

# Digital Preservation at Oxford and Cambridge

A collaborative research project to evaluate and provide sustainable recommendations for our digital preservation programmes

## Reflecting on knowledge and skills

Posted on [24 October, 2016](#) by [ljp](#)

From the Outreach & Training perspective at iPres2016, the work of the NDSR competencies has given us much thought towards both the content and methodology of our skills and knowledge needs survey. Jaye Weatherburn's award nominated iPres poster also reinforced our present thinking. In the poster it stated that

*digital preservation is not just a system. It's about the people, the culture, and the support networks that provide the expertise to build the robust infrastructure required to safeguard digital assets into the future to ensure reuse and reproducibility.*

It was great to see that culture and organisation were included in their four distinct areas of focus for digital preservation alongside the perceived established areas of policy and infrastructure.

One of the draws of the Polonsky project was that there were three distinct roles, one of which focussed purely on engagement with its immediate designated communities and the wider digital preservation world, which had a particular focus on people and organisational culture.

Sustainable digital preservation is not just about tools running from command lines, workflows and deep knowledge of file formats (although that is a massive component of it and are skills that can

be learned!) it's also about an awareness of the working environment and contexts in which the preservation of digital assets is needed. To make this happen, we need the people in our cultural institution to be aware of looking after these digital assets for the long term. Our particular task is to make it accessible and relatable to colleagues. Digital preservation is not something to be afraid of and we hope to strike a chord with them that perhaps this digital preservation thing isn't as abstract as they might have first thought and is something that they already have the relevant transferable skills and attributes.

We'll avoid the use of digital preservation buzzwords where possible but through constant review and in consultation with our institutional HR teams we'll see what specific terms and requirements stand the test of time and what terms become a passing fad. However, until we find out what our colleagues do know and what they can do, can we then begin to give them training, support and confidence with their needs when they think about preserving cultural digital objects.

To do this, we've been working on a skills survey which has so far reviewed skills frameworks like [DigCurV](#) and [DigCCurr](#), competency frameworks like [CILIP](#) and [ARA](#) as well as our own institutions and projects and papers such as [PARADIGM](#) and the follow up work done by The University of British Columbia.

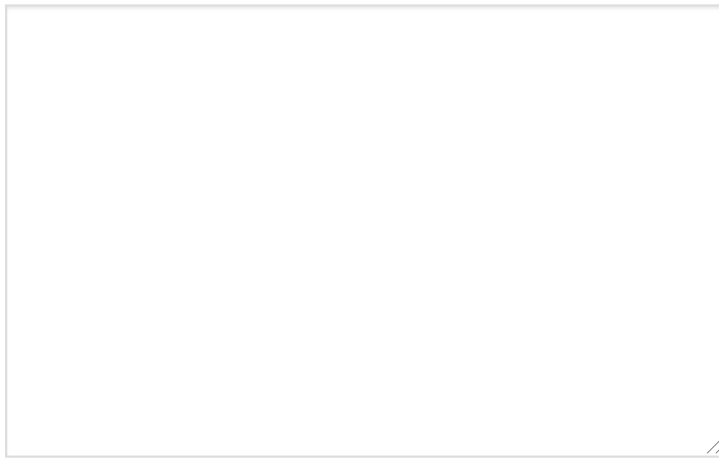
When the survey template is complete, we will share with you here first on our Resource page which we'd love to get feedback on. We won't be sharing the results of the survey until we get permission to publish an anonymised summary. If you feel moved to contribute to this discussion on what attributes, skills and competencies are needed to work in digital preservation, please get in touch or leave us a comment.

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