Data Archiving and Networked Services

MIXED Consultation Workshop
September 10, 11, 12 2009

MEMO 01
June 29th 2009

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1. Welcome
The MIXED project team is very delighted that a group of distinguished experts is able to participate in a consultation workshop next September. This is the first of a short series of memos by which we assist you in preparing for this workshop. This memo will have a general, introductory character.
You are selected as experts in several fields, and we expect that your interaction is not only relevant for the MIXED project, but that it will also give you an excellent opportunity to discuss topics in your fields from different perspectives.
The aims of the consultation workshop are:
- To evaluate the quality of the results of the MIXED project
- To set the agenda for the sustainability of the currents results of the MIXED project
- To calibrate the outcomes of the MIXED project with results of other initiatives
- To find new directions building on MIXED

We hope that the consultation workshop provides the MIXED project team with a number of scenario's for long-term usage of the MIXED framework.

2. Invited experts
In order to achieve the goals of the consultation workshop we have invoked the following fields of expertise:
1. Digital preservation tools, as a sounding board for the technical development of the software.
2. Research infrastructures that deal with digital preservation, as possible promoters of the MIXED framework
3. Scientific data archives and data centres, as possible users of the MIXED software.
4. Outreach of Open Source software, as way to distribute and popularise the MIXED software.

Most of the invited experts have a thorough knowledge of more than one subject area covered in the workshop, but we will try to address each expert for one specific field of interest.

Invited experts
About 20 experts will attend the consultation workshop. At the moment, the following projects and institutes are represented by the group of experts:

- 3TU.Datacentrum <http://datacentrum.3tu.nl/>
- CESSDA-PPP <http://www.cessda.org/project/>
- CLARIN <http://www.clarin.nl/> and <http://www.clarin.eu>
- DANS <http://www.dans.knaw.nl>
- DARIAH <http://www.dariah.eu>
- Dataverse <http://thedata.org>
- Escidoc <http://www.escidoc.org>
- ICPSR <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu>
- MIXED <http://mixed.dans.knaw.nl>
- OpenDataFoundation <http://www.opendatafoundation.org>
- PLANETS <http://www.planets-project.eu>
- UDFR/Pronom <http://www.gdfr.info/udfr.html>
- UKDA <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/>

The memo's that will follow will contain more information on the participants of the consultation workshop.

3. Information on MIXED
The url of the MIXED project is <http://mixed.dans.knaw.nl>. Through the navigation link "Facts and Vision" you can find a white paper that explains why MIXED is there and what it is doing. Through the link "Documentation" you can find a reference page that reveals the frame of reference of the project. Last but not least, through the link "Results" you can get an overview of the results of MIXED. These are not yet end result, and considerable updating is expected in the coming months.

The main idea of MIXED is deceptively simple: convert file formats to the XML data format in order to unwrap the data out of application-bound, closed formats. The unwrapped data is easier to preserve. But then these conversions themselves should be sustainable. A key role is for the resulting XML: we hope that there will emerge a "Standard Data Formats for Preservation" schema, an XML schema that refers to those XML schemas that are suitable as a standard preservation format for a certain kind of data. For example: Open Document Format (ODF) for spreadsheets, DDI for statistical data.

Having such an SDFP, we can build conversions from file formats to SDFP and back, and each of these conversions can be kept stable. That means that the investment made in writing these conversions will return more value.

So three things go hand in hand: (i) cleverness and diligence in writing converters, (ii) strategic choosing in defining SDFP, (iii) convincing dissemination to contributors to digital preservation. Now that you know the game, you may tell us the rules.

4. Practical matters
Travel, meals and accommodation costs will be covered by the project. One of the next project memos will provide information on the practical matters related to the reimbursement of the costs. The location of the workshop is not set yet. We are looking for an inspiring environment near the sea that both fits for work and social activities.

The workshop will start in the afternoon of Thursday September 10th and last until lunchtime on Saturday September 12th.

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