

Premises for co-operative long-term digital preservation solutions in Europe

Neil Beagrie

British Library/JISC

Frankfurt

April 2007

My brief

Our key issue is that the digital long-term preservation in Europe should be understood as part of a partnership, with distributed task areas... the final discussion of the conference...should trace the question whether all domains of cooperation have already been identified or further effort has to be made.

Focus of this lecture

- Some general reflections on collaboration
- National collaboration
- European/international collaboration
Subject and inter-disciplinary collaboration
- The bigger picture: the Web and Network
- Some premises
- Some suggestions

Collaboration – some reflections

- Not free or necessarily easy – an overhead and usually dependent on key individuals
- but it is critical to most aspects of digital preservation
- a “broad church” – collaboration has many forms and levels and possible roles
- must be flexible – needs/organisations change
- Institutions compete as well as collaborate

National collaboration

- Some very successful exemplars of national networks now in Europe – DPC, Nestor, PIN, - others in discussion
- National collaboration is a key building block – significant funding, organisational remits, and collections are at national level
- However long gestation period – need investment in digital content, trigger point, politics to build
- Example of DPC...

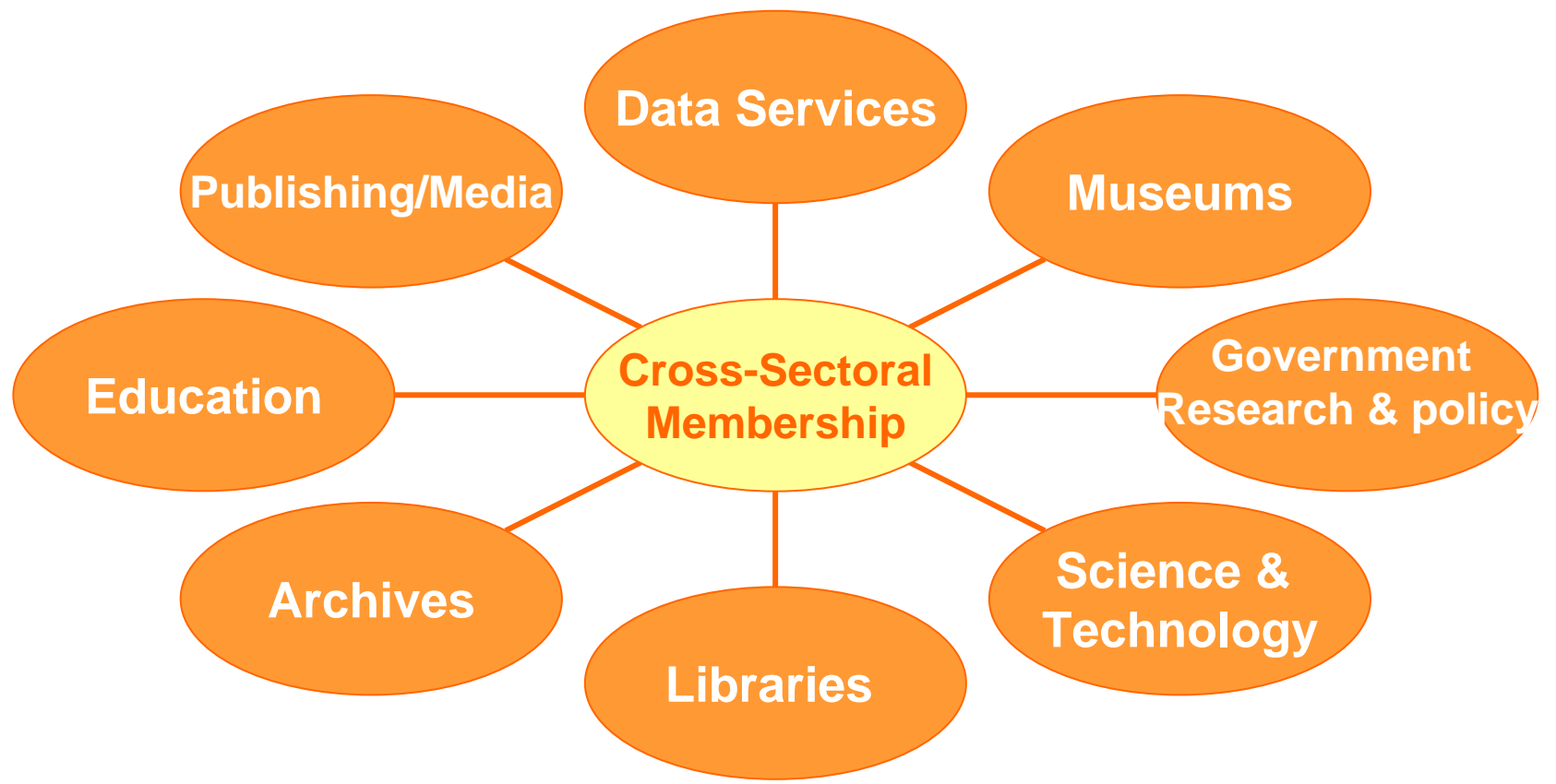
Mission of the DPC

“ The aim of the Digital Preservation Coalition is to secure the preservation of digital resources in the UK and to work with others internationally to secure our global digital memory and knowledge base ”

Timeline

- **March 1999:** A JISC/BL workshop recommended establishing a coordinating mechanism to tackle digital preservation
- **June 2000:** JISC Preservation Focus post established. Its main priority was to establish the DPC
- **January 2001:** First Summit meeting held, first civic meeting with 9 full members
- **July 2002:** DPC established as a not-for-profit Company Limited by Guarantee
- **May 2003:** New post of Digital Preservation Co-ordinator was established, first full-time employee
- **March 2004:** 27 members of the DPC, comprising a wide cross- sectoral range

Members of the DPC



Rationale for the DPC

What does the DPC do?

