

Advocacy paper – Intermediate version of the roadmap

Target: content providers and end-users like researchers / CH institutions

Digital preservation is a main stake for DCH institutions: they produce a large volume of data which needs to be safely stored, permanently accessed and easily re-used over time by different end users.

However, even if it has been identified as a key issue for DCH, there is a lack of best practices and common approaches. Member states are developing and implementing national preservation strategies, but there are many commonalities which could be addressed at European level.

Indeed, the DCH-RP project was designed to answer these needs, and to develop a roadmap to implement a federated preservation infrastructure for DCH, dedicated to support the application of open science in the arts and the humanities

Stakes:

- to make digital cultural heritage accessible and usable long term
- to contribute to the research capacities development of the DCH sector

What is digital preservation?

Digital preservation is defined as “a set of activities required to make sure digital objects can be located, rendered, used and understood in the future”¹. A more comprehensive term ‘digital curation’ is often used in parallel with digital preservation. It has a wider meaning and involves “maintaining, preserving and adding value to digital data throughout its life-cycle”²

One of the main issues is to preserve usability of digital objects over time to overcome technology obsolescence.

How is digital preservation tackled by cultural institutions?

4 main strategies are currently used (Techno-centric, incremental, analytical, durable digital objects), the migration strategy – converting digital objects to new standardised file formats at the point of technical generation changes - being the dominant one. The use of e-infrastructure could change this situation, easing digital preservation processes and reducing their costs, contributing to the general interoperability and openness of DCH data.

Why a roadmap for digital preservation?

¹ <http://www.digitalpreservationeurope.eu/what-is-digital-preservation/>

² <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/digital-curation/what-digital-curation>

Roadmaps are useful instruments to present the scope and coverage of an e-infrastructure. They are also frequently used within projects and institutions in the digital preservation domain. There is no roadmap on digital cultural heritage preservation. The DCH-RP project will build a roadmap, which should help policy makers and programme owners to plan ahead and assist managerial teams of cultural institutions in taking decisions related to digital preservation. It will support cultural heritage institutions in defining practical action plan with a realistic time frame for its implementation.

An intermediate version of the roadmap has been produced in January 2014, and will be completed until the end of the project, leading to a final roadmap in September 2014.

Why is it relevant for DCH sector to use e-infrastructures for digital preservation?

- Long-term preservation (i.e., bit-level preservation) and access to digital objects of different kind, also so called “live” content (e.g., streaming audio and video collections);
- Multiple entry-points that suit a variety of user interfaces (e.g. APIs, protocols);
- The DCH-community can focus on its own areas of specialisation by deploying new services for monitoring and management tools that ensure smooth and secure running of distributed operations;
- Forming a community of practice or a Virtual Research Community that transcends discipline and national boundaries while achieving economies of scale by bringing together international communities;
- Benefitting from integration within the research and educational e-Infrastructures support framework;
- Central hosting and monitoring of middleware services;
- Simple authentication and authorisation infrastructures for large (and potentially unbounded) user groups;
- Connections to shared services in other countries and sectors. (e.g., research data centres, commercial businesses, etc.).

How a federated e-infrastructure for DCH can be implemented?

DCH-RP proposes to exploit and integrate already existing e-infrastructures for research and academia (NRENs, NGIs and other data infrastructures), and to create only the parts which are not available. Existing e-infrastructures can be efficient channels also for services aimed at the digital cultural heritage sector for distributed digital preservation. Even if they are national entities, common policies, processes and protocols can be established to allow DCH institutions to access e-infrastructures.

What are the first recommendations of the roadmap?

The roadmap needs to focus on at least 4 areas presented below. For each area, the actions to take in the short-term (through 2014) are presented:

- Harmonisation of data storage and preservation: to integrate in common environments the curation of research data with other digital objects
- Improve interoperability: to integrate preservation requirement at all stages of digitisation and online access
- Cross-sector integration: to maximise successful solutions efficiency, knowledge and know-how transfer
- Governance models: to favour successful institutional participation in larger e-infrastructure initiatives, aggregation and re-use of digital resources.

How can stakeholders contribute to the roadmap?

In order to establish a roadmap answering to the stakeholders' needs, DCH-RP project will involve Cultural heritage institutions and e-infrastructures, through several means: workshops, events and conferences, questionnaires. It will combine bottom-up with top-down approaches, for a user-centric view that should foresee the implementation of the Roadmap to be based on requirements, development, testing and validation, from the digital cultural heritage community. The next consultation meeting will be in Tallinn, on 23rd and 24th of April 2014, to discuss the results of the intermediate roadmap.

Want to know more?

- On line:

On the project: Visit the DCH-RP website: www.dch-rp.eu

On the intermediate version of the roadmap: <http://www.dch-rp.eu/getFile.php?id=221>

- Event:

E-infrastructures for data preservation and curation @ EGI CF 2014, Helsinki

Workshop organised by DCH-RP in the frame of the EGI Community Forum in

Helsinki, 20th May 2014. Information : <http://www.digitalmeetsculture.net/article/e-infrastructures-for-data-preservation-and-curation-egi-cf-2014-helsinki/>