DigitalPreservationCoalition

Digital Archives for Archaeology and the Historic Environment – October 2011

1. Introduction

The DPC has been invited to facilitate a conversation between English Heritage, RCAHMS, RCAHMW and ADS to explore closer collaboration on the delivery of digital preservation services. Thoughtfully defined, closer collaboration could deliver advantages to all parties such as improvements in quality, more effective interoperability of processes, greater efficiencies in operation or economies in scale. Moreover, trusted preservation services benefit from peer scrutiny and transparency. So, even if closer collaboration proves to be impractical, these discussions may yet provide the basis for independent review and enhancement.

2. Preliminary Survey

In order to make the most efficient use of time, members have been asked to prepare a short overview of their digital preservation processes. This analysis is based on the functional areas of the Reference Model for an Open Archival Information System (OAIS), an ISO standard which assembles the building blocks of a long term preservation facility. The standard assumes the existence of six functional areas: Ingest, Archival Storage, Data Management, Administration, Planning and Access. A seventh area – Common Services – provides the local platform on which an OAIS is contructed. Each functional area in OAIS is composed of a group of components which work together to provide preservation services. Although the function of each component and the relationships between components are described, the standard offers only limited guidance on how any component is configured. From an organisational perspective, OAIS outlines a preservation architecture and common vocabulary, but it makes no assumption on whether the functional components are offered by a single agency or are shared between multiple partners, or outsourced. Therefore even a preliminary mapping against OAIS enables agencies to plan how they might contract services, outsource them or collaborate as appropriate.

The survey is not intended as an informal guide to the meeting rather than a comprehensive statement. Participants are asked to assess their own strengths and weaknesses against each functional component of OAIS, to identify whether they think there is scope for collaboration in this area, to outline the sort of collaboration they think is possible and what they would hope to gain from it.

Each participant at the meeting is asked to complete the attached questionnaire which will then be compiled and distributed to others in advance of the meeting. Comments and corrections are invited on this draft. We aim to distribute the compiled set of surveys on Thursday 13th October, so completed surveys should be sent to william@dpconline.org by 1700 on **Wednesday 12th October 2011.**

3. Plan for the meeting

The meeting will be chaired by William Kilbride of the DPC and to encourage free and frank exchanges participants are asked that the discussions be kept confidential.

The meeting will start with a question and answer session where each partner will be asked to present an element of the survey, then invite question and answer to clarify issues and opportunities. This element of the meeting will identify themes for the later part where participants will be asked to develop then present an action plan for collaboration on specific and clearly scoped areas, identifying also the benefits that are intended to accrue and the resources available to achieve them.

Proposals at the meeting will be written up by the DPC and shared among participants who will then be asked to make a formal response to the recommendations made, within a timescale agreed among partners. This gives members time to reflect on the process, discuss with their own stakeholders, and decide whether or not they are willing to progress any subsequent work.
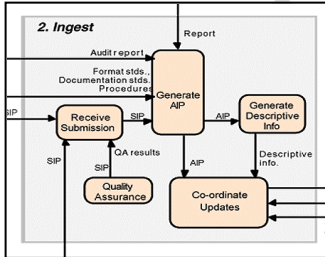
4. More details

For more details on the OAIS standard ….
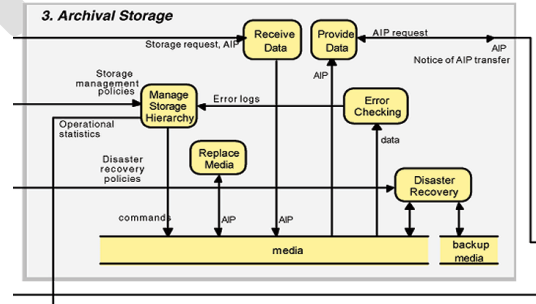
Survey of Digital Archive Functions

1. Introduction

What organization do you represent?	
What is the url of your organization?	
Who completed this survey?	
What is your email address?	
When did you complete this survey?	

2. Ingest

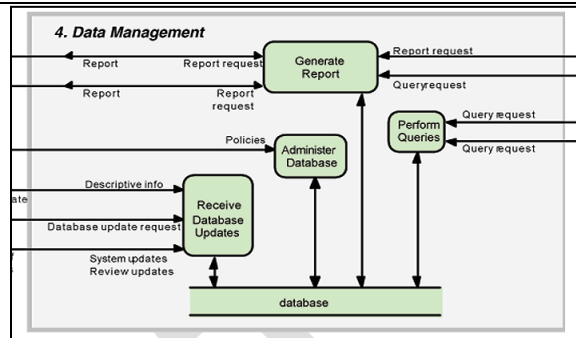|	
The 'Ingest' functional area is the interface between the OAIS and its producers and is primarily concerned with the taming of content and preparation for transfer into the archive. It includes five components: 'Receive Submission; Quality Assurance; Generate Archival Information Package; Generate Descriptive Information; and Co-ordinate Updates.	
Please briefly describe the typical elements of your ingest processes?	
Which parts of your ingest processes do you think are particularly strong?	
Which parts of your ingest processes would you like to improve given the resources?	
Are there any elements of the ingest process which you think would be improved through collaboration?	
Are there any elements of the ingest process which can only be carried out locally?	

3. Archival Storage

The Archival Storage area is oriented around the management of robust storage, placing data on media, ensuring the integrity of data stored and recovering data from media as required. It includes six functional components: Receive Data, Provide Data, Error Checking, Disaster Recovery, Replace Media, Manage Storage.	
Please briefly describe the typical operation of your Archival Storage?	
Which parts of your archival storage operations do you think are particularly strong?	
Which parts would you like to improve given the resources?	

