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Executive Summary Project Gutenberg is the first and largest collection of eBooks made freely available to the public. The project philosophy is that the greatest value of computers is not their computing power, but rather their potential for the searchable storage and retrieval of library materials. The premise for the project is that any object - whether text, picture, sound or 3D image - that can be entered into a computer can be replicated indefinitely. The eBooks generated by Project Gutenberg are stored on two main servers and can then be downloaded to local servers around the world. This case study differs form many other ERPANET studies in that the project is volunteer-driven. As such, there are no financial or business incentives to preserve the eBooks. The real incentive lies in the belief that literary works in the public domain should be freely accessible to as many people as possible for as long as possible. By digitising everything in 'plain vanilla ASCII' as well as many other formats, the eBooks are readable by over 99% of computer operating systems. By avoiding proprietary formats whenever possible, Project Gutenberg also helps to guarantee the long-term survival of the bit streams of the eBooks. The combination of open formats and the proliferation of copies downloaded around the world should ensure that the Project Gutenberg eBooks currently in existence are still accessible far into the future.

Chapter 1: The ERPANET Project The European Commission and Swiss Confederation funded ERPANET Project (1) (Electronic Resource Preservation and Access Network)

works to enhance the preservation of cultural and scientific digital objects through raising awareness, providing access to experience, sharing policies and strategies, and improving practices. To achieve these goals ERPANET is building an active community of members and actors, bringing together memory organisations (museums, libraries and archives), ICT and software industry, research institutions, government organisations, entertainment and creative industries, and commercial sectors. ERPANET constructs authoritative information resources on state-of-the-art developments in digital preservation, promotes training, and provides advice and tools.

ERPANET consists of four partners and is directed by a management committee, namely Seamus Ross (HATII, University of Glasgow; principal director), Niklaus BŁtikofer (Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv), Hans Hofman (Nationaal Archief/National Archives of the Netherlands), and Maria Guercio (ISTBAL, University of Urbino). At each of these nodes a content editor supports their work, and Peter McKinney serves as a co-ordinator to the project. An Advisory Committee with experts from various organisations, institutions, and companies from all over Europe gives advice and support to ERPANET.

Chapter 2: Scope of the Case Studies While theoretical discussions on best practice call for urgent action to ensure the survival of digital information, it is organisations and institutions that are leading the drive to establish effective digital preservation strategies (2). In order to understand the processes these organisations are undertaking, ERPANET is conducting a series of case studies in the area of digital preservation. In total, sixty case studies, each of varying size, will investigate awareness, strategies, and technologies used in an array of organisations. It is anticipated that upwards of 500 organisations, institutions and public bodies will eventually contribute to this research. The resulting corpus should make a substantial contribution to our knowledge of practice in digital preservation, and form the foundation for theory building and the development of methodological tools. The value of these case studies will come not only from the breadth of sectors included, but also through the depth at which they will explore the issues.

ERPANET is deliberately and systematically approaching disparate sectors from industry and business to facilitate discussion in areas that have traditionally been unconnected. With these case studies ERPANET will broaden the scope and understanding of digital preservation through research and discussion. The case studies will be published to improve the approaches and solutions being developed and to reduce the redundancy of effort. The interviews are identifying current practice not only indepth within specific sectors, but also cross-sectorally: what can the publishing sector learn from the aeronautical sector? Eventually we aim to use this comparative data to produce intra-sectoral overviews. This cross-sectoral fertilisation is a main focus of ERPANET as laid out in its Digital Preservation Charter (3). It is of primary importance that disparate groups are given a mechanism through which to come together as best practices for digital preservation are established in each sector.

Aims The principal aims of the study are to: \* build a picture of methods and match against context to produce best practices; \* accumulate and make accessible information about practices; \* identify issues for further research; \* enable cross-sectoral practice comparisons; \* enable the development of assessment tools; \* create material for training seminars and workshops; and, \* develop contacts.

Potential sectors have been selected to represent a wide scope of information production and digital preservation activity. Each sector may present a unique perspective on digital preservation. Organisational and sectoral requirements, awareness of digital preservation, resources available, and the nature of the digital object created place unique and specific demands on organisations. Each of the case studies is being balanced to ensure a range of institutional types, sizes, and locations.

The main areas of investigation included: \* perception and awareness of risk associated with information loss; \* understanding how digital preservation affects the organisation; \* identifying what actions have been taken to prevent data loss; \* the process of monitoring actions; and, \* mechanisms for determining future requirements.

