

PRESERVATION PLANNING: A COMPARISON BETWEEN TWO IMPLEMENTATIONS.

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ABSTRACT

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This paper examines preservation planning as it is implemented within the National Library's preservation repository (Rosetta) and compares it directly to the PLATO tool created as part of the PLANETS project.

Preservation planning is both a business precondition and the systematic framework defining any preservation action. At the National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa, preservation planning is embedded within the Rosetta system.

For the Library, the challenge can be stated simply: preserve New Zealand's digital documentary heritage. With no limitations or control over the format of the content that is collected and preserved, The National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa (NLNZ) has 'issues' to resolve before the long-term preservation of digital collections can be assured. Solving these and other problems is the responsibility of the National Digital Heritage Archive and a significant step has been taken through the development of the Rosetta preservation repository system in conjunction with Ex Libris Group.¹

1.2. Preservation Planning context

Library policies at the highest and most base levels have created an institutional context that imposes itself on the requirements for preservation planning. A few key salient factors are outlined here and will be developed further in the fuller paper.

The National Library can, and does accept all formats. It collects content, not 'perfect' formats. All materials collected through legal deposit are ingested into the preservation repository essentially as is, and the current policy of the NDHA is to not transform content into preferred formats on ingest.

Risk analysis is situational and characterized by understanding institutional capability. The Library does not use sustainability factors for generating a risk view

of its content. The range of formats ingested along with the imperfect nature of identification and characterisation tools necessitates the creation of a risk profile based on the Library's ability to render content. A two-tier view allows us to see exactly what content the Library can render through a systematic relationship between formats and applications and can take account of any specific properties of files that impinge on that relationship [1].

The basic policy of the National Library is that we will only be taking action on content if we are truly required to. While this may seem to be a self-evident statement, it is important to understand that by basing risk on institutional capability the Library is not beginning preservation planning on 'what if', but rather is working on a 'we have to' statement. We believe that 'what if' is linked to the use of risk analysis that is based on projections using 'sustainability criteria' [2], rather than definite capability tracking.

1.3. Preservation planning

The ultimate goal of preservation planning for NLNZ is for the plan to become a defined course of action. That is, it becomes the unchangeable template of action against which every file that matches its criteria follows. To get to that point, a number of critical elements need to be in place and a structured workflow must be successfully negotiated.

It is these elements and stages that will offer the initial comparison with the PLATO functionality. Preservation planning in Rosetta was not created within a vacuum. A great deal of time was spent modelling both the Library's and Ex Libris's expectations and testing these against the detailed flow developed by the PLANETS project and are embodied in the PLATO tool [3].

This paper will deliver not only a line-by-line comparison of the elements both types of planning have identified as required, but will also explore the institutional background behind the major points in both planning frameworks, particularly at points of difference.

The paper will undertake a comparison in the following areas:

- The place of the frameworks within the lifecycle of digital objects

¹

<http://www.exlibrisgroup.com/category/RosettaOverview>

- Workflows
- Evaluation of plans
- Presentation of plans to decision-makers

It is clear that there are a great number of similarities between PLATO and the Rosetta planning framework. Both are grounded by a focus on the presentation of solid information to decision makers from which the best path forward can be decided upon. However, initial work has identified some divergence, characterized mostly by differences in emphasis and the timing of some of the stages.

For example, by virtue of being an active preservation repository dealing with heritage items, the place of planning within Rosetta appears to be more tied to mitigating an occurred risk. This has ramifications on lifecycles of plans and the environment they are created within. The paper will explore whether this conjecture is valid.

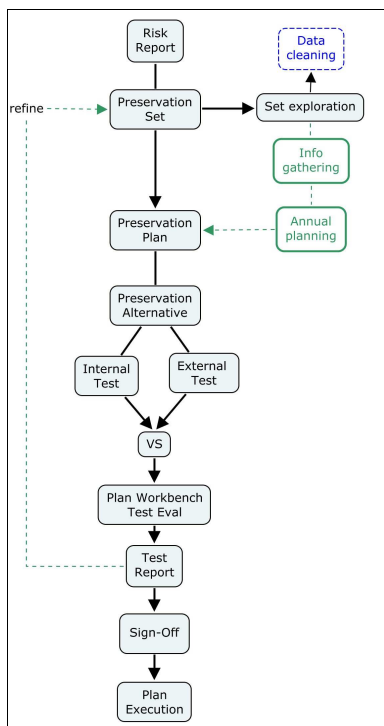


Figure 1. Overview of preservation planning in Rosetta

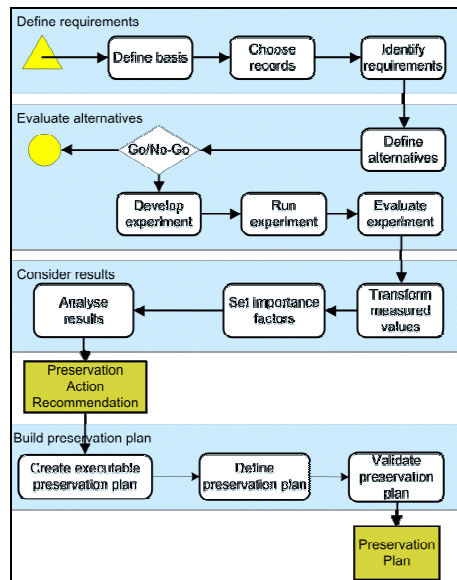


Figure 2. Overview of PLANETS Preservation Planning Workflow¹

2. INITIAL REFERENCES

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¹ This diagram is taken from the PLATO website. <http://olymp.ifs.tuwien.ac.at:8080/plato/help/workflow.html>