Are there any elements of the archival storage which you think would be improved through collaboration?	
Are there any elements of archival storage which can only be carried out locally?	

4. Data Management

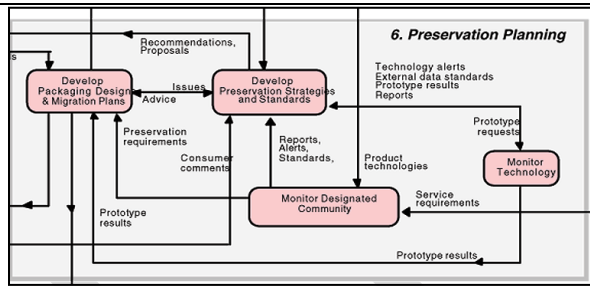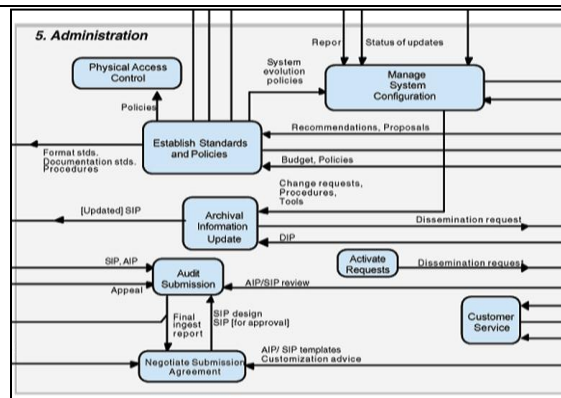| The Data Management functions are primarily concerned with ensuring that descriptive information about the contents of the archive is maintained and made available for internal administrative and reporting. In this context 'data' is distinguished from the information packages which the archive receives, preserves or distributes. This functional area is therefore oriented around a collection management database. It includes four components: Receive Database Updates, Administer Database, Perform Queries, and Generate Reports.	
Please briefly describe the typical elements of data management in your preservation facilities?	
Which parts of your data management processes do you think are particularly strong?	
Which parts of your data management processes would you like to improve given the resources?	
Are there any elements of the data management process which you think would be improved through collaboration?	
Are there any elements of your data management processes which can only be carried out locally?	

5. Administration

| The Administration functions ensure that the OAIS remains aligned with the goals of the agencies which sponsor it. It is a relatively complex area and interfaces with technology and resources as well with the administrative relationships an archive is required to develop with consumers and producers. It includes eight components: Physical Access Control, Establish Standards and Policies, Manage System Configuration, Archival Information Update, Audit Submission, Negotiate Submission Agreement, Activate Requests and Customer Service.	
Please briefly describe the typical elements of Administration in your preservation facilities?	

Which parts of your Administration do you think are particularly strong?	
Which parts of your Administration would you like to improve given the resources?	
Are there any elements of the Administration which you think would be improved through collaboration?	
Are there any elements of Administration which can only be carried out locally?	

6. Preservation Planning

The Preservation Planning functions are primarily concerned with ensuring that the actions and standards followed by the OAIS remain current and effective through time, and that any actions are assessed and validated where possible. It includes four components: MonitorTechnology, Monitor Designated Community, Develop Preservation Strategies and Standards, and Develop Packaging Design and Migration Plans. OAIS makes only rudimentary recommendations for what ought to be included in a preservation plan.	
Please briefly describe the typical elements of preservation planning in your preservation facilities?	
Which parts of preservation planning do you think are particularly strong?	
Which parts of preservation planning would you like to improve given the resources?	
Are there any elements of preservation planning which you think would be improved through collaboration?	
Are there any elements of preservation planning which can only be carried out locally?	

7. Access

The Access functions manage the relationship between the OAIS and its consumers. In doing so it interfaces with the administration functions and archival storage. The scale and nature of access is not defined so the consumer could be broker who provides access to the public, a customer, or the public via the Internet. There are only three components: Generate Dissemination Information Package, Co-ordinate Access Activities and Deliver Response.
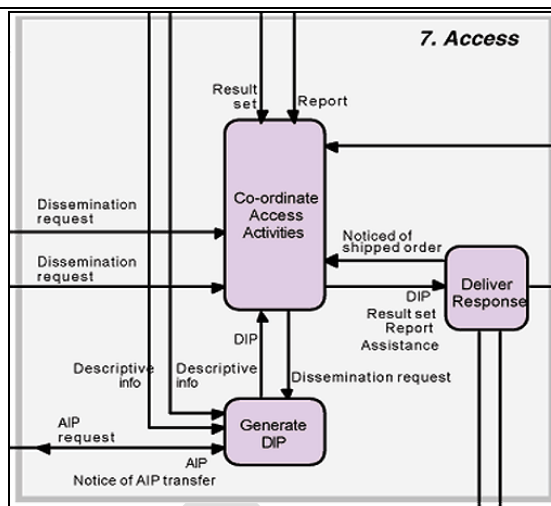
Please briefly describe the access functions within your preservation facilities?	
Which parts of access do you think are particularly strong?	
Which parts of access would you like to improve given the resources?	
Are there any elements of access which you think would be improved through collaboration?	
Are there any elements of access which can only be carried out locally?	

8. Any other comments

Are there any other areas of strength you would like to mention?	
Are there any other areas of weakness you would like to mention	
Are there any other areas for collaboration you would like to propose	

9. About this document

Version 1	Document initiated by WK and distributed to members as draft	30/09/2011	WK
Version 2	Updated with comments and distributed		
Version 3	Return individual survey responses		
Version 4	Compile responses and distribute to members		