Within each section, the questions were designed to bring organisational perceptions and practices into focus. Questions were aimed at understanding impressions held on digital preservation and the impact that it has had on the respective organisation, exploring the awareness in the sector of the issues and the importance that it was accorded, and how it affected organisational thinking. The participants were asked to describe, what in their views, were the main problems associated with

digital preservation and what value information actually had in the sector. Through this the reasons for preserving information as well as the risks associated with not preserving it became clear.

The core of the questionnaire focused on the actions taken at corporate level and sectoral levels in order to uncover policies, strategies, and standards currently employed to tackle digital preservation concerns, including selection, preservation techniques, storage, access, and costs. Questions allowed participants to explore the future commitment from their organisation and sector to digital preservation activities, and where possible to relate their existing or planned activities to those being conducted in other organisations with which they might be familiar.

Ten organisations in each sector, and three people within each organisation are targeted for each study. In reality this proved to be problematic. Even when organisations are identified and interviews timetabled, targets often withdrew just before we began the interview process. Some withdrew after seeing the data collection instrument, due in part to the time/effort involved, and others (we suspect) dropped out because they realised that the expertise was not available within their organisation to answer the questions. The perception of risks that might arise through contributing to these studies worried some organisations, particularly those from sectors where competitive advantage is imperative, or liability and litigation issues especially worrying. Non-disclosure agreements that stipulated that we would neither name an organisation nor disclose any information that would enable readers to identify them were used to reduce risks associated with contributing to this study. In some cases the risk was still deemed too great and organisations withdrew.

Chapter 3: Method of Working Initial desk-based sectoral analysis provides ERPANET researchers with essential background knowledge. They then conduct the primary research by interview. In developing the interview instrument, the project directors and editors reviewed other projects that had used interviews to accumulate evidence on issues related to digital preservation. Among these the methodologies used in the Pittsburgh Project and InterPARES I for target selection and data collection were given special attention. The Pittsburgh approach was considered too narrow a focus and provided insufficient breadth to enable full sectoral comparisons. On the other hand, the InterPARES I data collection methodology proved much too detailed and lengthy, which we felt might become an obstacle at the point of interpretation of the data. Moreover, it focused closely on recordkeeping systems within organisations.

The ERPANET interview instrument takes account of the strengths and weaknesses from both, developing a more focussed questionnaire designed to target a range of strategic points in the organisations under examination. The instrument (4) was created to explore three main areas of enquiry within an organisation: awareness of digital preservation and the issues surrounding it; digital preservation strategies (both in planning and in practice); and future requirements within the organisation for this field. Within these three themes, distinct layers of questions elicit a detailed discovery of the state of the entire digital preservation process within participants' institutions. Drawing on the experience that the partners of ERPANET have in this method of research, another important detail has been introduced. Within organisations, three categories of employee were identified for interview: an Information Systems or Technology Manager, Business Manager, and Archivist / Records Manager. In practice, this usually involved two members of staff with knowledge of the organisation's digital preservation activities, and a high level manager who provided an overview of business and organisational issues. This methodology has allowed us to discover the extent of knowledge and practice in organisations, to understand the roles of responsibility and problem ownership, and to appreciate where the drive towards digital preservation is initiated within organisations.

The task of selecting the sectors for the case studies and of identifying the respective companies to be studied is incumbent upon the management board. They compiled a first list of sectors at the very beginning of the project. But sector and company selection is an ongoing process, and the list is regularly updated and complemented. The Directors are assisted in this task by an advisory committee (5).

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Chapter 5: Details and circumstances of the Interviews Michael Hart, Founder and Director of Project Gutenberg and Dr. Greg Newby, CEO of the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation completed the questionnaire and participated in email communications between March and April 2004.

Chapter 6: Analysis This section presents an analysis of the data collected during the case study. It is organised to mirror the sequence of topics in the questionnaire. \* Perception and Awareness of Digital Preservation \* Preservation Activity \* Compliance Monitoring \* Digital Preservation Costs \* Future Outlook

Perception and Awareness of Digital Preservation

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#### **Preservation Activity**

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### Future Outlook

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#### End Notes:

(1) ERPANET is a European Commission funded project (IST-2001-32706). See www.erpanet.org for more details and available products. (2) Chapters 2 and 3 are taken from 'Cross-sectoral Development of Digital Preservation Strategies: ERPANET and the Expansion of Knowledge', given at Preservation of Electronic Records. New Knowledge and Decision-making, Symposium 2003. (3) The Charter is ERPANET's statement on the principles of digital preservation. It has been drafted in order to achieve a concerted and co-ordinated effort in the area of digital preservation by all organisations and individuals that have interest and share these concerns. http://www.erpanet.org/www/content/documents/Digitalpreservationcharterv 4 1.pdf. Appendix. We include the questionnaire to encourage comment and in the hope that other groups conducting similar research can use the ideas contained within it to foster comparability between

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