COPTR-EDIT-A-THON

Tooling up for digital preservation

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COPTR Edit-A-Thon during iPRES2021 brings the international digital preservation community together in a common effort to enrich the data in COPTR, explore the possibilities of the recently added semantic annotation, and discuss the future of the registry.

I.   THE CONFERENCE THEME

This edit-a-thon proposal addresses the conference's theme and its subthemes in the following way: 1) It improves access to knowledge on preservation tools. Therefore, it enhances the capacity and capability of the community of practice to make informed choices on the use of tools and workflows in their organizations. 2) It does so by engaging the participants in a process of editing and enriching data in COPTR. It enhances collaboration by creating new connections between the participants and expands the community currently maintaining COPTR. 3) It explores the new horizons of the newly added semantic MediaWiki functionality, allows the participants to explore its new possibilities and formulate their vision for the future of COPTR.

II.   COPTR'S BACKGROUND

Community Owned digital Preservation Tool Registry, or COPTR, was developed in 2013 to provide efficient "one stop shopping" for practitioners performing research on digital preservation tools and services. It was a response to the growing need for a central place where knowledge on the growing number of tools used for digital preservation could be assembled and developed. It's development and centralization of several pre-existing registries, has been a collaborative milestone for the international digital preservation community. COPTR is a "community registry that is owned by the community, for the community." It is supported by DCC, DCE, DPC, DDHN, NDSA, OPF, NESTOR, and POWRR Project.

Since COPTR's inception, tools used in the digital preservation workflows became more numerous and ever more specialized. Yet many tools are still developed for discrete localized tasks or for limited term projects, and as a result, many become orphaned due to lack of community adoption. For tools finding a wider audience, there is a greater chance of survival, which is why sharing knowledge on the use of tools is essential. For practitioners building a local workflow, evaluating tools can be a time-intensive endeavour involving finding the tools and deploying them to see if they would be a good fit. The fact that many tools suffer from poor documentation makes this work difficult, often leading to a dead-end, even after a considerable time investment. Therefore, ensuring that the available documentation is up to date and easy to find can make a significant difference for professionals engaged in such research.

III.   RECENT DEVELOPMENT OF COPTR

In April 2021, from the initiative of The Dutch Digital Heritage Network, and in collaboration with DPC, OPF and ArchiXL COPTR has been migrated to a semantically annotated data structure from its initial (unstructured) MediaWiki format. This makes a large part of the information within the registry

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machine-readable and queryable. It opens new possibilities for creating tool overviews and allowing users to find comparisons that will be useful to them. It also makes new integrations possible for projects, which are based on data harvested from COPTR. The full spectrum of possibilities opened by this new development is yet to be discovered. Thus, organising an edit-a-thon during iPRES2021 would be a great opportunity to present the new features to the digital preservation community and involve them in experimenting with them.

IV.   WHY EDIT-A-THON DURING IPRES2021

Despite its wide usage within the digital preservation community, COPTR continues to struggle with finding new contributors to update tool features, functionality, licensing or to add tools as they are created. This is partly due to time constraints, but also because some practitioners feel that their knowledge level is not sufficient to contribute or that their assessment of a tool may not be good enough to submit. Bringing together digital preservation practitioners in the style of a traditional Wikipedia Edit-A-Thon would allow them to spend a sustained block of time working collectively on updating and improving COPTR. We hope that the confidence built during the workshop will lead to further additions and enrichment later. Such an event would also help build and enrich relationships in the community and entice more of its members to become contributors. This event would also give the community time to experiment with and talk about the new features introduced by the semantic MediaWiki, and about the future of the COPTR. This event would build on the success of a COPTR edit-a-thon held at iPRES2018.

V.   PROPOSED OUTLINE

Preparation ahead of time will include gathering a to do list of topics, tools, workflows, views and integrations that might prove popular targets in the edit-a-thon. Participants on the day will be able to add to this or "call dibs" on topics they wish to enrich at the event. Due to the global and hybrid nature of iPRES2021, we would like to create a Slack or Discord channel for the participants. The proposed outline is as follows: 1) Welcome, review of the aims of the edit-a-thon. 2) Review Guidelines for Contributing to COPTR and discuss what makes for a good entry. 3) Review and group discussion on crowdsourced list of priorities and COPTR's

existing to do list. 4) Discuss/brainstorm on the new possibilities offered by the semantic annotation and what new 'to do's' this introduces. 5) Rank the priorities for the workshop. Depending on the number of participants and tasks, we may consider splitting work among groups or individuals. 6) Individuals/groups perform editing work. Instructors would be available for technical help, questions about content suitability, or questions about tool functionality. 7) Discussion on items/issues that require group feedback. 8) Group discussion on the pros and cons of the COPTR MediaWiki platform and its future developments. By the end of the workshop, COPTR would have new/improved entries, new ideas for making the most of the new functionality, and new items to add to the "to do" list for future improvements.

VI.   PRESENTERS / INSTRUCTORS

Stacey Jones Erdman is the Digital Preservation & Curation Officer at Arizona State University. In this position, she has responsibility for designing and leading the digital preservation and curation program for ASU Library. She is the former Digital Archivist at Beloit College and Digital Collections Curator at Northern Illinois University. She has been part of the Digital POWRR Project from its inception in 2012 and worked on developing the subsequent POWRR Workshop and POWRR Institute grants. The Digital POWRR organization was one of the original contributors to COPTR. Stacey serves as consulting instructor for the POWRR Institute training events.

Ania Molenda is the project leader of Preservation Tools project at Dutch Digital Preservation Network. Recently, within her Preservation Tools project she was involved in the migration of COPTR from a regular wiki to a semantic MediaWiki, providing the register with a quarriable data structure. Within her project she works on popularising tools for digital preservation, building a knowledge base on the available tools and fostering collaboration around this topic.

Paul Wheatley is the Head of Research and Practice at Digital Preservation Coalition. Paul spearheaded the COPTR initiative, by pitching a community-owned tool registry to the attendees of the initial Aligning National Approaches to Digital Preservation meeting. He brought together the stakeholders from the 5 major tool registries, and worked on combining, collating, and de-duping the

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contents into what became COPTR. He presently helps maintain all aspects of COPTR.

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