

Digital Preservation Coalition Strategy 2009 – 2011

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Executive summary

This document constitutes a new strategy for the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) for a three year period, 2009-2011. The strategy presented redefines the DPC's remit as one which will embrace issues of digital preservation, digital asset management and access. The DPC's overarching principle will be to help sustain ongoing access to the digital assets which are an increasing part of our members' collections and business resources. This is a statement of intent indicating to members and the community that the DPC is a forward-thinking and sustainable organisation which continues to be at the forefront of digital initiatives.

This strategy signals that the DPC is focusing its finite resource on the production and delivery of more tangible and achievable objectives in the short term. There is a stronger emphasis on service delivery and knowledge transfer amongst its members.

The detailed strategic objectives are grouped into five key areas:

1. Leadership, influencing and effective collaboration

The DPC's raison d'être is to articulate that digital preservation is an enabling process which underpins core business activity. Its impact must be transparent and resonate with a range of stakeholders and decision makers. It must influence the influencers and operate as a first choice consultative body to as wide a range of stakeholders as possible. It is expected that the DPC will help to drive the agenda for digital preservation and asset management at national and international level.

2. Sharing and disseminating knowledge

The DPC seeks to promulgate best practice and engender active debate around the emerging issues in digital asset management and preservation. The DPC will publish material to address the challenges which members are currently facing and provide research-based evidence to effect decision making and workflow development. We will seek to increase our members' capacity to develop their own policies and strategies by targeted research into areas that are relevant to them.

3. Enriching our members' experience

It must be immediately evident to members and non-members alike what value there is in DPC membership. To reinforce this, more tangible outputs and benefits will be delivered to members. A more flexible membership structure will be developed to broaden the appeal of the DPC to as wide a range of organisations as possible. Knowledge transfer and networking opportunities will be facilitated through collaborative working practices and fora.

4. Empowering and developing our members' workforces

All of our members operate in a competitive and dynamic knowledge environment where roles and responsibilities of all staff are constantly changing. It is crucial, therefore, that staff remain informed of, trained in and confident with the new developments and tools which are released and made available. This is particularly important when existing staff are retrained to embrace a new skills set. The DPC will seek to address this issue by facilitating training and support activities and creating practitioner-focused material and events.

5. Assuring the sustainability and effectiveness of the Coalition

Improving the DPC's sustainability will allow us to do more of the things we want to do. To maximise the DPC's potential and to offer value-for-money services to its membership the organisation must be financially secure. The current financial model - reliance on a single non-recurrent income stream and relatively high fixed costs - needs to change. To ensure that the DPC is fit for purpose its governance and staffing structure will be reviewed to ensure that it is well suited to serve the membership and deliver the revised strategy.

The first year, 2009, will be one of transition balancing the impact of the new strategy and remit with the delivery of ongoing value and activity. To fulfil these new challenges the DPC and its members will need the foresight and confidence to invest in the DPC over the lifetime of this strategy. The strategy represents the activity from both core funding and any additional funds we are able to identify and secure.

Our mission

The aims of the Digital Preservation Coalition are:

- *enabling and acting as a catalyst to support its members to ensure long term access to and management of their digital assets*
- *collaborating with our national and international partners to take forward the digital preservation and asset management agenda*
- *acting as a broker and an agent of knowledge transfer amongst its membership*

Our vision and context

The DPC's vision is

To make our digital memory accessible tomorrow

The DPC, and its members, operate in a dynamic landscape which has changed considerably since the founding of the DPC in 2001. In the large organisations which form the bulk of DPC membership, there is both a greater awareness and a better understanding of the fundamental issues. For many, digital preservation has become a mainstream activity which permeates their core business activities.

The roles and priorities of the other stakeholders in this area (e.g. JISC, UKWAC, RIN and DCC etc) have inevitably changed during that period. To ensure that the DPC continues to have effective and valued relationships with sister organisations it must continuously explore their changing needs, attitudes and priorities.

The unifying cross-sectoral structure of the DPC is even more important as the number of stakeholders in the fragmented digital world grows. The common elements between sectors will be built on and the sector-specific expertise will be shared across the membership. During this next three year period the DPC must leverage tangible benefit from this diversity of expertise and experience for its members.

The fundamental premise of this strategy is that digital preservation and access have a symbiotic relationship and are mutually dependent. Both facets have to be considered in order to offer realistic benefit to our members. It is to this digital landscape that the DPC through the delivery of this strategy will position itself as a guiding hand to its members.

