

A proposal to create a Network of Excellence in Digital Repositories

Our vision is to see a world in the future where knowledge is created and shared, where access is clear and available, where roles of creators are understood, nurtured, and supported. Where users become learners, and thus contributors. Where barriers break down, through ease of use. Where Captain Kirk's preface to a huge searching question, "computer, tell me ...", becomes a reality. Where my repository talks to your repository. *repo, repo*, the art and science of building repositories that enable our knowledge to be more than shared, to be explored, extended, free to some, commercially viable for others.

The European Union Framework 6 program has a method, a network of excellence, which could bring together and accelerate the creation of such a vision.

Digital repositories are systems that provide for the capture, management, publishing, and preservation of all types of digital content. Topics to be addressed can include the federation of repositories, storage and preservation aspects, the development of user communities, the creation and management of standards. Users of digital repositories (and including current digital libraries), still face many problems. Technology developers attempting to build and standardize such systems, and to allow for federation of the knowledge, and assets that reside in such systems, though developing fast, are still at an early stage. We propose there is still much work to be done, deep research to be engaged in. A network could aspire to provide a framework for such research, and potentially be a conduit for funds.

We are inviting you to attend a meeting to explore the possibilities of such a network, creating a major asset of the European Research Area. Attendees would likely be users and developers of digital repositories, from all sectors of the research and technology communities, with an initial emphasis on research institutions, and pre-competitive commercial organizations (e.g. "science park start ups")

The specific intention of the meeting is to bring together an incipient technology research community, with a view to making a bid for substantial research funds.

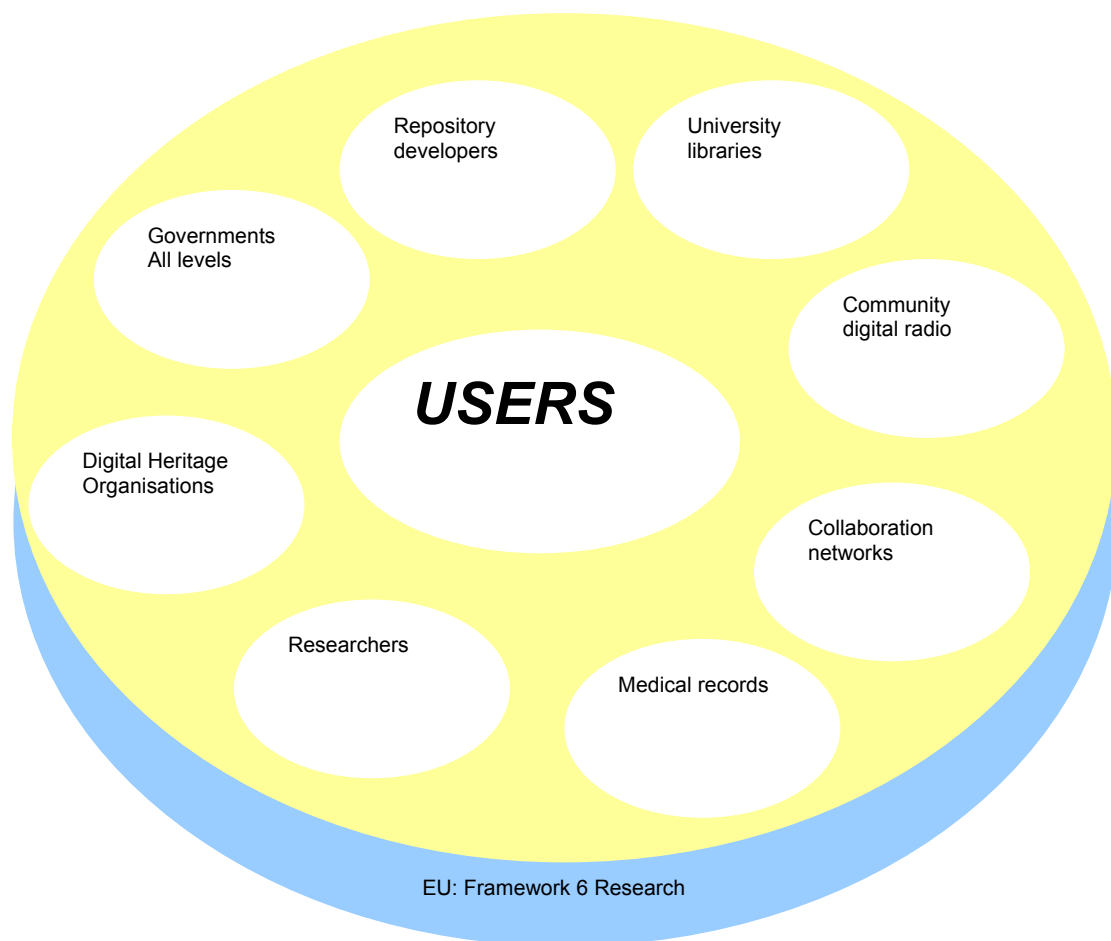
Location: HP Labs, Bristol, UK, Date 16th July 2003

