

Costing Curation: are we on the right track?

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Abstract

The 4C Project is European Commission funded two year coordination action which has been funded to provide useful, useable resources that provide better support to identify and quantify the cost of digital curation. IDCC14 occurs at roughly the half way point of the two year project and provides a timely opportunity to review and appraise the completed and planned outputs. One of the guiding principles of the 4C Project is to create a better understanding of digital curation costs through collaboration; and also to be an ‘open and social’ project and to listen to the needs of the digital curation community. Research data and the people who manage them are an important subset of the broad stakeholder community that the 4C Project needs to reach. This workshop is an important opportunity for the 4C Project to disseminate its work to that community and to elicit further input about the particular requirements and novel attributes of the cost of managing research data. The workshop will be a learning opportunity for the curious; a dialogue for the informed; and a requirements gathering and agenda setting exercise for the 4C Project.

Workshop

The workshop will guide participants through a number of 4C outputs and start by introducing them to some resources that are in development. 4C takes a holistic approach to the cost of digital curation and believes that ‘cost’ cannot be understood in isolation from other economically determining factors such as ‘benefit’, ‘value’, ‘risk’ and ‘sustainability’. Following a general introduction, the workshop will quickly proceed to exercises that focus on the early outputs of the project. This will include examination and prioritisation of a list of ‘Indirect Economic Determinants’ (relating to digital curation) and scrutiny of the ‘Economic Sustainability Reference Model’ which is an ongoing attempt to look beyond cost and business models and to think clearly and creatively about the *value* of digital assets, including data.

Other 4C outputs will be summarily presented at the workshop. The results of the 4C ‘Needs and Gap Analysis’ will be presented and participants will be invited to respond to its conclusions. A draft version of the ‘Curation Costs Exchange’ (CCEX) will be presented and opinions and input will be solicited. This latter output is a key deliverable of the project and is potentially an important collaborative community resource for unlocking cost-effective ways of specifying and pricing viable digital curation and preservation systems in the future. According to the working project definition of the CCEX, it will be:

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‘... an online, virtual community platform for the exchange of curation cost information. The CCEx will be used to gather cost information from partner organisations and stakeholders, submitted to the exchange using a submission form/template. The form will aim to capture calculation processes, metrics, effort statistics and value calculations from stakeholders in order to underpin future activity with empirical knowledge.’

4C has an ongoing agenda of engagement with a variety of stakeholders and where discussions have shed particular light on the costs of curation, this will be addressed at the workshop. With their permission, detailed information and figures from organisations that might include the Dutch National Library (KB) and CERN; and 4C partner organisations such as the German National Library (DNB), the Danish National Archives (DNA) and DANS will be presented at the workshop as data exemplars and sources of data for the CCEx.

4C engagement with events such as the January 2014 CERN workshop on the DPHEP (Data Preservation of High Energy Physics) Full Costs of Curation workshop will inform the IDCC workshop, as will a series of meetings and communications with other relevant EC-funded projects such as APARSEN, ENSURE, EUDAT, and a number of other international initiatives.

No prior knowledge or analysis of the costs or value of digital curation is required for attendance at the workshop. It would help, however, if participants had an interest in one or more of the following motivations for determining the cost of curation. A better understanding of the cost of curation should:

- Allow an organisation to offer realistic and cost effective preservation services to others;
- Support strategic planning;
- Support tactical decision-making;
- Provide evidence of cost-effectiveness and value;
- Enable clarification and publication of the cost of digital curation which could enhance an organisation’s credibility. (This must be done along with the context of how the costs were calculated);
- Understand how economic drivers can help to strategically align an organisation.

Active participation and input is encouraged and the workshop will be discursive and informal in tone. Listening and learning will also be a valid mode of participation though and no IDCC delegates should feel excluded from attending if they are interested in the topic.

Draft Programme

Whole day workshop

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- 09.00 – Introduction to the 4C project and the costs of curation (presentation)
 - 09.30 – What is your organisation interested in? (presentation and Q&A using the 4C Indirect Economic Determinants and the more broadly defined benefits of curation)
 - 10.00 – How do different organisations count the cost of curation? (Exemplars)
 - 10.30 – *Break*
 - 10.45 – How would you break down the cost of curation? (Exercise)
 - 11.45 – Introduction to the 4C draft Cost Concept Model (Presentation)
 - 12.15 – Discussion
 - 12.30 – *Lunch*
 - 13.30 – The CCEx and sharing costs (presentation and Q&A)
 - 14.15 – From costs to a business model for curating digital assets (presentation and Q&A)
 - 15.00 – *Break*
 - 15.15 – Sustaining solutions and services using the ESRM (Exercise)
 - 16.15 – Discussion – the particular attributes and requirements of curating research data and how that might affect the cost of its long term storage
 - 17.00 – Summing up

Speakers

The lead for the workshop will be the 4C coordinator Neil Grindley. Other 4C project partners will contribute and if possible, affiliate stakeholder organisations will also present.

Intended Audience

The ideal audience would be a mixture of those with opinions and information to offer the 4C project and those who would take information back to their organisation and prepare the way for effective dissemination towards the end of the project. This is both an input and an output opportunity.

Attendees

A workshop of between 15-30 people would be a useful size and a great opportunity to have a detailed conversation with an interested audience.