National Digital Stewardship Alliance

NDSA

http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/ndsa/

Overview

Founded in 2010, the National Digital Stewardship Alliance is a consortium of institutions committed to the long-term preservation of digital information. The mission of the NDSA is to establish, maintain and advance the capacity to preserve our nation's digital resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

Objectives/Problem To Be Solved

The challenge of digital stewardship is greater than any single institution can address. NDSA organizes a national network of collaborative partners to take stewardship action across a range of issues, including identifying, selecting, preserving and making available digital content; supporting appropriate digital stewardship standards; encouraging the development and maintenance of tools for curation and preservation; encouraging and conducting research in digital preservation sciences and technologies; building relationships with stakeholder communities; and preparing and sharing digital preservation information resources.

Recent Activities

- *2014 National Agenda for Digital Preservation*: This document integrates the perspective of dozens of experts and hundreds of institutions to provide funders and executive decision-makers insight into emerging technological trends, gaps in digital stewardship capacity and key areas for funding, research and development to ensure that today's valuable digital content remains accessible and comprehensible in the future, supporting a thriving economy, a robust democracy and a rich cultural heritage.

- The NDSA Levels of Digital Preservation: A tiered set of recommendations for how organizations might begin to build or enhance their digital preservation activities. The guidelines allow institutions to assess the level of preservation achieved for specific materials or collections in their custody or their entire preservation infrastructure. The levels are organized into five functional areas that are at the heart of digital preservation systems: storage and geographic location, file fixity and data integrity, information security, metadata and file formats.

Members/Partners

The NDSA is a growing organization with more than 150 partners, including universities, government agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses and professional associations. NDSA partners are proven in the field of digital stewardship. Members share expertise, tools and practices to benefit local efforts while contributing to the stewardship of a growing national collection of diverse digital content.

Funders/Funding Model

The NDSA is a voluntary membership organization with no dues or fees. The National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program at the Library of Congress provides program support. Members contribute in-kind services.

Collaborative Working Groups

The NDSA has established five working groups focusing on the following areas of digital preservation: Content, Standards and Practices, Infrastructure, Innovation and Outreach. Individuals decide together on the work and scope of projects and activities.

Content: Focusing on the selection, discovery and preservation of digital content.

- NDSA Storage Survey: An exploration of the storage practices used by member organizations. The results provide a frame of reference for organizations to compare their storage system approaches with those of other NDSA member organizations. The inaugural version of the survey was published in May of 2013 and the second survey is currently underway.

Governance

The NDSA Coordinating Committee provides strategic leadership with committee members and the committee chair elected on a yearly basis. The National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program at the Library of Congress is the secretariat of the NDSA and provides program support. The work of the NDSA is organized across five working groups, each of which has a pair of volunteer co-chairs: Content, Standards and Practices, Infrastructure, Innovation and Outreach.

Next Steps / Planned Future Work

The NDSA has a number of active projects, including:

- NDSA Content Case Studies: investigating guidelines for the selection of significant content for preservation across a range of content types;

- Levels of Preservation: further exploration in expanding the levels guidance and suggesting implementation guidelines;

- NDSA Reports on the Appraisal and Selection of Geospatial Data and Guidance on the use of the PDF/A file format;

- Continued engagement with the digital storage industry;

- The annual release of the National Agenda for Digital Stewardship;

- WikiProject Digital Preservation: work to improve Wikipedia's coverage of digital data preservation and the organization of information and articles related to this topic;

- Ongoing communication and outreach across a range of platforms, including publications, conference presentations and webinars.

- NDSA Web Harvesting Survey: A 2011 survey exposed the landscape of web archiving activities in the United States, including what organizations or individuals are archiving, what types of web content are preserved, the tools and services used and what type of access is provided for researchers. The NDSA will conduct another survey in late 2013, with results expected to be published in 2014.

Standards and Practices: Promoting effective methods for digital content selection, organization, preservation and access.

Infrastructure: Working to identify and share emerging practices around the development and maintenance of tools and systems for curation and preservation.

Innovation: Working to encourage and share innovative methods of digital preservation practices and technologies.

Outreach: Building relationships with stakeholder communities and preparing and sharing digital preservation information resources