

HubbuB: September 2020

Digital Object Store



I have mentioned previously the proposal for Jisc to create a store for digital materials. At the moment we are focussing on an access store (digital content store for display, not preservation). Originally we thought about expanding a current Jisc service - the Open Research Hub - to create this digital object access store, but we have had lengthy discussions and taken feedback from Hub contributors, and decided that it needs to be more embedded within the Archives Hub. Essentially, the digital objects need to be closely aligned with the descriptive metadata. Our system already understands archival metadata and the complexities of hierarchy, so it makes more sense to build upon that to create the store. We are also looking at providing a preservation service for archival digital objects, and for that we are still exploring developing the Open Research Hub (and linking it to the Archives Hub system).

If you are interested, please email me, jane.stevenson@jisc.ac.uk, and I will include you in the email group. This group is helping with requirements and giving feedback. I should say that this will be a charged-for service, but our aim is to provide low cost options for a basic store. We are currently aiming to provide an update on this work later in September.

Names Project



We have finally embarked upon what I hope will be the first phase of a longer term initiative to incorporate name records into the Archives Hub. Our system suppliers, Knowledge Integration, are leading on this work for us. If you are interested in following progress, there will be a series of blog posts. Several have been posted: <https://blog.archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/category/names-project/>

It is a very big challenge to work with names, and yet the rewards of being able to identify people and organisations and understand more about their lives and connections can be immense. Unfortunately, we, as a sector, have not been consistent in how we create name entries, and obviously it is only in recent years that we are aware of the importance of both consistency and structure. So, matching name entries is going to be a challenge. It will never be perfect. We will never be able to create one entry for one person and be confident of identifying every instance of that name (as representing the same person). But tools are increasingly sophisticated, there has been a lot of work around using persistent identifiers to link disparate resources, and the importance of Linked Data approaches are becoming increasingly acknowledged and embedded into systems - e.g. creating URIs for all entities.

At present our focus is on the all-important workflow. When creating something like this for a large aggregator, everything has to be automated, so the basic model needs to be carefully thought-out, tested, and adjusted. We are also looking at how to incorporate external resources, as well as working on the heart of the challenge - how to de-duplicate and match names. We need to demonstrate to Jisc the value and importance of this work in order to get funding to carry on with the development, and create a front-end interface.

Licensing for the Archives Portal Europe



The Archives Hub considers the descriptions that we bring together to be open data. We firmly believe that this ethos to promote open and reusable metadata is vital to cultural heritage. We are keen to encourage initiatives for the free-flow of data, to help increase profile and use of archives.

The Archives Portal Europe has, up until now, adopted a position where the data is 'owned' by the contributor, and APE can do nothing with the data. This hinders innovation and data sharing.

Note that for both the Archives Hub and APE we are only talking about the metadata. The licence and rights status of digital objects is entirely up to the institution.

You will have (or should have) received an email asking you to approve the new APE licence and also asking you to specify the licence you want for your data, if it is not the default licence of CC-BY-SA (lets others use your data as long as they credit you and use the same licence).

Please contact us if you have not received this, or have any further questions.

Commercial Digital Archival Collections

Our Jisc members may be interested in the digital archival group purchasing scheme, which helps higher education libraries with the purchasing of digital collections and archives from publishers by making them more affordable. In this context, digital archival collections are defined as static databases of texts, images, audio-visual material and data which libraries typically buy as one-off purchases (current subscriptions to journals and book collections are out of scope).

See: <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/digital-archival-collections-group-purchasing>

Archives Hub Forum



Some time ago we started a list that we called the Forum. It was specifically for discussion and debate. We want to consult you and get your input on various decisions and issues that we need to think through. However, we are aware that not everyone wants to receive more emails, so we didn't want to use the main Archives Hub list for this.

We sent several questions, on a range of subjects, but didn't get much response. That's fine, of course, but it does seem a shame to close down this channel of communication. So, I sent a question out recently about adding pay for services to the Archives Hub (as Online Resource). We got several replies, which is really helpful. We want the service to develop in ways that work for the contributors and users, so your input is very important.

Therefore, we'll keep the Forum going for now. Please do consider joining it. It is an opportunity to think about issues relating to online discovery, use of technology, cataloguing standards, data flows, etc. It is there for you to ask questions and initiate debate as well as us!

You can join by going to <https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?SUBED1=ARCHIVES-HUB-FORUM&A=1>