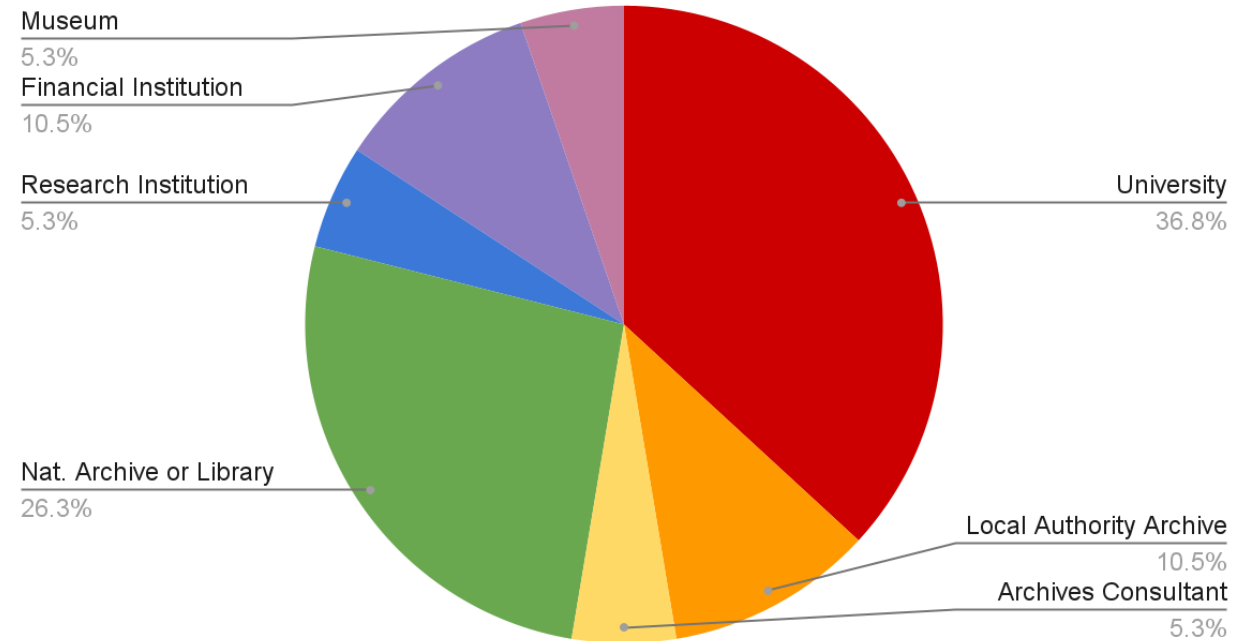
Research: Focus Groups

- 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

Participant Organization Types



Research: Analysis of DARs

ID No	Ref. No / Issue also cat. ref.
Acc Date	specific or Accession No some both
NP of Files	Alias settings / or Transfer Date
Size	Make numerical
Storage location	Pick a size (e.g. MB, GB) some have multiple values
Content types	separate media / access
File formats	Physical media
Media formats	
Format Validity	
Data Owner	-responsibility, useful for data abstract or creator
Ownership	
IPR	
Status	*ingest date ready for ingest
Risks	e.g. accessioned, quarantined, pre-ingest
Risk Score	also pass at Risk / in impact
Value	
Benefits	
Retention Period	* Disposal date
Disposal	# no. of files deleted
Name of Coll	Digital Asset Name, Title or sensitive data
Data Protection	* locate
Physical Media Loc	
Software Dependencies	
Access Rights	Gift Loan Purchase, internal, digitized
Description	Text description
Importance	e.g. vital, high usage, key asset - impact
Access	who / which dept transferred the data
Parent Coll	e.g. restrictions, or has been made up
Assoc. Series	
Asset Type	born dig, digitized, ext. media
Format Version	
PUIDs	

- 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:
 - DPC Good Practice team
 - The National Archives (UK) colleagues
 - Focus group participants
- Developed accompanying templates and guidance
- Created a short course
 - Updated N2KH DAR module



What's In the Toolkit?

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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

Introduction: Who? What? Why?

- 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:
 - Capturing info in one place
 - Acting as a finding aid
 - Info for planning & prioritizing processing and ingest
 - Facilitates retention decisions
 - Establish clear responsibilities for management
- Aids with advocacy by:
 - Helping make digital content “seen”
 - Stats provided can be used in business cases etc.
- Also aligns with good practice
 - UK Archive Service Accreditation and DPC RAM



What Makes a Good DAR?

