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Facilitating Re-use of Quality Resources



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Outline

- Building quality service(s)
 - Why?
 - Developing Collections Policies
 - Effective use of standards
 - Interoperability
- Methods for encouraging re–use
 - Facilitating access
 - Promotion and Training
 - Confidence building
- **Towards a
Distributed (Inter)National Electronic Resource?**



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Why build these services?

- a mass of data exist
 - in a variety of forms
 - with varying degrees of accessibility
- money spent on computer–aided research ‘wasted’
 - data effectively vanish
 - 5” disks in a box under the bed... or worse!
 - creators of existing data would like to see them preserved
- researchers want access to existing data for re–evaluation.



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Quality + ...

- To be effective, it is not enough to simply assess basic measures of a resource
 - quality
 - value
- AHDS attempts to encompass the whole
 - data creation
 - data preservation/ migration
 - data access/ re-use.



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Arts & Humanities Data Service

- AHDS is funded by the UK Higher Education Funding Councils, and comprises:
 - Archaeology Data Service (York *et al.*)
 - History Data Service (Essex Data Archive)
 - Oxford Text Archive (Oxford)
 - Performing Arts Data Service (Glasgow)
 - Visual Arts Data Service (Farnham)
 - an Executive (King's College, London).



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Data in the Arts & Humanities (1)

– Arts & Humanities data encompass a wide range of types and formats, including

✍ text

– raw, SGML marked-up, PDF, *etc*

🗄 databases

– flat file, relational, spatial, temporal, GIS, *etc*

❄ images

– manuscripts, works of art, remote sensing, film, video, *etc*

📞 sound

– recordings, MIDI, *etc.*



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Data in the Arts & Humanities (2)

- These data not only span diverse technical formats, they are also
 - constructed within differing conceptual frameworks
 - ‘geographies’, theoretical paradigms, *etc*
 - ‘Creator’ may *not* be quite synonymous with ‘Author’
 - recorded following different — and inconsistent — cataloguing practices
 - described using many different ‘metadata’ systems, if formally described at all.



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Developing Collections Policies

- Unwise to accept *all* data offered... ☺
- AHDS–wide high level Collections Policy
- Individual Collections Policies for each Service
 - ‘Quality’
 - technical considerations
 - methodological considerations
 - data considerations
 - ‘Value’
 - data considerations
 - research considerations
 - re–use considerations



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Effective use of Standards

- To link all these resources, we need
 - metadata/ cataloguing standards
 - communications standards
 - procedural standards
- Effective standards implementation facilitates comparison of like with like across disciplines, data types, and locations.



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What is ‘Metadata’?

- meaningless jargon, **or**
 - a fashionable term for what we’ve always done, **or**
 - “a means of turning *data* into *information*”, **and**
 - “data about data”, **and**
 - the name of a film director (‘Luc Besson’), **and**
 - the title of a book (‘*The Lord of the Flies*’)
 - *etc*
- Metadata means many things to many people
- AHDS is currently concerned primarily with *resource discovery metadata*.



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Interoperability / Technology

- Z39.50 links AHDS services together
 - Z Target at each service
 - Z Gateway at AHDS to allow cross-search
 - Z Gateways at several services, allowing drill-down to other community resources
- Dublin Core forms the AHDS-wide ‘glue’
 - subject communities too diverse for single cataloguing scheme to be effective
 - subject communities too entrenched to accept change, too!
 - Dublin Core accepted following 12 months of consensus building.



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Interoperability / Communication

- AHDS is not alone...
- Imposition of standards and approaches from above has failed before...
- Wheels have been reinvented all too often...
 - Consensus building helps us and those we seek to serve
 - within Subject disciplines
 - across the Arts & Humanities
 - with the world at large
 - national and international.



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Ideas into Practice

- **The AHDS gateway**
- **Two levels**
 - cross–disciplinary access
 - subject specific detail from the Service Providers
- **natural continuum of knowledge rather than artificial subject boundaries.**



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Facilitating Access

- **User friendly interface**
- **Help screens**

- **User support**
 - depositors and end users
 - workshops and case studies
 - depositor packs and user guides



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Promotion & Training

- **Style – coherent identity**
- **Publicity**
 - posters, leaflets, mailings, mailbase lists, newsletter
- **Workshops**
 - librarians and academics, museums and funding agencies, researchers and consultants
- **Case studies**
 - interviews, visits, publications



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Guides to Good Practice

- **Creating and documenting electronic resources**
 - five subject areas
- **Already published:**
 - Archaeology GIS
 - Creating viable scholarly digital resources
 - on the web and in paper form



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Confidence Building

- **Partnerships**

- Royal Commissions, museums, consultancy firms, academics and librarians

- **Teamwork**

- e.g. special collection librarians, academics, data service help people (advice and deposit), technical experts, students



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Towards a D(I)NER

- **DNER framework principles:**
 - a network of distributed data building on existing institutional strengths
 - wide range of data types and users
 - standards for collection management
 - integrated access to collections
- **Iterative evaluation – collectors, cataloguers and users**



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Finding out More...

On the web...

<http://ahds.ac.uk/>

by E-mail...

info@ahds.ac.uk

Announcements...

ahds-all@mailbase

