Our digital memory accessible tomorrow

DPC Strategic Plan 2012-2015

Our Vision

The Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) is an advocate and catalyst for digital preservation, enabling our members to deliver resilient long-term access to content and services, and helping them derive enduring value from digital collections. We raise awareness of the importance of the preservation of digital material and the attendant strategic, cultural and technological issues. We are a not-for-profit membership organisation and we support our members through knowledge exchange, capacity building, assurance, advocacy and partnership. Our vision is to make our digital memory accessible tomorrow.

Our Values

In everything we do the DPC shall:

- 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 enable knowledge transfer with our members to support their local priorities.
- Maintain vendor neutrality.
- Support developments of standards and generic approaches to digital preservation.
- Respond to the needs of members in the delivery of services.
- Be authoritative, current and concise in all our publications and communications.

Our Objectives

We will concentrate our activities on the following themes in the three years from 2012-2015:

- Workforce development and capacity building
- Knowledge exchange
- Developing assurance and practice
- Advocacy
- Partnership and sustainability

Our Scope and Context

The DPC operates on behalf of its members. In the last planning period we invested considerable energy in framing a programme that responded to their needs. The Coalition has grown rapidly as a result. We will continue and extend as appropriate this process, engaging members in all our planning.

We define digital preservation as the managed activities necessary to ensure continued access to digital materials for as long as necessary, including all of the actions required to maintain access beyond the limits of media failure or technological change. We engage in and with any and all of the people, tools, services, agencies and activities that serve this purpose.

The DPC is a cross-sector, inter-disciplinary body which is open to all who need to ensure continuing access to digital collections, irrespective of purpose. Our independence is guaranteed by our broadly based membership, transparent management and vendor neutrality. We provide a safe haven for members to talk freely and at times confidentially. We contribute to public debate directly, expertly and with integrity.

The urgency of awareness-raising about digital preservation has lessened since the DPC was founded. It is now possible and necessary to articulate more subtle messages about how and why citizens, agencies and governments should work together to ensure a dependable digital legacy and the benefits that accrue. These benefits can be stated more clearly than in previous years. Data and systems form a distinctive element of corporate and personal identity. 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. Digital preservation is not simply an investment in data: it is an investment in distinctiveness, competence and competitiveness.

The last decade has seen a proliferation of digital preservation tools and services, delivering great benefit in ensuring the longevity of data sets that are themselves expanding in scale, complexity and importance. But the fragmentation and impenetrability of digital preservation research is now an impediment and disincentive to those who need solutions urgently. There are growing risks that tool developers find it hard to reach a market meaning their solutions are under-deployed and their investment under-exploited; standards developers struggle to achieve consensus meaning their approaches are under-consulted or ignored; and problem owners find it hard to locate solutions, increasing the short-term risks of data loss and the long-term costs of deployment. By bringing people together the DPC reduces the barriers to digital preservation. We enable higher quality research, better informed standards and faster deployment of solutions.

Our members are primarily in the UK and Ireland and therefore the DPC will focus its advocacy work within these jurisdictions. This enables us to have a more effective impact in refining and advocating regulatory and legislative reform to enable reasonable actions that will support long-term access to data. This will include continuing work around electronic legal deposit, intellectual property rights, heritage and research data management, transparency, data protection and freedom of information.

We aim to extend our membership into business and industry. Responding to a gloomy economic outlook, business and industry seek to refine ever-smarter and ever-more-responsive products and services that deliver higher value results on fixed or reduced budgets. Information is a tool for efficient and adroit deployment of resources, a change made viable only if data management and decision making are integrated. Digital preservation is part of an emerging solution of how business and industry can work more smartly.

We will retain and where possible develop relationships with cognate agencies in the UK and Ireland including the British Library Preservation Advisory Centre, the Archives and Records Association, UK Office for Library Networking, and the Institute for Conservation. We will work to establish closer relationships with professional bodies including the British Computer Society, the Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals, the Information and Records Management Society, the Museum Association, their affiliates and others. We will work to establish new and mutually beneficial relationships with those institutions of higher education who teach information management in its broadest sense to ensure that they can access up-to-date and high quality research and teaching materials for digital preservation.

We will retain and develop our relationships with partners overseas to facilitate an interlocking set of supports for practitioners, teachers, researchers and policy makers. We welcome the development of new partnerships and analogous membership bodies and will continue to share with them, especially NESTOR (Germany), Digital Stewardship Alliance (USA), and NCDD (The Netherlands). We welcome and commit ourselves to collaboration with the range of specialist agencies who work across our borders to deliver specific research and of the digital preservation supply chain including the Alliance for Permanent Access, the Open Planets Foundation, the IIPC, the Preservation and Archiving Special Interest Group and the Storage Network Industry Association.

