
**DCC**

Digital Curation Centre

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**Peter Burnhill — DCC Director (Phase One)**



Digital curation enables communication across time: so that there is 'recordness' for changes made in databases and systems; so that the content of digital information survives vagaries in the global environmental change of ICT. After fifty or so years of generating digital information, and several years of studies, digital curation is the problem space of the moment. Now is the time to act, achieving consensus about what is new, what is different about the digital, and about those aspects of prior thinking and proven procedure upon which we can build for our knowledge management.

Digital curation is a new term for two complementary areas of importance to scholarship, and much else: how to make the best of, and add value to that which is digital; how to ensure the longevity of what is well judged as having long term value. For both data curation and digital preservation there are challenges of large scale and of variety, and of competition for policy and funding priority, to be met by sharing insight, vocabulary and procedure for continuing and open access to the information that scholarship needs and the knowledge that it creates.

We do need 2020 vision, and for the year 2121 and beyond, as the future will be different. Beyond the operation of systems of forward migration, we must therefore always be well practised and skilled at data rescue and digital archaeology, and have skill in modelling and emulating past systems. However, the key task is the deployment of a digital curation strategy, or set of strategies, that ensures provenance and manages representation information, as well as

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preserves the integrity of digital bits on long-lasting media.

The Digital Curation Centre has been given charge of investment for R&D, for advocacy, and for delivery of community support services. This we now undertake, operating through an organised consortium drawn from university and research council, with expertise in informatics and law, in e-science and digital library development, and with a commitment to quality of service. The overall aim of the DCC is improvement in the quality of digital curation, to help others to succeed in their responsibilities, engaging with the wide variety of institutions and individuals having archival duty and stewardship for data as evidence. This we can only do through collaboration and positive engagement, providing the arena for interaction among these communities of practitioners, across discipline and profession, and making available tools for the tasks in hand.

The DCC has been entrusted with the best of challenges: they are of first order significance with hardly a trivial problem in sight. We welcome you all in, with the call that we must all be digital curators now.

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## **Professor Tim O'Shea — Principal of the University of Edinburgh**



The pervasive nature of Information and Communications Technology and the development of e-science mean that preserving the digital outputs of our research is vital if society is to benefit fully in years to come. As a computer scientist and as Principal of an institution which lost its artificial intelligence archive to fire not two years ago, the importance of the Digital Curation Centre is manifest and I'm therefore delighted that the University has been able to work in collaboration with others to deliver this facility for the UK. I am confident that it will be a great success.

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## **Sir Ron Cooke — Chair of the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC)**



The Digital Curation Centre promises to be a strong and vibrant focus for the enormously important task of managing and preserving the digital outputs of our research community. It will also have at its heart collaboration, excellence and the needs of institutions across the UK. On behalf of JISC may I warmly congratulate all those involved in its launch and wish them all the very best for the important work ahead.

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## **Professor Tony Hey — Director of UK e-Science Core Programme EPSRC**



e-Science is ushering in a revolutionary new way for science, and much else, to be done. As well as the availability of compute power, the deluge of scientific data expected from the next generation of experiments, simulations, sensors and satellites, together with the data that is now being used to record annotation and opinion, must be managed in a new, more proactive, way and we must also recognise the wisdom of preserving this information to be used and re-used for generations to come. The time is ripe for the document tradition of scholarly research to be integrated into this vision in the rapid progression as Research becomes e-Research.

It is therefore timely that the Digital Curation Centre is being launched and I am grateful that I have been able to play a part in its creation. It is one of the three major activities in Phase 2 of the UK e-Science programme, along with the National Grid Service and the Open Middleware Infrastructure Institute, as well as being a major JISC activity.

The staff of the Digital Curation Centre have been set a hard task but I have confidence in them and wish them well in their endeavours.

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## **Lynne Brindley — Chief Executive, British Library**



The British Library is particularly pleased to welcome the launch of the DCC. As the volume and range of digital material we collect grows at an exponential rate the size and scope of the digital curation and preservation challenge similarly grows. We believe that centres of excellence, strong and enduring partnerships and technical innovation will be required to respond to the challenge of making research results reuseable and available for future generations. We therefore welcome the launch of the DCC and look forward to a close partnership where solutions to these complex issues can be discovered.

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## **Graham Cameron — Associate Director, European Bioinformatics Institute (EBI)**



Modern life-science research depends on databases such as those for DNA sequences, protein sequences, molecular structures, gene expression patterns, molecular interactions and biochemical pathways. They are the only dissemination channel for the data resulting from today's high-throughput biology. Insights gained in minutes or hours by exploiting these databases would hitherto have required months of laboratory work. To enable optimal navigation and exploitation of the

information space generated by this extensive electronic record of science, it must have high quality content and be robustly engineered. Digital curation is a new kind of endeavour which has emerged to satisfy these needs. Its very novelty leaves much unexplored territory in the methods which can be fruitfully applied, and in the evolution of "best practice". The Digital Curation Centre is a timely initiative to engage with existing curators and to expand our understanding of this crucial activity through targeted research.

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### **Lorcan Dempsey – Vice President, Research, and Chief Strategist, OCLC**



As a growing part of our activities enters the digital environment we are becoming much more interested in the record, the scholarly record, the cultural record. The more we know, the more we realise that we need to know more. The Digital Curation Centre continues a strong tradition of national services in the UK which help to accelerate us up the learning curve, which allow us to pool our uncertainty, and which concentrates expertise. The DCC has important work to do and we wish it well.

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### **Cliff Lynch – Director of the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI)**



The launch of the Digital Curation Centre (DCC) is a highly important step in recognizing and addressing both the opportunities and the obligations of the e-science (or, more broadly, e-research) environment and all of the changes in the practices of scholarship and scholarly communication that this new environment implies. While the DCC is being established as part of the infrastructure

for UK e-research, I believe that the DCC will have importance and impact worldwide, both because scholarship broadly and e-science particularly is a global enterprise, and also because the technologies, intellectual strategies and best practices being pioneered and advanced by the DCC will serve as models for other national cyberinfrastructure initiatives and for local institutional repository programs in many countries. I also hope that the work of the Curation Center will contribute substantially to broader worldwide efforts to meet the challenges of archiving and preserving the intellectual, cultural and social record in the digital age, and to our collective understanding of the responsible stewardship of this record.

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**Dr Reagan W. Moore — Associate Director of Data-Intensive Computing, San Diego Supercomputer Center, UC San Diego**



At the San Diego Supercomputer Center, we view the proposed National Digital Curation Centre as leading the integration of curation and preservation environments, and welcome the opportunity to collaborate on the development of curation mechanisms. SDSC is developing data grid, digital library, and persistent archive technology that can be used to facilitate sharing, publication, and preservation of data. We are actively pursuing the development of standards for data curation through collaborations with the Global Grid Forum on Data Grid technology and with the InterPARES project.

Given the importance of the research topic, the established strengths of the Storage Resource Broker and data mining technology at SDSC, and the high-quality of your proposed team, I look forward to working together with the DCC in this area.

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**Sarah Tyacke — Chief Executive, The National Archives**



The launch of the Digital Curation Centre (DCC) is warmly welcomed by The National Archives. As we have found in the development of our digital archive, the management of the 'seamless flow' of electronic records into the archives, the curation and preservation of digital records is the biggest challenge facing the archival community. The DCC, by becoming a centre of expertise, support and advice, will play a vital role in helping practitioners to ensure that the digital historical record will be preserved for future generations. The National Archives looks forward to working closely with the staff at the DCC and wishes them well in their valuable work.

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