

Open

archives

forum

OPEN ARCHIVES FORUM

The Open Archives Forum provides a European-based focus for dissemination of information about European activity related to open



archives and, in particular, to the Open Archives Initiative. The aim of the Forum is to facilitate a critical evaluation of the potential of the open archives approach in a wider context, as well as validating European experience of the Open Archives Initiative specifications. The project will also encourage the clustering of IST projects, national initiatives and other associations, such as cultural heritage institutions, research organizations, public library sectors, community services and commercial organizations which are interested in the open archives approach.

OPEN ARCHIVES FORUM

OBJECTIVES

Open archives offer the possibility of disseminating content now 'hidden' in cultural heritage and learning institutions at a very low cost. If this promise is fulfilled, it may have a significant impact on the building of new service provision. It is essential that European data and service providers are prepared to participate in this innovation. To this aim, the Open Archives Forum (OA-Forum) will provide a framework where European and national initiatives using an open archive approach can share their experiences and co-ordinate the development of software tools and infrastructures. Particular attention will be dedicated to those initiatives which are implementing or using the Open Archives Initiative (OAI) metadata harvesting protocol (<http://www.openarchives.org>).

The OA-Forum will provide the means for European stakeholders to collaborate and form a coherent framework in which future policy decisions can be made. In particular, the project intends to promote the use of the open archives approach to provide access to a broader range of digital resources. The project will facilitate the participation of representatives of different domains in the forum, such as cultural institutions, research organizations, the public domain sectors, community services and commercial organizations.

The OA-Forum will facilitate a critical and co-ordinated evaluation of the potential of the open archives approach in a wider context by exploring the added value that this approach might offer in the different domains. It will also encourage European readiness to exploit commercial opportunities offered by low cost entry to interoperability.

The OA-Forum will validate the European experience in implementing and using the OAI harvesting protocol and others similar approaches to interoperability. It will also encourage European initiatives to share and reuse software solutions.

The OA-Forum will establish an exchange channel with the OAI that will permit continuous monitoring of its progress and the discussion of the results of the OA-Forum evaluation activity at the international level.

ACTIVITY

The activity of the Open Archives Forum is organised into four main tracks, each structured in a number of sub-tracks

1. Setting up of a European-based focus for dissemination of information about European open archives activity

- Organise a series of workshops to share experiences and promote good practice targeted at current and potential implementors, service and data providers, and commercial, cultural heritage, research and educational initiatives
- Establish the project web site as a focus for information concerning the implementation of open archives in Europe
- Publish information regarding implementation of OAI through a variety of different publishing channels, either paper based or electronic
- Liaise with the OAI in the USA and beyond

2. Stimulating building of an open archives infrastructure in Europe

- Co-ordinate evaluation of OAI specifications

- Consider alternative technical and organisational solutions
- Co-ordinate development of software tools and added value services
- Explore sustainability issues arising from the OAI approach

3. Supporting new service provisions

- Facilitate groupings of European OAI Data Providers and Service Providers
- Facilitate co-operation on infrastructural issues, agreement on metadata extensions, common partitioning of archives, etc
- Facilitate a consensus approach to Intellectual Property Rights issues
- Evaluate the benefits of the open archive approach in different domains and sectors

4. Exploiting synergies between projects and reinforcing the combined effort of projects

- Present integrated results of related projects by means of reports and a database
- Provide a platform for exchanging experiences between projects in Europe
- Provide a focus for interaction with the international open archive community



- UKOLN
University of Bath, United Kingdom



- National Research Council
Istituto di Elaborazione della Informazione, Pisa, Italy



- Rechenzentrum / Computing Center
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin