# PLANETS NEWSLETTER

Issue 1, March 2007

## THE COST OF DIGITAL OBSOLESCENCE

The beautiful digital snapshot of your trip to Tibet, the digital X-ray photos your dentist uses to survey your teeth, not to mention the masses of electronic documents created by organisations around the world and even the digital variant of this newsletter will become a challenge for future preservation as a result of digital decay.

The consequences of this problem are far reaching. Digital obsolescence will become costly or even life threatening for cultural organisations, commercial companies and governments. The value of digital documents produced in the EU which are in danger of loss to digital obsolescence is estimated to be around € 3 billion per year!

The Planets project will develop preservation technology to ensure the accessibility of digital information over time. The European Commission is co-funding PLANETS to the tune of € 9 million, through the digital cultural heritage objective of its Information Society Research programme.

### THE PLANETS SUB-PROJECTS

**Preservation Planning**: empowering organisations to define, evaluate and execute preservation plans

**Preservation Characterisation:** aiding the identification and validation of digital content

**Preservation Action:** ensuring digital content can be kept accessible

**Interoperability Framework:** providing the infrastructure for the interoperability and choreography of the results of the other PLANETS sub-projects

**Test-bed:** delivering a preservation laboratory for the evaluation of preservation tools and activities

**Dissemination and Take-up:** promoting Planets developments with the aim of fostering a market for preservation tools and services

### PLANETS ACTIVITIES

The project was in full swing by the fall of 2006, after establishing teams at the participating institutions. Research is in progress, strategies and designs have been developed and lines of communication have been put in place. The first all staff meeting was held in Pisa in February 2007 and marked a move from predominantly requirements and design work to the implementation of the first tool and service prototypes.

### PLANETS SUB-PROJECTS

The **Preservation Planning** sub-project will build on existing work in this area and add support for more detailed planning inputs, in particular ensuring that institutional factors are considered. The project partners applied the planning process to real digital preservation case studies at a workshop in December 2006 in order to refine the technique. An evaluation of frameworks and platforms to be used for development has been completed and implementation work on the first prototype planning tool has now begun.

The **Characterisation** sub-project has developed a standard for describing the significant properties of digital objects through an eXtensible Characterisation Description Language. It will also create a standard for describing the encoding of significant properties in order to allow tools to extract those properties through an Extraction Language. The design of the Characterisation Framework has been completed and development work is underway. A survey has identified existing tools appropriate for use in future work.

The **Preservation Action** sub-project will significantly advance our ability to preserve digital content using cost effective and appropriate preservation tools. Work to date has focused on a strategy for modelling and describing preservation action tools. This will facilitate the selection of appropriate tools during preservation planning activities. Work over the next six months will include wrapping existing preservation action tools and developing new tools where there are gaps in existing support. Activities to survey, categorise and describe existing tools, as well as devise a model for tool development are already in process.

The **Interoperability Framework** will integrate the tools from each of the other sub-projects in a distributed service network, allowing them to be seamlessly choreographed. The sub-project gathered requirements by interviewing and surveying the Planets partners, in order to facilitate the creation of complex preservation workflows. Following a comprehensive requirements gathering and design process, development of the first iteration of the Framework was due to begin at the time of going to press.

The **Test-bed** will provide a preservation laboratory in which carefully logged and repeatable experiments can be performed on the tools produced by Planets. The wider preservation community will have access to later iterations of the Test-bed. As with the Interoperability Framework, the main focus has been on defining requirements and drawing up a design. Implementation work will begin during the next six months of the project.

The **Dissemination and Take-up** sub-project has developed a foundation and strategy for training and dissemination activities that will take off in earnest as Planets begins to deliver usable outputs. A key activity for the next six months is to foster relationships with the application vendor industry and future users of Planets tools as part of a wider aim to develop a market for preservation tools and services.

### LOOKING AHEAD

Issue 2 of the Planets Newsletter will report on the first prototype tools and services which Planets will be delivering over the coming months. It will also detail events such as the "DCC/PLANETS/CASPAR/DPE Joint workshop: Developing an International Curation and Preservation Training Roadmap" due to be held on the 29th and 30th March 2007.

### ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

Planets will publish a newsletter on a regular basis throughout the four year life of the project. Initially, it will be published twice a year, and this will increase to four times a year in 2008 as Planets begins to deliver prototypes, tools and services. Each issue will detail recent project activities, describe the practical tools and services developed by the project, and highlight a partner involved in the Planets Project.

### CONTACT PLANETS

Sign up for Planets newsletters via the RSS feed at: **http://www.planets-project.eu**

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