

Digital Preservation at Oxford and Cambridge

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

Visit to the National Archives: herons and brutalism

Posted on **23 March, 2017** by **Sarah**

An update from Edith Halvarsson about the DPOC team's trip to visit the National Archives last week. Prepare yourself for a discussion about digital preservation, PRONOM, dark archives, and wildlife!



Last Thursday DPOC visited the [National Archives](#) in London. David Clipsham kindly put much time into organising a day of presentations with the TNA's developers, digitization experts and digital archivists. Thank you Diana, David & David, Ron, Ian & Ian, Anna and Alex for all your time and interesting thoughts!

After some confusion, we finally arrived at the picturesque Kew Gardens station. The area around Kew is very sleepy, and our first thought on arrival was “is this really the right place?” However, after a bit more circling around Kew, you definitely cannot miss it. The TNA is located in an imposing brutalist building, surrounded by beautiful nature and ponds built as flood protection for the nation’s collections. They even have a tame heron!



After we all made it on site, the day kicked off with an introduction from Diana Newton (Head of Digital Preservation). Diana told us enthusiastically about the history of the TNA and its Digital Records Infrastructure. It was really interesting to hear how much has changed in just six years since DRI was launched – both in terms of file format proliferation and an increase in FOI requests.

We then had a look at TNA’s ingest workflows into Preservica and storage model with Ian Hoyle (Senior Developer) and David Underdown (Senior Digital Archivist). It was particularly interesting to hear about the TNA’s decision to store all master file content on offline tape, in order to bring down the archive’s carbon footprint.

After lunch with Ron Davies (Senior Project Manager), Anna de Sousa and Ian Henderson spoke to us about their work digitizing

audiovisual material and 2D images. Much of our discussion focused on standards and formats (particularly around A/V). Alex Green and David Clipsham then finished off the day talking about born-digital archive accession streams and PRONOM/DROID developments. This was the first time we had seen the clever way a file format identifier is created – there is much detective work required on David's side. David also encouraged us and anyone else who relies on DROID to have a go and submit something to PRONOM – he even promised its fun! Why not read [Jenny Mitcham's](#) and [Andrea Byrne's](#) articles for some inspiration?

Thanks for a fantastic visit and some brilliant discussions on how digital preservation work and digital collecting is done at the TNA!



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An excellent visit to the [@UkNatArchives](#) to talk [#digitalpreservation](#) with [@Britpunk80](#). Thank you for having us! [@EdithHalvarsson](#) [#DP0C](#)

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