

Digital Preservation Projects, Challenges, and Questions

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1. Are you working on a digital preservation project? Provide a brief description of your project and its goals.

The Carolina Digital Repository (CDR) is being designed as repository for material in electronic formats produced by members of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill community. Its chief purpose is to provide for the long-term preservation of such materials. By preservation we mean the ability to ingest the material, index and search it, replicate it, and keep it safe from alteration.

Following standards developed in the reference model for an Open Archival Information Systems, the CDR employs Fedora for data content models and uses iRODS as a data store.

2. What is the status of the implementation (planning, just started, in production, etc.)?

Nearing production.

3. What digital preservation challenges are you facing?

Metadata issues:

- Generating/gathering meaningful descriptive metadata.
- Consolidating preservation metadata.

High level preservation issues:

- Depth of recovery scenarios
- Preservation planning in the face of the unknown.
- Depth of system reliability in a hybrid system.
- Durability/survivability of authentic digital objects.

Getting “the stuff” – timely submission of digital objects before they reach obsolescence.

4. Does iRODS currently play a role in the project? If so, please describe how you are using iRODS.

Yes. CDR is employing iRODS for storage and a platform for implementing preservation activities.

5. What challenges have you faced using iRODS?

Complexity of rules syntax.

Lack of documentation.

Lack of production configuration examples.

No maintenance of stable release; fixes rolled into new releases only.

6. What questions do you have for the DICE group about iRODS?

Will you be coordinating with archivists on the development of preservation policies for iRODS?

When will you begin providing maintenance releases?

When will the iRODS book be available?