Networks, and Nodes

Our proposal for such a network would be to establish a series of nodes, in a network framing. A node would be autonomous, saving having membership of, and responsibility to, the network. The network would act as a primary conduit for, and enable the passage of, linkages between diverse repository users, and technology developers, and could be an enabler for the simpler passage of EU research funding. The diagram following has candidate initial node titles. Nothing should be read into the placing, titling or number of the nodes.

Many of the current digital library technologies, and technology topics, would also be candidates for nodes, they are not shown in an attempt to get beyond the obvious.

The creation of these nodes, their nature, composition and linkage, will be a primary work topic for the meeting. The node structure is offered as a terminology intended to have a deeper meaning than say, “interest groups”, “themes”, or “subjects”. It is certainly a candidate for debate



Meeting FAQ

Q: Why would I come, who would I represent?

A: You'd be a developer, provider or user of digital repositories. You may come from one of the nodes listed, or be passionate about a node not yet named. You'd represent an organization in a research nature, or pre-competitive commercial, or government body.

Q: When, and where? Cost?

A: July 16th is the agreed date, hosted by HP Labs, Europe, in Bristol. No charge.

Q: How do I get there? is there any aid for transport costs

A: You'll have to get yourself to Bristol, we are investigating providing a coach at a single time from London Heathrow to Bristol. Bristol is well served by air, by train, and by coach (bus) services.

Q. Accommodation?

A: We are compiling a list of suitable low cost places to stay.

Q: What would I get out of this meeting?

A: The opportunity to shape, and be an early member of, what we aspire to making the European Network of Excellence in digital repositories

Q: Why Hewlett Packard Laboratories? What does HP want out of this?

A: HP Labs have excellent facilities to host such a meeting. By hosting such a meeting, the research community at HP Labs can participate in the development of the network. We seek to advance the idea that such a network be formed, not to control it, to fund it, but to participate and develop on the same basis as any other.

Q: Orixo, the Cocoon Alliance, what have they to say about this?

A: They have participated in getting this meeting to happen. As an extant organisation they'd be a natural candidate to form a node.

Q: Are you aiming at a particular area of the Framework 6 Program?

A: Yes. Call 2 of the FP6 programme We imagine a bid being structured into the section 2.3.2.7, Cross Media content for Leisure and Entertainment (workprogram 2003/4, pp53). This should be seen as a starting place, and we are aware that many of the proposals in Call 1, have relevance as well.

Q: What is the drop-dead date for an EU FP6 proposal for call 2

A: The documents must physically be in Brussels by October 15th

Q: Can I circulate this invitation to other interested parties?

A: Yes. Please do, particularly those from non UK European countries.

Q: Who is coordinating this proposed meeting?

A: Glenn Hall, a researcher in the Digital Media Systems Lab at HP Labs Bristol. Contact please only by email: glenn.hall@hp.com

Research objectives

The following represent some suggested research objectives of the network of excellence.

- Identify best practice in digital archiving and preservation, including:
 - standards
 - protocols
 - formats

- Define digital repositories, including:
 - what they should do
 - what they shouldn't do
 - common sets of requirements, conflicting requirements

- Identify existing digital repository architectures
 - Establish whether current initiatives address the totality of the requirements

- Propose a model for building digital repositories
 - Options for achieving critical mass in development and deployment
 - Options for ensuring interoperability and multichanneling

- Identify suitable test-cases
 - deployment locations
 - types of repository

Draft Agenda

Opening Address: a Vision of Federated repositories

- Why create this network of Excellence.
- EU speaker: What is an NoE, how do they work
- Speaker: an NoE already running, stories from the frontline

Workshops, Aim: Create a network

- Create the necessary commonly held views of what is the minimum subset of administration to run a network.
- Establish an initial governance model
- Appoint a steering group to oversee getting the work done.
- Create technology nodes
- Create user nodes
- In plenum, agree name, and establish resources for bid

Workshop: So what is the network actually going to do?

- Develop a research vision greater than all the nodes, respecting those nodes needs
- How can we create something bigger, by framing our research in a network/ node configuration
- Outcomes: Research programme, methodology for research idea propagation,
- Critical outcome: a commonly shared vision of something bigger, and more useful, than just another club

Workshop

- Bidding for an NoE
- Creating a bid team
- Node memberships of bid teams, responsibilities

Workshop

- Framing other bids in a network-conscious way, IP's and STREPS