DPC and RLUK: Proposed Collaboration 2009/2010

1. Introduction

Preliminary conversations between the management of RLUK and DPC have identified a number of shared challenges faced by members on the topic of needs assessment and the provision of support. While there are considerable opportunities for training and staff development in the field of digital asset management for libraries, archives and cognate institutions, and while there is proliferation of advisory and information services, there is a challenge in matching the right support to the needs of each institution. A more effective model of support could be based on an iterative needs assessment that identifies strengths and weaknesses and therefore identifies more explicitly the opportunities for collaboration between members.

It is therefore proposed that DPC and RLUK establish a joint project within the next 6 months and to last around 12 months, to scope and address this issue on behalf of members. The board is invited to agree in principle to the allocation of up to £25K in the financial year 2009-2010 (which may stretch into 2010-2011), matching similar funding provided by RLUK. This agreement in principle will enable a more detailed negotiation defining the terms of reference of a shared project.

RLUK enjoys a constructive relationship with the National Preservation Office. A shared staff member works half time for each organisation on topics pertaining to paper conservation. It is proposed that DPC develop a similar relationship with RLUK: a shared post for a fixed duration, on which both DPC and RLUK could draw. The officer thus employed would be tasked with assessing needs and helping staff in member institutions to meet the challenges they face. A particular focus will be expensive E-journal content in which research libraries have invested over the last decade: staff often lack the skills or confidence to evaluate the long term and post-cancellation solutions currently on offer.

2. Indicative benefits and deliverables

- A ‘mind the gap’ style report for each member of the DPC and RLUK
- A synthesis of needs across the DPC and RLUK
- Enhanced collaboration across the DPC and RLUK community
- Member work forces enabled
- A report that identifies key areas of over or under provision in training
- A roadmap for tools and service requirements for digital preservation in the RLUK and DPC
- An assessment toolkit that can be re-used
- Greater capacity to evaluate and describe ‘long term’ tools and services such as E-Journal archives
- Contribution to discussions on audit, certification and assessment in digital preservation

3. Indicative Timeline

- June to September 2009 – WK and MM develop project brief, deliverables, plan, risk assessment, quality plan, outline methodology and budget
- October 2009 – consultative meeting between DPC and RLUK to specify (optional)
- November 2009 – proposal approved by DPC and RLUK and project initiated*
- December 2009 - project officer recruited (secondment preferred option) , project board appointed
- January 2010 – project commences in earnest with pilot partners (3 DPC members and 3 RLUK members)
- March 2010 – report to DPC and RLUK board, methodology finalised*
- March 2010 – proceed to work with all RLUK/DPC members
- November 2010 – draft final report to DPC AGM and RLUK board
- December 2010 – final report, lessons learned report, project closes

(* go/no-go review points)
4. The Partners

The Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) is a not-for-profit membership organisation whose primary objective is to raise awareness of the importance of the preservation of digital material and the attendant strategic, cultural and technological issues. Its vision is to make our digital memory accessible tomorrow.

RLUK (Research Libraries UK) is a consortium of the UK’s top research libraries. It works with its members and partners to shape and realise the vision of the modern research library through collaboration, representation, promotion of excellence, advocacy and leadership. Its vision is that the UK will have the best research library support in the world.

RLUK and DPC have much in common: they are membership organisations with business plans that deliver member value through collaboration; they are concerned to promote the better management and access to distinctive and valuable collections, and in this way deliver benefits to the wider economy; both engage with opinion formers and policy makers to raise awareness of the challenges faced by their members. RLUK, formerly known as CURL was a founding member of the DPC and has delivered significant projects in digital preservation such as the CEDARS projects.

5. About this document

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<td>Review and commentary by CJ, MM</td>
<td>03/07/2009</td>
<td>MM and CJ</td>
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<td>Version 3</td>
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<td>03/07/09</td>
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