Our values

The values which underpin all of the above are that the DPC should:

- Operate as a neutral body.
- Embrace a consultative, innovative and open approach.
- Engage in a collaborative manner with all stakeholders to comprehend and respond to their needs.
- Maintain sound stewardship of the Coalition's resources.
- Share best practice and knowledge transfer with our members to support their local priorities.
- Maintain vendor neutrality.
- Support developments of standards and generic approaches to digital preservation.

Our strategic aims and deliverables

We have identified five strategic priorities which are the cornerstones of our activity which must be achieved if the DPC is to remain a viable and significant organisation.

The DPC will deliver in these strategic areas through a number of objectives and deliverables. These are linked to transparent outcomes and key performance indicators (KPIs) which are outlined in a later section. The strategy and outcomes will be monitored and reviewed quarterly as part of the regular business cycle. Adjustments will be made accordingly to ensure that the strategy remains a living document which reflects and supports the needs of its members.

Strategic Priority 1. Leadership, influencing and effective collaboration

The DPC will act as a catalyst to facilitate the process of change and transition which members are undertaking. To optimise its value the most effective way the DPC can operate is to influence larger organisations that have the resources and political strength to effect change for the benefit of DPC members and the wider community. To enhance the DPC's influence it is key that robust strategic partnerships are sealed which provide deliverables and tangible services and progress the Coalition's aims.

The DPC will take a holistic approach to digital preservation by making connections with the growing network of bodies which are funded and tasked to deliver different parts of the digital preservation panoply e.g. RIN, UKRDS etc. To make a difference the DPC must ensure that it is a very highly regarded consultative partner by these agencies.

1. **Objective.** To nurture collaboration with cross sectoral stakeholders to affect change. To identify and stimulate opportunities for increased funding to provide solutions for shared challenges.

- a. *Action.* To build productive partnerships with key national and international agencies e.g. Research Councils, Europeana, JSTOR.
- b. *Action.* To create an effective communication plan emphasising the valuable outcomes from managed digital preservation activity.
- c. *Action.* To explore the feasibility and benefit of shared service provision.
- d. *Action.* To seek out opportunities to harness external sponsorship from commercial vendors
- e. *Action.* To act as an 'honest broker' to afford opportunities for its members to engage with and gain benefits from other agencies e.g. grant awarding bodies.
- f. *Action.* To explore opportunities and synergies to work more closely with other bodies e.g. the Digital Curation Centre (DCC), Humanities Advanced Technology And Information Institute (HATII)
- g. *Action.* To explore the opportunities of aligning more closely with UKWAC and to develop a joint work plan of activities and outputs.
- h. *Action.* To engage with the publishing community (e.g. ALPSP) to explore how we might build a productive partnership to provide benefit and capitalise on their awareness of digital preservation.

Benefits: Dissemination of expertise and best practice throughout community; secure additional funds; to support valued cognate organisations.

2. **Objective.** To develop the DPC as a community of good practice by providing networking opportunities.

- a. *Action.* To run two briefing days per annum exclusively for members, on topics of common interest.
- b. *Action.* To seek further opportunities to collaborate and host joint events.
- c. *Action.* To encourage interactive, participative and collaborative working amongst members through effective use of Web 2.0 technologies and social networking tools e.g. to allow members to directly contribute to web site content.

Benefits. To provide additional valued service to members; cascading good practice.

3. **Objective.** To ensure the DPC outputs and aims are as widely disseminated as possible.

- a. *Action.* The DPC will develop a communication plan to underpin this strategy.
- b. *Action.* To review DPC branding.

Benefits. Raise the profile of DPC. Raise awareness of the issues to community.

4. **Objective.** To encourage and support best practice and research in digital asset management and preservation.

- a. *Action.* To review and possibly extend the scope of the DPC sponsored Digital Preservation Award (DPA)
- b. *Action.* To explore opportunities to secure new sponsors for the DPA.
- c. *Action.* To engage with other bodies working in this area e.g. RIN, UKRDS to identify mutual areas of interest and potential opportunities to jointly deliver our strategies.

Benefits. To raise awareness of DPC; maximise investment in the DPA.

Strategic Priority 2. Sharing and disseminating knowledge

There is an ever increasing stream of information, projects and initiatives in the international digital landscape. As the domain matures and interfaces with related disciplines this corpus of knowledge will continue to grow. The DPC will support its members in navigating this information forest through a systematic review of the scope, relevance, and quality of the current literature. We will provide authoritative advice and guidelines which will be delivered through the expansion of our website as it develops into an information hub and gateway.

