The DCH-RP Project

R. Barbera[1,2,*] and A. Fresa[3], on behalf of the DCH-RP Consortium

[1] Department of Physics and Astronomy of the University of Catania – Italy
[2] INFN, Division of Catania – Italy
[3] Promoter s.r.l., Peccioli - Italy

Abstract

The Digital Cultural Heritage (DCH) community is producing large volumes of digital contents that need to be safely stored and curated, permanently accessed and easily re-used by researchers operating in humanities domain.

The vision for the next two decades is to implement a federated infrastructure dedicated to support the application of open science in the arts and the humanities. "To implement" here means to exploit and to integrate what already exists and to create ex-novo only those parts that are not yet available. To do this, conceptual and operational coordination will be necessary both at European and international levels and among DCH organisations and e-Infrastructure providers.

Further, the use of existing e-Infrastructure for research and academia (including NREN, NGI and the newer data infrastructures) would be an efficient channel for the delivery of advanced services to the DCH community. Connecting European facilities would indeed contribute to developing the research capacities of the DCH sector.

Implementation of the preservation infrastructure for DCH is the first priority in this direction. Preservation is in fact one of the most challenging problems of the current digital era and this applies also to DCH. It is meant in this context as the combination of preservation of digitised and born-digital contents (databases, catalogues, files, etc.) as well as preservation of information associated with that content, the so-called "infostructure", referred to also as metadata.

Each digitization programme is currently addressing the issue of preservation in a separate manner, while a shared implementation of common e-Infrastructure layers could be beneficial and cost effective to all.

DCH-RP (www.dch-rp.eu), started on the 1st of October 2012, is a coordination action co-funded by the European Union under its Seventh Framework Programme whose outcome is a roadmap for the implementation of a preservation infrastructure for DCH which will be the first instance of an Open Science Infrastructure for DCH in 2020.

The roadmap will be supplemented by practical tools which would help the monitoring of such activities, and thus would be of great benefit to stakeholders, such as the EC and national ministries, but also offer knowledge instruments to stakeholders of the DCH domain (i.e., the cultural institutions) to make informed decisions on digital preservation.

DCH-RP builds upon the knowledge generated by DC-NET (www.dc-net.eu) and INDICATE (www.indicate-project.eu), two pioneering projects for DCH in the e-Infrastructure area. In this regard, it should be noted that preservation has been identified as the first priority in the DC-NET Joint Activities Plan and has been further investigated within the INDICATE Use Case Studies.

In this contribution, the DCH-RP objectives and work plan will be outlined as well as the results already achieved. Opportunities for the Asia-Pacific DCH community to collaborate with DCH-RP will also be presented.

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* Corresponding author. Email: roberto.barbera@ct.infn.it