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

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

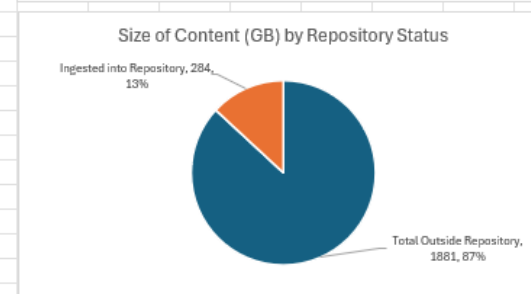
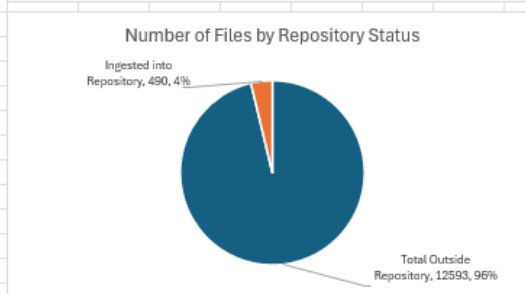
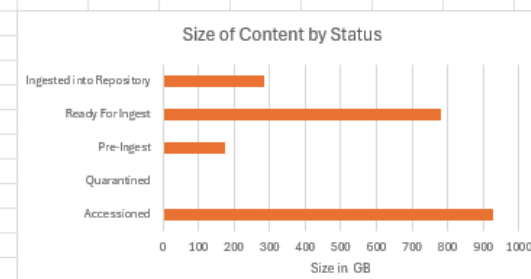
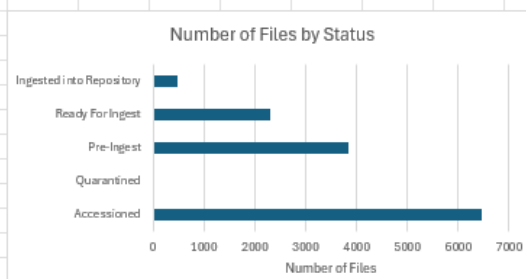


Excel DAR Template

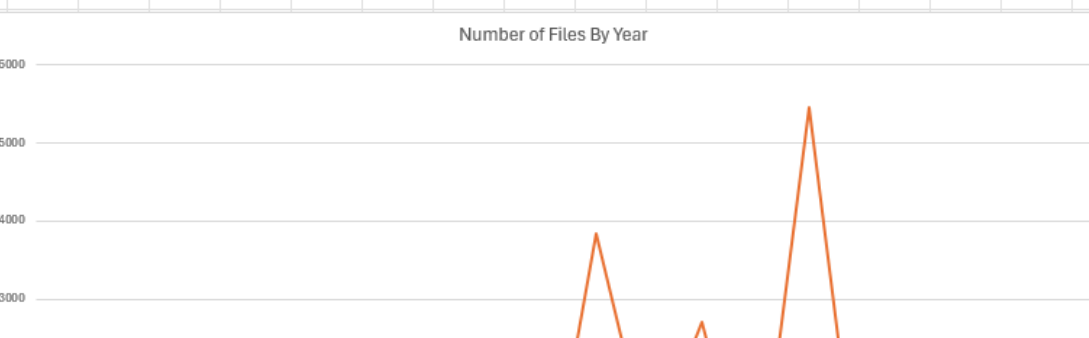
DAR ID	Content Name	Transfer Year	Accession Type	Source	Description	Data Owner	Number of Files	Content
MSC/2024/001	Mary Soto Collection	2024	Purchase	Mary Soto	A collection of papers relating to the author Mary Soto, including drafts of her published works, cover designs, email correspondence, and business records (Including contracts).	Archivist (Literary Archives)	5457	Text documents, emails, C
ORG/2023/021	Executive Board Papers 2022	2023	Internal Transfer	CEO's Office	Papers, including minutes, from meetings of the organization's Executive Board in 2022	Archivist (Institutional Records)	78	Text documents
ORG/2020/007	Estates and Buildings Deposit 2020	2020	Internal Transfer	Estates and Buildings Department	Records generated by the Estates and Building department from 2014 to 2017, including contractor timesheets, architectural plans, and financial records.	Archivist (Institutional Records)	3841	Text documents, spreadsheets, database
NCC/2022/001	North Camwood Community Group Records	2022	Gift	Ruairi Carter, Secretary, North Camwood Community Group	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.	Digital Archivist	412	Text documents, emails, s
RSB/2022/002	Red Star Books Collection	2022	Gift	Yusra Kahn, Chief Editor, Red Star Books	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.	Archivist (Literary Archives)	2297	Text documents, video, eB

Stats Dashboard

Summary of Content Amounts			
	Accessions	Number of	Size in GB
All Digital Content	6	13083	2165
By Status			
	Accessions	Number of Files	Size in GB
Accessioned	2	6455	927
Quarantined	0	0	0
Pre-Ingest	1	3841	173
Ready For Ingest	1	2297	781
Total Outside Repository	4	12593	1881
Ingested into Repository	2	490	284



Totals By Year				
Year	Accessions	Number of Files	Size in GB	
2010	0	0	0	
2011	0	0	0	
2012	0	0	0	
2013	0	0	0	
2014	0	0	0	
2015	0	0	0	
2016	0	0	0	
2017	0	0	0	
2018	0	0	0	
2019	0	0	0	
2020	1	3841	173	
2021	1	2297	781	



More on Information Gathering

- General guidance on selecting methods
- Tips for each key method
 - Pros and cons
 - Issues to consider
 - Types of info they can capture
 - Tools to use
- Appendix Two includes a set of example interview questions



Bonus Option: N2KH DAR Course!

← Back to course page

Novice to Know-How: Building a Digital Asset Register

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Path Learners Discuss

1. Course Modules

- Introduction to Digital Asset Registers
- Identifying your Motivations and Scope
- Making a Plan for Building your Digital ...
- Gathering Information for your Digital ...
- Using, Updating, and Reviewing your Di...

2. Course Quiz and Certificate

< previous

next >

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!

 Existing Resources 

 Interviews 

 Surveys

 Characterization Tools

 Physical Media

Previous

Next

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!

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Digital Preservation Coalition