Work in digital preservation is often incremental, funded only in the short term, and fragmented. Whilst there is no cohesive national digital preservation strategy in the UK there are published strategies addressing many of the relevant issues. The DPC can help members develop their own policies through sharing findings from DPC commissioned research and exchange of expertise and guidance.

1. **Objective.** To keep members up to date in a managed and contextualised fashion on digital asset preservation and management news through an alerting service.
 - a. *Action.* To review and evaluate the DPC's current alerting service, 'Quarterly Digest', from the view of its value to our members, the cost and effort of publication and its timeliness.
 - b. *Action.* To discuss the opportunities for collaboration and joint initiatives with other stakeholders internationally to explore the value in pooling resources to produce one centralised alerting tool.

Benefits. Coordinating fragmented activity; streamlining DPC resources exploitation.
2. **Objective.** To add value and to complement work undertaken by other cognate groups the DPC will review published policies and strategies to identify areas where research may still be required.
 - a. *Action.* The DPC should review key policies and strategies on a regular basis and provide a digest identifying any gaps in the provision.
 - b. *Action.* To engage with the funding agencies e.g. Wellcome, Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Esmee Fairbairn, JISC etc. to explore how this work may usefully inform their funding decisions.
 - c. *Action.* To collate and publish members' strategies on the DPC web site.
 - d. *Action.* To enable members to publish their project outputs and findings directly on to the DPC web site

Benefits. Improved coherence and engagement with range of stakeholders; to promulgate best practice.
3. **Objective.** To develop a portfolio of publications to include high level intelligence briefing reports, technical overviews and practical focused guidelines on a range of digital preservation issues. The topics and style to be readily accessible to cover generic issues such as knowing what you have, how to ensure its long term viability, how to archive it and what collecting decisions need to be addressed.
 - a. *Action.* To review and evaluate the current suite of publications to assess their value and impact.
 - b. *Action.* To investigate the updating of the current handbook.
 - c. *Action.* To produce a roadmap of publications for the first year of the strategy.
 - d. *Action.* To implement the recommendations from the newly commissioned communications plan.
 - e. *Action.* To develop a 'How to' series in areas of concern to members e.g. guidelines, FAQs etc.

Benefits. The development of member focused support material.
4. **Objective.** To build a central resource hub and information rich web site to facilitate resource discovery and dissemination.
 - a. *Action.* The DPC web site will be redesigned to improve the usability, navigation, depth and quality of content.
 - b. *Action.* To encourage interactive and collaborative working amongst members more effective use of Web 2.0 technologies and social networking tools will be facilitated to encourage direct member contribution to the web site.
 - c. *Action.* Members will be encouraged to provide regular updates about their projects to share best practice amongst the membership. This will be facilitated by the creation of a shared, structured working space.

Benefits. Raises visibility of DPC and digital asset management initiatives; reduces in-house administrative operations.
5. **Objective.** To provide advice, guidance and direction on long term preservation to enable ongoing access to an organisation's digital assets.
 - a. *Action.* To explore the feasibility of providing a service and support to practitioners in all matters of digital asset management e.g. sponsored consultancies.

- b. Action.* To develop a suite of FAQs to cover the fundamental issues of digital asset management and d preservation.

Benefits. A tangible service for the members.

Strategic Priority 3. Enriching our members' experience

The DPC is governed and funded by its members and so to guarantee its sustainability and vibrancy it must be an attractive option for prospective members. The value of being a member should be clearly visible to our current members.

One of the fundamental strengths of the DPC is its cross sectoral nature. We will build upon this diversity and range of membership. Clear tangible benefits will be demonstrated so that the collective weight and expertise of the DPC may be easily harnessed by individual members.

1. **Objective.** To ensure that the DPC has as wide and diverse a membership as possible and is an inclusive body offering valued services and benefits that are attractive to a range of stakeholders.

- a. Action.* To evaluate and monitor DPC activities to measure their relevance to members.
b. Action. Develop success measures for DPC's outreach programme.
c. Action. To review and create a more flexible membership package.
d. Action. To target specific segments of the commercial sector to join the DPC e.g. e-content publishers,
e. Action. To formulate a generic business case outlining the value and impact of DPC membership.
f. Action. To regularly consult with members through as many channels as possible to ascertain what benefits are valued by them. To align this activity with the communication plan.

Benefits. Facilitates networking and sharing of experience. Spreads awareness to the 'non community'

2. **Objective.** A longer planning horizon needs to be introduced to increase the viability of the Coalition

- a. Action.* To formulate a new multi-year subscription package.