DPC is willing to amplify, consolidate and disseminate research, developments or innovations that are likely to benefit our members and which align with our strategic goals. We seek a mutually supportive dialogue with all research and innovation projects that seek to engage with the digital preservation community in the UK and Ireland. This is especially true for projects funded by the European Commission between 2012 and 2015.

How We Will Achieve Our Objectives in the Next Three Years

1. DPC: Workforce Development and Capacity Building

The DPC will facilitate the development of a workforce with the skills and tools necessary to ensure long-term access to digital collections and will encourage the proliferation and diversity of training necessary to that purpose. It will provide tangible benefits to members in the form of training and will support those who provide quality-assured training in digital preservation which is relevant to the needs of members' workforces. It will support those colleges and universities which seek to develop curricula in digital preservation and provide authoritative labour market intelligence for employers, students and teachers alike. We shall do this by:

- *Delivering entry level and specialist training events based on members' needs*

Target: Each year the DPC will aim to deliver or collaborate in the delivery of six specialist briefing events per year which are matched to the needs of the members and will support a programme of introductory training aimed at new entrants in digital preservation.
Success measure: feedback from participants at events, numbers in attendance, requests for repeats, willingness of speakers and contributors, publications citing and reusing resources from events.

- *Providing scholarships so that members' workforces can attend specialized, difficult-to-obtain career development, in this way also reducing the risks to those who provide that training*
  Target: The DPC will aim to exceed the scholarships offered under our Leadership Programme between 2009 and 2011. We will expand the number and range of training activities supported, will publish quality criteria to ensure relevance of training being supported and will provide generic training materials to encourage new providers to create training opportunities for members.
  Success measure: number of scholarships delivered, feedback from recipients and their employers, re-use of generic training materials by third parties, emergence of new training providers.
- *Providing support in curriculum development for new educational programmes in digital preservation*
  Target: the DPC will engage with higher and further education providers, encouraging library, archive, records management, computing and cognate departments to incorporate high quality teaching in digital preservation within their programmes. The DPC will aim to accredit at least one such course before the end of 2014, or collaborate in this accreditation as appropriate.
  Success measure: range and quality of qualifications increasing, perception of quality of graduates, willingness of institutions to work with DPC, satisfactory accreditation of at least one course.
- *Undertaking systematic and regular analysis of the digital preservation labour market*
  Target: the DPC will harvest representative labour market information for digital preservation roles. It will share these resources with members seeking to recruit their own staff and use this intelligence to support the development of training materials and qualifications for digital preservation practitioners.
  Success measure: number of adverts 'captured', use of DPC intelligence by others, use of intelligence in the development of training.
- *Facilitating student placements and early career training with and for the benefit of members*
  Target: DPC will establish an exchange programme that matches opportunities in member agencies with the needs of HEIs and the induction and development of staff. The first placement programme will have been published before the end of 2014.
  Success measure: willingness of members and other participants, reports from participants and hosts of placements, evidence of skills developed.
- *Facilitating staff exchanges between members that help career development and help transfer skills*
  Target: DPC will investigate the establishment of a programme of exchanges between staff. By the end of 2014 at least one batch of exchanges will have taken place and have been reported.
  Success measure: willingness of participants and hosts, evidence of skills transferred.
- *Understanding and prioritizing member needs*
  Target: In the first year of the new strategic plan, the DPC will initiate a sustained analysis of training needs among members and use this to shape workforce development and knowledge exchange.
  Success measure: willingness of members to participate, accuracy of analysis, speed with which recommendations are implemented, extent to which the needs are met over the subsequent years.

2. DPC: Knowledge Exchange

The DPC will be a forum for detailed and timely knowledge exchange between members and for the benefit of the wider community. It will help members to understand and refine their own requirements, provide them with access to world class expertise in digital preservation and help them to communicate lessons learned from development projects. In this way we will ensure that members can progress more quickly in the development of digital preservation solutions. We shall do this by:

- *Providing frequent, accessible and current communications*
  Target: the DPC will review its communication plan in the first three months of the new strategic plan. This will include plans for content development on the DPC web site, use of social media, and the aggregation of content from members' blogs, newsfeeds and other media.
  Success measures: Frequency of updates to the web site and number of users as evidenced by analytics, followers on Twitters, citations; production of What's New on a monthly basis and growth in readership of online publications.

