Co-operation for digital preservation and curation: collaboration for collection development in institutional repository networks

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Abstract

The digital preservation problem is a series of interrelated technical and organizational challenges that can only be met co-operatively by the many different stakeholders that are involved. The rise of the institutional repository paradigm backs this up with its focus on co-operation within national or subject-based networks and the wider positioning of repositories within modular service frameworks like those devised by the Digital Library Federation's Service Framework Group (Lavoie, Henry & Dempsey, 2006). Long-term preservation is one of the areas where it is widely perceived that institutional repositories will need to co-operate. So, for example, it is assumed that not all institutions with repositories will be able to provide appropriate levels of preservation and curation infrastructure, technical support or expertise. Instead, it is expected that repositories will co-operate on preservation, e.g. within national or regional consortia or with preservation services provided by third parties. These preservation services might include both services that undertake to preserve content on behalf of repositories as well as shared services like registries of representation information that can be used to support specific preservation functions. One of the areas where co-operation is likely to be important is collection development, e.g. helping to reduce duplication of effort while also enabling coordinated decisions to be made about the scalable adoption of multiple preservation strategies. However, it is not entirely clear in all cases what would be the most appropriate levels for co-operation, the exact form that co-operation should take, or what forms of additional policy-level co-ordination might be necessary.