- **Raises the profile** of Digital Preservation
- **Runs advocacy campaign** which targets stakeholders:
 - Owners and Creators of digital resources; Funding bodies
- **Provides examples** of Good Practice
- **Highlights** where gaps and priorities for action and responsibility are
- **Acts as catalyst** for Action
 - Builds partnerships, disseminating information; maintaining current awareness, develops projects

Activities – Initiatives

Digital Preservation Award:



- This award, the first of its kind, is worth £5,000 and recognises achievement in the digital preservation field
- Sponsored by the DPC, it is aimed at encouraging creative and practical approaches to the preservation of ‘born-digital’ materials
- The award reflects significant progress both in the work of the DPC and institutions who are carrying out important digital preservation work

European/International Collaboration

- Digital preservation is a global challenge arising from international developments in IT
- Long-term risks accumulate over time and place – role of “safe places network”
- Several areas therefore where responses may be best at a European and international level
- Some examples are/could be:

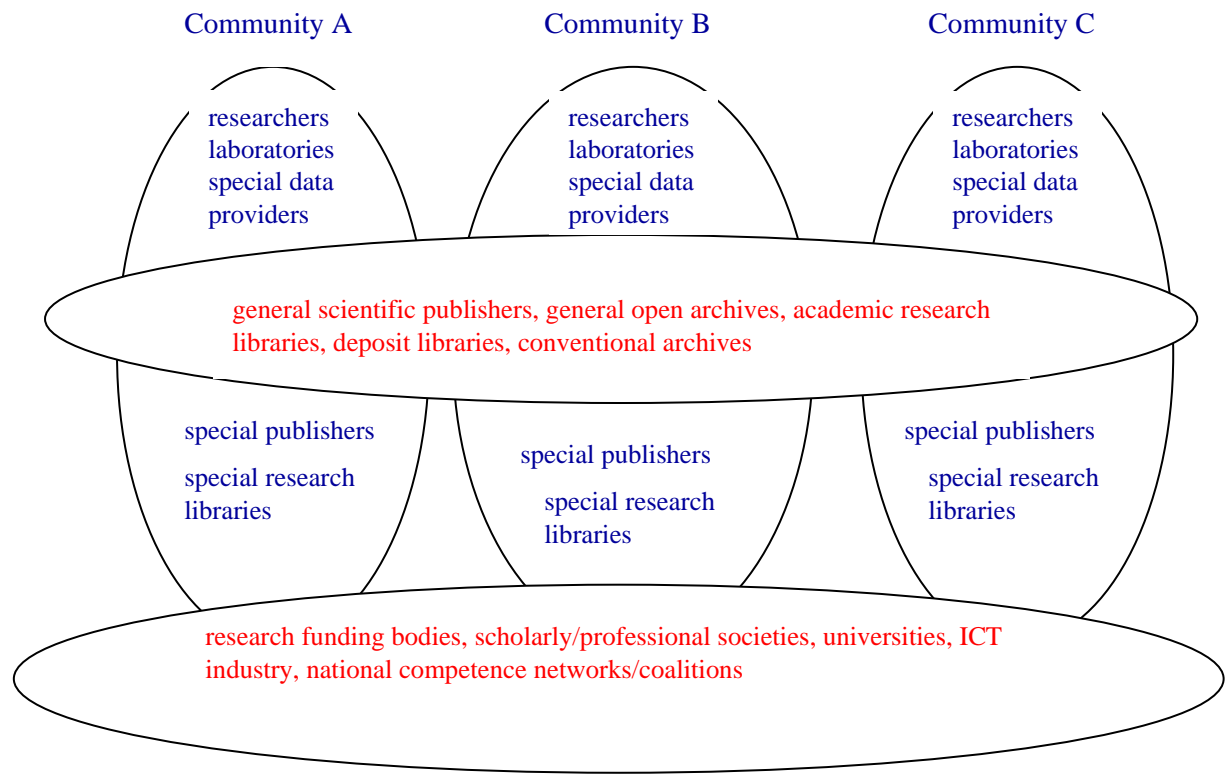
European/International Collaboration

- **Training** – Cornell/DPC courses, Erpanet/DPE
- **Research** – EU eg Planets, Caspar
- **Certification** – eg TRAC checklist
- **Tools and workflow** – eg IIPC web-archiving
- **Current awareness** – eg PADI, Whats New in Digital Preservation
- **Infrastructure** – too premature or should we do more?
- **Collaborations possible for all the above**

Subject and inter-disciplinary collaboration

- Disciplinary collaboration important for data preservation and re-use in many areas of sciences, social sciences, and some arts and humanities
- Example of social science national data archives, networks, and DDI standard
- Can need very long gestation periods
- Increasingly linking up silos of knowledge (data and publications, environmental datasets)
- Growing need being recognised eg Alliance for permanent access to records of science

Alliance for Permanent Access



The Web/Global Network

- So is that it?
- Broader picture and drivers of Global network/The Web
- Democratisation of content creation
- Digitisation on massive scale
- Accelerating shift to digital
- Personal archiving
- Commercial and community activity in our field

Some premises

- Collaboration must fulfil broader policy aims – preservation is a means to an end
- Mutual benefit
- Pragmatic aims (but can still have ambition!)
- Can have different forms, durations, roles for partners
- “right time, right place”
- Reducing cost/replacing cost (but not monolithic)

Some suggestions

- More advocacy – current and future generations
- Develop collaboration between national networks and seed more over time
- Engage with both science and culture
- Develop Alliance for Permanent Access to Records of Science
- Engage with individual citizen/personal archiving
- More collaboration on training, current awareness, tools, certification, and infrastructure

End of my shopping list

Thank you for listening