Digital Preservation: Mind the Gap!

Business Case: Digital Repository
What is a Digital Repository?

• A Digital Repository is a combination of people, processes, and technologies which together provide the means to preserve and provide access to digital information.

• A Digital Repository does not simply provide backup! It is an active process which anticipates technology and format obsolescence (amongst other things) and resolves these problems before they occur.
Business Case: Context

• Successful funding from SPRUCE/Jisc of £5K for development of digital preservation business case.

• Bid included expert consultation from University of London Computer Centre (ULCC).

• Views expressed represent current best practice based on expertise and knowledge from Digital Curator and ULCC.
Current Situation

• Some departments that have traditionally produced records in hard copy, for example the Finance Department, are now increasingly digital, meaning that all future records will only be in this format.

• The organisation is well aware that a new, consistent approach to handling digital data is required.

• The implication is that Northumberland Estates inability to cope with such digital information risks compromising its core function of functioning as a property management and investment business.
Options

- Digital preservation is a complex, emerging discipline that is outside the experience of most archivists and requires specialist systems:

  1) **Do nothing**: Extremely risky and could result in worst case scenario, e.g. permanently losing business critical information

  2) **Open Source**: Requires lots of investment/expertise (Not feasible)

  3) **Out of the Box**: Vendors provide best practice systems suitable for NE (Recommended)
Solutions!

- Tessella: Preservica
  - Subscription to the cloud-hosted digital preservation service Preservica.
  - Based on the same advanced technology specifically developed for leading national archives across the world.
  - Offers flexible, robust, affordable solution to Northumberland Estates digital preservation needs.
Benefits
(if recommended option is adopted)

1. Recurring **financial savings** in supporting the transition from paper based to digital records.

2. **Corporate memory** in historical terms, but also the wider context of enhancing accumulated knowledge and expertise.

3. Increased **efficiency** and saving of staff time in accessing and disseminating information.

4. Meeting **legislative requirements**. There is a very high risk that without proactive intervention, digital information will become inaccessible and Northumberland Estates will be unable to meet its **regulatory obligations**.

5. Northumberland Estates have already invested significant resources in the creation of digital information. Adequate digital preservation activities will **protect** and **sustain** existing infrastructure.

6. Supports digital ways of working. For example, the future implementation of an EDRMS can be supported though the assurance that Northumberland Estates can **organise** and **preserve** its digital information into the **future**.
Costs

• 3 month "try before you buy" option (including Tessella promoting Northumberland Estates as EVAL 3 Early Adopter)

• No subscription cost during the first 3 months for the Preservica service, Northumberland Estates must take the 1 day (on-site) basic training course at £2,000

• Continuation into 12 month Classic Pay Plan with the required level of storage (550 Gb) at £1,150 per month

• First Year 15 Month Costs = £18,960 (Inclusive of VAT)

• On-going Annual Costs = £16,560
Recap

• Northumberland Estates needs to act now if business critical records are not lost (e.g. Hilton Nomis)
• Requires a long term commitment to invest resources and staff expertise
• Recommended option Preservica result of extensive analysis of current market
• Risks and future costs will only increase the longer digital preservation is ignored
What next?

- **Firm Commitment** – Digital preservation cannot be done on the cheap and requires sustained investment and support.
- **Skills Gap** - Permanent post with the expertise and experience required to implement and manage both digital preservation and EDRMS.
- **Business Case** - Contains further detailed information supporting this outlook.
- **Honesty** – If the Estates is serious about addressing these problems then it needs to invest the time and resources required to solve them.
- **Organisational Culture** – Adverse to change. Digital information requires significant change to solve significant problems. The business should be adapting and not resisting this change.