- *Providing an expertise and practitioner network*
  Target: the DPC will use web-based tools to create an active practitioner and expert network which will allow members to locate and share expertise and to promote projects and initiatives.
  Success measure: number of members registered, representativeness of members registered, case studies of knowledge and expertise shared or projects established through such a network.
- *Providing accessible but authoritative publications*
  Target: DPC will commission and publish at least six new Technology Watch Reports in the period 2012-15 (or revise and update existing reports). DPC will continue to publish case notes, aiming for 4 per year. It will maintain an FAQ service and will examine the possibility of revising and re-publishing the Digital Preservation Handbook.
  Success measure: extent to which DPC publications are cited and used, quality among peers.
- *Offering thematic events and networking opportunities*
  Target: DPC will offer at least six thematic events for members per year, invite members to attend an annual Planning Day and invite full members to send delegates to an annual Directors' Group.
  Success measure: feedback from events, willingness of members to share expertise and share problem solving.
- *Supporting thematic task forces and working parties*
  Target: the DPC shall respond to member requests to provide a forum for specialist task forces to address specific areas of concern.
  Success measure: perception of success among members, utility of solutions provided.
- *Undertaking informal consultancy and mutual support for member initiatives*
  Target: the DPC will be available to provide informal consultancy for members such as sitting on project boards, helping to find partners, problem solving for specific themes, advising and supporting grant applications and helping with procurement and policy.
  Success measure: number of requests from members, perception of quality by members, success of projects and proposals supported this way.
- *Articulating and capturing requirements for preservation services and encouraging developers and technology vendors to supply products that meet members' needs*
  Target: the DPC will dedicate one of its planning days to mapping members' technology needs and will disseminate the results to vendors and developers. It will arrange at least one meeting between members and technology vendors and suppliers to ensure that they properly understand member needs and are able to develop tools and technologies that meet them.
  Success measure: quality of participation in, and feedback from, planning day, uptake of recommendations by developers, funders and vendors; greater satisfaction with products, reduced costs of development

3. DPC: Developing Assurance and Practice

The DPC will facilitate and support the development of tools and methods that offer credible and achievable routes to long-term preservation for digital resources managed and created by members and their partners. It will identify and respond to gaps in the current provision of tools, standards and services and will encourage and guide the release of resources so that members and partners can fill these gaps. It will investigate the provision of added value services to members and will support the development of standards and tools that are of benefit to all. We shall do this by:

- *Reviewing, commenting and supporting the development of standards relevant to digital preservation*
  Target: the DPC will set up a standards observatory to inform members of emerging standards for preservation and enable members to input into standards development.
  Success measure: number of standards and draft standards assessed by the observatory function, perception of utility by members.
- *Researching, documenting and articulating members' needs to vendors, developers and funders*
  Target: the DPC will dedicate one of it planning days to examine members' technology needs and will compile the results of this study and prioritise them to produce a report that will be placed in front of developers.
  Success measure: number of participants in study, accuracy of analysis, number of vendors, developers and funders reading and acting on recommendations.

- *Enhancing and providing mechanisms to assure the quality of digital preservation facilities and processes*
  Target: DPC will establish a working party to deliver peer review of preservation facilities and services to enhance member's practice and improve repository procedures. This working party will consider more formal quality assurance mechanisms.
  Success measure: number of facilities reviewed, perception of usefulness by members, willingness to participate.
- *Enhancing and providing mechanisms to accredit digital preservation training courses and practitioners*
  Target: DPC will provide free online access to course materials derived from the TIMBUS and APARSEN projects. We will publish explicit criteria to govern the allocation of funds from the DPC Leadership Programme making this a de-facto quality stamp.
  Success measures: uptake of online materials, number of courses accredited, number of new entrants into training, improving quality and relevance of training as perceived by participants.

4. DPC: Advocacy

The DPC will be an advocate for the digital preservation community. It will help key decision makers and opinion formers to understand the opportunities and challenges of long-term access and encourage them to act, ensuring that public and institutional policy, legislation and regulation enable rather than inhibit the development of a stable and extensible digital preservation infrastructure. We shall do this by:

