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The preservation of complex digital objects

Experiences with emerging formats at the British Library

Michael Day, Giulia Carla Rossi, Ian Cooke, and Maureen Pennock

The British Library

18 and 19/11/2020
This is a recorded presentation.

Recording, presentation slides and full paper will be posted on PCS & ITS publication page.

Questions or comments? Please type into the chat or Q&A box.

The talk is GDPR-compliant

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The preservation of complex digital objects: experiences with emerging formats at the British Library

Michael Day, Giulia Carla Rossi, Ian Cooke, and Maureen Pennock
The British Library

IFLA Information Technology and Preservation & Conservation Section
virtual event, Preservation of Digital Complex Objects, 18 & 19 November 2020
Outline

• Contexts:
  • Non-Print Legal Deposit in the UK
  • NPLD Emerging Formats project
• Selected examples of emerging Formats:
  • eBooks published as apps
  • Web-based interactive narratives
• Lessons learned so far
Legal Deposit in the United Kingdom

• Preserving a published record of UK culture, politics, society, technology, …
• Established in 1662: Bodley’s Library, Royal Library, Cambridge University Library
• From 1911: six Legal Deposit Libraries
• Covers certain categories of printed works published in the UK and Republic of Ireland
• 2013 Legal Deposit extended to Non-Print Works
• Initial focus on e-journals, ebooks, and the web (UK Web Archive)
Emerging Formats project

- Emerging Formats project established by the UK Legal Deposit Libraries Committee, led by the British Library
- Interested in new kinds of content and how they might be considered in terms of Legal Deposit
- Focused on:
  - eBooks published as Apps
  - Web-based interactive narratives
  - Structured data (database-driven services)
- Approaches:
  - Engagement with creators, producers, user communities
  - Detailed evaluation of selected content combined with the technical assessment of file formats
  - Development of a collection management methodology
croeso
Croeso i o Gymraeg Prifysgol Cymru
Pan fydd 'Cym' i'w wedych gallwch chwilio am air neu ymadrodd Cymraeg. En morewyn chwilio am air neu ymadrodd Saesneg yn y cyfystyrón Saesneg pwysawch ar 'Cym' uchod i'n nenid i 'SAES'.

Gellir rhoi:
* I gyfateb i 0,1, neu ragor o lythrennau
+ I gyfateb i 1 neu ragor o lythrennau
? I gyfateb i 1 lythrennau

Am gymorth, pwysawch ar GPC, yna Cymorth.
“As someone coming from the wrong side of the two cultures, Eliot’s poem had effectively been closed off to me for decades. Now it isn’t, and that in itself would almost justify the price of the iPad that made it possible.”

theguardian
Goldilocks and Little Bear

Welcome to Goldilocks and Little Bear – whose story will you choose?

Explore both Goldilocks and Little Bear’s stories in this ground-breaking new story app: switch to either story at any time simply by rotating your device!

Goldilocks and Little Bear demonstrates a unique, interactive new form of story-telling – it’s an incredible, 21st-century reading experience.

It’s the classic story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears – as you’ve never seen it before. While Goldilocks is in the bears’ home, eating their porridge, sitting in their chairs, and sleeping in their beds, Little Bear is in Goldilocks’s family’s home – eating their pancakes, wearing their clothes, and reading their books!

Enjoy each story in parallel, individually, or however you’d like – you can toggle between the two at any point.

With beautiful artwork, stunning animation, ingenious, playful forms of interactivity, original music, voice work and sound effects, and lots more!

* Rotate your device to explore another story!
80 DAYS

**DAY 1**

- **TUESDAY**
- **C4,000**
- Departs AT 9:00 PM
- Arrives tomorrow

PARIS

**AMPHITRITE EXPRESS**
It is too late. It’s too late for Flo, too late for you. It doesn’t matter if it’s 10am Thursday or 1am Friday — she’s left it too long. So have you.
Technical assessments

• App-based content
  • Based on proprietary container formats
    • IPA for iOS devices
    • APK (Android Package) for Android
  • Preservation issues:
    • Content is tightly bound to particular versions of OS, device-types
    • Versioning: content has to be continually updated
    • Embedded Digital Rights Management

• Web-based content
  • Based on web standards (e.g. HTML5), but dependences on external resources
  • Emerging Formats project experimented with the use of web archiving tools: W3ACT and Web Recorder
  • Results added to the Emerging Formats collection in the UK Web Archive
Collection management challenges

• Identification of new content
  • There are no standard directories of Emerging Formats
  • Need to work with creators, researchers, publishers, etc.

• Acquisition and collection
  • Decisions on which versions to collect and on acquisition methods, e.g. file transfer, download via access code, web harvesting, etc.
  • Recording or documenting content that cannot be realistically collected

• Discovery and access
  • Decisions on the metadata required to facilitate discovery and use (e.g. information on technical requirements, etc.)
  • Challenges for access via UK Legal Deposit frameworks; requirements for hardware, user support, etc. in reading rooms
Need for collaboration and engagement

- Publishers, publication platforms
- Content creators
- Other organisations dealing with complex digital objects
thank you

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