

## DCH-RP AND PREFORMA: TWO CASE STUDIES ON THE DIGITAL PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

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### **Abstract:**

A huge amount of digital cultural heritage data is growing every day thanks to the digitisation programmes carried out by cultural institutions and can be used for very different purposes: research, leisure, cultural enrichment, education, etc. In principle, data should be available to anyone wishes or needs to access to it. The concept of “access to digital information” implies that that the information is available when we need it and where we need it and on a permanent basis, even in the future. This latter case is a very important challenge memory institutions have to face nowadays and several questions need to be answered to this regard, such as: How will we ensure the long-term preservation and access to our digital information, taking into account the exponent growth of data? Who should select which digital data should be saved and what criteria will be used to make those decisions? How will we successfully store and migrate data as technology moves from one medium to the next, from one system to another?

Understanding of digital preservation requires consideration of two main aspects: organisation and technology. Several projects have been funded in the last years to work on these topics by the European Commission, in the context of the Seventh Framework Programme and now in Horizon 2020. This paper presents the work that is being carried out in two of these projects: DCH-RP (Digital Cultural Heritage – Roadmap for Preservation) and PREFORMA (PREservation FORMAts for culture information/e-archives). DCH-RP is mostly focused on the planning and organisational aspects. Its main outcome is the definition of a Roadmap for the implementation of a federated infrastructure for the digital preservation of DCH and more in general dedicated to support the application of open science in the arts and the humanities. PREFORMA focuses instead on a technological challenge: the implementation of an open source conformance checker that verifies whether the file to be ingested in the digital archives have been produced according to the specifications of a standard file format and that this process is under the direct control of the memory institutions. This represents one of the most important aspects memory institutions have to consider, as data objects meant for preservation, passing through an uncontrolled generative process, can jeopardise the whole preservation exercise.