Benefit. Improves the sustainability of the DPC

3. **Objective.** To engage more closely with members by strengthening a DPC community of practice in which members are more closely involved in the delivery of the strategic priorities.

- a. Action.* To develop the members' area of the website with increased content and resources.
b. Action. To create a task force approach whereby members work on specific projects which align with their own organisational priorities and interests.

Benefits. Provides a cost effective responsive organisation for members

Strategic Priority 4. Empowering and developing our members' workforce

A key requisite for successful and ongoing digital preservation activity is that it must be underpinned and supported by a knowledgeable, expert and motivated workforce. In many circumstances there are no additional resources available for specialist staff to manage the digital preservation activity. This means that staff with traditional skills will need to be retrained to manage and curate the hybrid collections. Furthermore, staff that are domain experts need to keep their knowledge and skills up to date.

Despite this there are few formal qualifications or accredited routes for career development. As in many areas of digital preservation there is global activity but much is fragmented and resourced through finite project funding. The message from the community is that this needs to change. This is evident from the recent findings of the DPC survey about the Mind the Gap recommendations, where the ongoing need for training was identified as high priority. Collaboration in this area is essential to ensure that sustainable and robust solutions are delivered and to minimise duplication of effort.

1. **Objective.** The DPC, in concert with other agencies, will develop the digital preservation expertise amongst members and the wider community.

- a. Action.* Develop relationships with HEIs that award formal Digital Preservation qualifications and to contribute to their curricula development.
b. Action. To investigate opportunities to partner with other expert bodies in related areas mindful of the international dimension of this area e.g. NPO, RSP, SCONUL, LIBER, NDIPP etc to explore the feasibility of developing joint initiatives in supporting staff to embrace new skills.

- c. *Action.* To foster relationships with the professional bodies to begin to work towards providing a continual professional development programme for practitioners e.g. SoA, CILIP etc.

Benefits. Reduces duplication of effort; provides training opportunities.

2. **Objective.** To make the case to funding agencies to support the creation and development of a national digital preservation training programme tailored to the needs of the different sectors. Deliverables from which to be mapped to the development of the DPC handbook.

- a. *Action.* To convince the funding agencies of the need and expediency of developing a training programme for digital preservation and asset management.

Benefits. Secures additional funding to support DPC's aims.

3. **Objective.** To move from fragmentation to convergence the DPC will explore, in collaboration with other bodies e.g. DPE, DCC, nestor, HATII etc, the need for a digital preservation certification and accreditation service.

- a. *Action.* To contribute to and engage with the major players in this area e.g. DPE, DCC, UKOLN etc.
- b. *Action.* To explore with other stakeholders evidence based assessment of the key skills and competencies required from an effective skilled workforce.
- c. *Action.* To contribute to and engage with initiatives in the trusted digital repository area to explore viability for joint accreditation e.g. Drambora, RLG-OCLC, NARA

Benefits. Embed a robust training programme in concert with all parties; support the cultural transition; reduce the duplication of effort.

Strategic Priority 5. Assuring the sustainability and effectiveness of the DPC

To allow the DPC to fulfil and deliver its mission and objectives there needs to be an underlying organisational infrastructure which operates efficiently and cost effectively. A prerequisite for the success of any of the DPC's ambitions is the need to secure an adequate level of resource. To provide an adequate planning horizon we shall seek to increase and diversify our funding streams. All financial transactions will be transparent and accountable to our members and we will continue to look for efficiency savings at all levels of operation so that resources can be targeted to the Coalition's priorities.

1. **Objective.** To ensure the DPC has the resources to deliver its strategy to its members.

- a. *Action.* To explore alternative business and membership models.
- b. *Action.* To seek opportunities to generate additional income from other sources e.g. funding bodies, sponsors etc.
- c. *Action* To increase membership by two members each year over the three-year period.
- d. *Action* To review the membership rates annually and link any increases to the annual rate of inflation (RPI).
- e. *Action* To revisit the charitable status of the DPC.

Benefits. Reduces financial risks; diversifies income streams.

2. **Objective.** To continue to practise sound financial management.

- a. *Action.* To comply with all regulatory requirements in a timely and transparent fashion.
- b. *Action.* To review and update regularly the established risk register to ensure that it reflects the current DPC activity.

Benefits. Demonstrates legal and financial compliance.

3. **Objective.** To build a governance structure which supports agile decision-making and enables timely delivery of the new strategy.

