



Assessment and Sustainability of Repositories and Digital Libraries with DRAMBORA

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The preservation imperative pervades all aspects of digital repositories. Preservation applies to all types of resources but most importantly to information objects, and as such it can be seen as embedded within the digital repositories. Effective preservation demands that the provenance and authenticity of digital entities are secured, that their 'interrelatedness' is retained, and that information about the context of their creation and use continues to be available. At the most conceptual level, full understanding of an information object requires knowledge of the cultural context and of the meaning of the representation mechanism, such as term or graphic or sound elements, used by the creator of the object at the time of creation. Preservation might also be viewed as interoperability over time.

The Digital Curation Centre (DCC) in the UK and the EU-funded Digital Preservation Europe (DPE) project jointly released the Digital Repository Audit Method Based on Risk Assessment (DRAMBORA, <http://www.repositoryaudit.eu/>) in early 2007, with the goal to provide a practical, evidence-based toolkit for assessing repositories and digital libraries.

Digital curation can be characterized as a process of transforming controllable and uncontrollable uncertainties into a framework of manageable risks. The DRAMBORA process focuses on risks, and their classification and evaluation according to individual repositories' activities, assets and contextual constraints. The methodological outcome is a determination of the repository's ability to contain and avoid the risks that threaten its ability to receive, curate and provide access to authentic and contextually, syntactically and semantically understandable digital information.

DRAMBORA successful bottom-up approach enables repositories to relate their benchmarks for success more explicitly to their own aims and contextual environment, enabling an increased granularity of understanding of preservation approaches and challenges. A key strength is that the toolkit is capable of being used both independently and in association with more objective guidelines.

The tool's development and ongoing evolution has been informed at all times by practical research. More than twenty international repositories have completed a assessment using the toolkit, enabling the validation of its primary methodology and offering insights into potential shortcomings and the extent of its applicability in a range of diverse preservation contexts. Subsequent iterative development has led to the refinement of its methodology, and the release of DRAMBORA Interactive, a freely available online tool aimed at streamlining the core risk assessment process and currently being used by multiple international repositories. A ISO working group has also been set up to move forward on the ISO/TC 46/SC 11 standard on risk assessment in records management, based on the DRAMBORA toolkit.

This paper will describe the DRAMBORA methodology, focusing on its benefits and developments, and introduces DRAMBORA Interactive. It will then go on to describe the results of some of the most successful pilot assessments.

Most notable is the work funded by the DELOS Digital Library project, which sought to identify core characteristics within a range of digital libraries (Gallica – National Library of France, CERN Document Server, Michigan Google Digitization Project and Digital Library of the National Library of Sweden) in order to conceive a repository profile that might form the basis for subsequent repository development and evaluation. A further overview of the repository landscape has been provided by the recent investigation of the applicability of DRAMBORA in libraries archives and data centres/repositories in Japan (Digital Library meeting of the National Diet Library in Kyoto; Digital Archive of the National Archives of Japan in Tokyo; HUSCAP repository - University of Hokkaido), with the support of the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation.