



Press Release

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The National Archives wins award for digital preservation

The National Archives is celebrating its victory at the Conservation Awards 2007, winning the award for digital preservation. The award, presented on 27 September, recognises leadership and practical advancement in the new and challenging field of digital preservation. The prize was given to The National Archives for its work on active preservation through the development of two tools: the PRONOM Technical Registry and DROID file format identification.

The National Archives holds 10 million government records, spanning 900 years. Almost all the records created in government – and an increasing number of those arriving at The National Archives – are now electronic. As technologies change and inevitably become obsolete, the information in these documents risks becoming inaccessible, providing one of the most fundamental challenges of digital preservation. A major challenge for The National Archives has been to develop the capability to preserve digital records in accessible form, across time and evolving technology.

The National Archives' PRONOM Technical Registry

(www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pronom/) answers this challenge. PRONOM is an online knowledge base providing a simple interface to allow users to query a database of technical information on over 600 file formats and 250 software

tools. In conjunction with this tool, The National Archives has also developed a standalone format identification tool called DROID (Digital Record Object Identification), which identifies and reports the specific file format versions of digital files. Freely available to download under an Open Source licence and written in platform-independent Java, DROID supports batch processing of large numbers of files.

Natalie Ceeney, Chief Executive at The National Archives, said: “I am thrilled that The National Archives has won this award. The digital revolution has drastically changed the nature of the information we need to safeguard and digital preservation is now fundamental to preserving our heritage. The National Archives seeks to ensure the survival of today’s information for tomorrow, constantly developing new tools to ensure that we continue to have access to the information government creates.”

Ronald Milne, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Digital Preservation Coalition, which sponsors the Award, said, “The National Archives fully deserves the recognition which accompanies this award.”

The Conservation Awards – rewarding excellence in conservation, collections care, conservation research and digital preservation – celebrate the skills of those who care for our cultural heritage.

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Notes for editors:

The National Archives, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk, is a government department; and also an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The National Archives brings together the Public Record Office, Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Office of Public Sector Information and Her Majesty's Stationery Office. See also www.opsi.gov.uk

The National Archives is at the heart of information policy – setting standards and supporting innovation in information and records management across the UK, and providing a practical framework of best practice for opening up and encouraging the re-use of public sector information. This work helps inform today's decisions and ensure that they become tomorrow's permanent record.

The National Archives is also the UK government's official archive, containing 900 years of history from Domesday Book to the present, with records ranging from parchment and paper scrolls through to recently created digital files and archived websites. Increasingly, these records are being put online, making them universally accessible.

The vision of The National Archives is to:

- Lead and transform information management
- Guarantee the survival of today's information for tomorrow
- Bring history to life for everyone