- *Researching, sharing and refining user requirements for long-term access*
  Target: the DPC will publish, through case studies, examples of the opportunity and benefits delivered by preservation and the opportunity costs and harm that result from inaction.
  Success measures: extent to which these case studies can be used in advocacy, perception of credibility of claims made.
- *Engaging proactively with public policy development.*
  Target: the DPC will respond to all relevant public consultations and will take opportunities to provide informal personal briefings for opinion formers, policy makers and senior managers. DPC will develop an executive briefing pack on digital preservation.
  Success measures: number of consultation responses published, perception of impact, number of invitations to comment.
- *Helping members develop and embed policies and regulations that can become examples of good practice within their own communities*
  Target: the DPC will create a policy exchange that will collate and distribute members' digital preservation policies and practices, deriving generic lessons from these as appropriate, and publishing appropriate elements as case studies of good practice.
  Success measure: willingness of members to supply policy documents, ability to re-use case studies to inform policy.
- *Providing high profile and accessible mechanisms to communicate good practice and innovation in digital preservation to those in cognate groups (such as through the Digital Preservation Awards)*
  Target: The DPC will offer the Digital Preservation Award every two years, providing a mechanism to celebrate and raise the profile of significant accomplishments.
  Success measure: number of applications, volume of media coverage generated, perception of value among applicants and judges

5. DPC: Partnership and Sustainability

The DPC will develop and maintain partnerships so that all agencies involved in providing or enabling long-term access to digital resources can flourish and benefit from an effective and productive relationship with the DPC. In this way we will work to work to discourage fragmentation, ensure the maximum impact for existing and emerging tools, and encourage new contributions to the field. The DPC will continue to monitor and maintain its own relevance, coherence and effectiveness. We shall do this by:

- *Establishing and updating our relationships with existing and emerging partners*
  Target: the DPC will review and update its existing set of relationships and establish and formalise new relationships as appropriate with partners

Success measure: successful completion of negotiations, evidence of collaboration

- *Expanding the core membership to include all relevant authorities, agencies and services with an operational interest in long-term access to data in the UK and Ireland*
  Target: the DPC will grow its organisational membership by at least two new agencies per year retaining all of its current members. The relative proportions of associate to full members (circa 2:1) will be maintained, and a new membership category for institutions that offer relevant degree programmes will be introduced. The personal membership category will be retained and become a permanent feature with around 30 members.
  Success measures: growing number and distribution of members, interest in membership.
- *Consulting with the membership and ensuring that the executive remains accountable and responsive to the changing and diverse needs of members*
  Target: the officers and staff of the DPC will meet all of the members of the Coalition face to face and in their own places of work at least once during the operation of the plan. Members will be invited to the planning day and the directors' group and receive reports and elect officers at the Annual General Meeting. The Board will continue to be drawn from the full members. It will meet regularly and provide oversight, scrutiny and support to the executive.
- *Broadening the revenue base of the Coalition through fundraising, sponsorship, consultancy and projects to deliver greater value from member subscriptions*
  Target: the DPC will continue to move from complete dependence on subscriptions by developing new revenue streams. However, new revenue streams will only be adopted where they enhance our capacity to deliver benefits to our members, are congruent with members' needs, are consistent with our values, and are aligned with our strategic objectives.
- *Being clear about core functions of the Coalition and striking an appropriate balance between core functions and opportunities to undertake projects.*
  Target: DPC will derive a proportion of its income from projects but will assess all projects against their relevance to the strategic plan. The Board will approve any projects with an income greater than 10K and will receive written or verbal reports as appropriate.
  Success measure: focus on strategic plan
- *Discharging all appropriate statutory and legal functions and ensuring transparency of governance through an annual independent audit*
  Target: the DPC will maintain its current financial and regulatory processes. Annual budgets will be published and approved by the Board, and annual accounts will be published, scrutinised by an independent auditor and made available to all members at the AGM and through an annual report. Monthly management accounts will be filed, made available to the Board on request, and will be presented at each meeting of the Board. All other statutory and legal functions will be maintained.
  Success measure: reports from auditors, perception of satisfaction from Board and other members
- *Ensuring that we have the appropriate levels of resources to operate effectively by setting realistic targets for income, realistic work plans and undertaking regular assessments of staffing and risk*
  Target: the DPC staff complement will be reviewed early in the period of the strategic plan against a workplan which will be delivered by the Executive Director, ensuring that all necessary resources are available and optimally deployed. The DPC will routinely review the risks it faces and it will act to implement any actions that arise from such analysis. DPC staff will be employed under clear terms and conditions and a staff handbook will be maintained and updated throughout.
  Success criteria: balanced workload and targets, delivery of work plan, reports from staff review.

About this document

The DPC strategic plan was written by William Kilbride (Executive Director) after consultation among the entire membership through 2011. It was scrutinised and improved by a working party of the DPC Board comprising Richard Ovenden, Patricia Killiard and Nicky Whisted, was approved by the Board of the Coalition on 1st December 2011 and endorsed by the Annual General Meeting of the Coalition also on 1st December.