- a. *Action.* To carry out a review of the governance and board structure.

Benefits. Improves effectiveness of the Coalition.

4. **Objective.** To operate as cost effectively as possible to ensure that value- for-money services are delivered.

- a. *Action* To monitor all operational procedures in order to seek opportunities to improve efficiency and streamline operations. This action is aligned to objective 2(c) in Strategic Priority 1 as the DPC office facilitates a more member driven approach to dissemination.
- b. *Action*. To implement at least a cost-recovery model for all DPC events.
- c. *Action*. To ensure that all remuneration packages, both to salaried staff and commissioned consultants, are levied at the appropriate market rate for the work undertaken.

Benefits. Improves efficiency and effectiveness of the Coalition.

5. **Objective.** To align the DPC's staff competencies to the new strategic priorities and organisational requirements.

- a. *Action*. To commission an independent review of the current staffing structure.
- b. *Action*. To ensure that staff have the requisite and appropriate skills set to deliver the DPC's work programme.
- c. *Action*. To introduce and standardise on a competency-based review procedure for all staff.

Benefits. Improves sustainability of the DPC; reduces income-related risks; ensures the DPC can deliver the strategy.

Key performance indicators and measures

As noted earlier there needs to be an ongoing evaluation process for all DPC activity to measure success. This will also provide valuable feedback and input for the next tranche of work programme activity. The strategy needs to be a living document which will be regularly reviewed and realigned if necessary to ensure that the DPC continues to be an agile responsive organisation.

The following are some key performance indicators which will provide a framework for the evaluation and monitoring process. Further qualitative assessment will be ongoing from the existing programme of post event and member activities.

KPIs	Measure
To commission and publish, at least, 3 Technical Watch Reports, 2 sets of FAQs, and 4 alerting tools pa.	Number of reports; readership; breadth of collaboration; number of times cited
To run at least 3 outreach events annually	Number of events; Level of take-up; Feedback; profile of audience; post event chatter (blog postings etc); level of outputs; level of sponsorship; quality of speakers able to commission
To engage with other stakeholders	Number of presentations; external panels etc
To raise awareness of DPC and its objectives	Web traffic; number of new members; number of new allied organisations; external press coverage
To improve the membership experience	Number of new members; evaluation of members' feedback; rate of subscription non renewal
To improve the sustainability and robustness of the DPC	Number of income streams; Level of external funding;
To deliver training opportunities to members	Number of training programme
To support and disseminate best practice	Number of applicants to the DPA
To undertake a review of the governance and staffing structure	That recommendations from the staffing and governance review are made to the Board on time and in budget

Risk statement

Risk	Factors which might make this happen	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Actions	Responsibility	Timescale
Approval for strategy not obtained	Low input from membership. No consultation. Aims not resonate with members	Low	High	Shared planning Review and negotiate plans Consultation with members	ED/Board	Annual
Unable to progress key deliverables	Low input from membership. Loss of key staff. Resource limitations	Low	High	Monitor progress of activities. Review priorities. Investigate obstacles. Consider alternative delivery mechanism	ED/Task Forces	Monthly
Unable to meet members expectations	Limited resources. Failure to communicate DPC output & impact. Inappropriate activity	Medium	High	Constant updating and communicating with members. Monitor feedback. Review activities	ED/Board	Ongoing
Staff retention/ absence	Staff leave. Unable to fill vacancies. Poor attendance records	Medium	High	Review, structure, workloads and roles. Staff development policy.	ED/Board	Ongoing
Staffing & funding constraints do not enable delivery of strategic priorities.	Missing targets. Failing to progress the work programme High turnover of staff Lack of commitment and/or direction from the Board	Medium	High	To ensure ownership of activity by Board & members through task force approach. Adopt collaborative approach to decision making. Ongoing evaluation process	ED/Board	Ongoing
Unable to cover organisational running costs	Reduced income. Increased activity costs	Low	High	Financial planning, monitoring and forecasting. Diversify income streams	ED/ Board	Ongoing
Fail to engage with and build partnerships with potential funders.	No additional resources secured No joint initiatives secured	Medium	Medium	Effective communication plan Expand and extend our relationships with existing and new stakeholders and intermediaries.	ED/Board	Ongoing
DPC output are not seen as credible or authoritative	Publications have little impact on the community. Low take up of readership of reports. Low attendance at events	Low	Medium	All output is rigorously reviewed by members & stakeholders. Leading experts are commissioned by the DPC. Provide opportunities for members to contribute.	ED/Board	Ongoing