

Long-term archive preservation: taking IISH policy to the next level in 2017

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Introduction

For some time now the IISH has had a reliable infrastructure for recording and storing digital collections and making them accessible. An important component of this infrastructure is the digital repository, where the collections are preserved for the long term and can be accessed online and offline. In 2017 the IISH will be implementing three closely related projects to enhance its policy on long-term digital archiving:

- Implementing Archivematica, a digital preservation system
- Applying for Data Seal of Approval (DSA) certification for the digital repository
- Drawing up a Preservation Policy Plan

Archivematica

Archivematica is open-source software that allows digital archives to be ingested into the digital repository in a standards-based manner, where it can be permanently stored and accessed. The software allows all stages, from pre-archiving, ingesting, preservation, and dissemination,¹ to follow a logical sequence. It adopts the logic of the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) model. This serves as a reference model for the design of a digital repository and is recognized throughout the world as the standard for the long-term preservation of digital collections. For the IISH, implementing Archivematica represents an important advance in the long-cherished wish to acquire TDR (Trusted Digital Repository) status for the digital repository.

Data Seal of Approval certification

To achieve TDR status, in 2017 the IISH will apply for a DSA certificate. This globally supported standard covers a wide range of requirements that must be met in order for a digital repository to be certified.² It requires, for example, an explicit policy on sustainability, a continuity plan for the long-term preservation of collections, and a plan to ensure that collections are used and curated in accordance with what has been agreed with those creating the collection, and taking into account privacy and copyright issues. Requirements are also set in relation to organizational aspects, including a clear description of responsibilities, sufficient qualified staff, and ongoing expertise development. On the technical side, there are requirements concerning the authenticity³ and

¹ In this context dissemination does not mean offline or online access. Access itself is provided using other software. Archivematica ensures that files and metadata are provided in such a way that they can be processed by the access software.

² See website: <http://www.datasealofapproval.org>.

³ In this context authenticity means whether the essential characteristics of the digital object are preserved – even after being migrated to another, more durable format. One question concerns whether the metadata adequately capture the context (provenance) of the creation and transformation of the digital object.

integrity⁴ of data, storage systems (including backup procedures), data quality (in relation to metadata and metadata systems), workflows, and the overall technical infrastructure. Another important requirement concerns the security of data, users, and services. Finally, the digital objects must be discoverable, reusable, and uniquely identifiable. The DSA applicant must be able to substantiate everything with documentation and have drawn up a so-called Preservation Policy Plan.

The DSA certification process follows a set procedure. The first stage is a self-assessment by the applicant. Once this has been completed, it can be submitted for peer review by a number of institutions that have already been DSA-certified. If the requirements are met, the DSA certificate will be awarded for three years, after which the applicant is required to reapply for certification.

Preservation Policy Plan

This policy plan outlines the ambitions and responsibilities of the IISH in relation to the long-term preservation of its collections and details how we actually go about this. The aspects covered in this plan are broadly similar to the requirements for the DSA and therefore constitute an important basis for certification. As a result, the plan also covers mission, policy, expertise, organization, storage, metadata, preservation, storage formats, access, and protection. The IISH will be publish this policy plan in the course of 2017.

⁴ In this context the integrity of the digital object is taken to mean that the integrity of objects should be ensured at bit level.