The Open Platform Initiative: A proposal for coherence and interdependence in Community-owned Infrastructure

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OPEN PLATFORM CONVERSATION

For over 30 years, research libraries have invested in building the ecosystem of open source communities and software projects that support the preservation and access of digital content.

Based on a perceived shared imperative for the need to bring new thinking, new funding models, and new commitments to promoting sustainable, interoperable infrastructure, a small group has started a conversation aligned around a seed concept for collective action and started a draft proposal.

We are seeking to expand the conversation, improve it, and scale it to hundreds of institutions.
A siloed landscape of open infrastructure projects...
Overall Picture of Vulnerability:

TOO MUCH CONCENTRATION AND POOR INCLUSION

Investments in Open Interoperability vs. Individual Applications

- $468,500 (17.2%)
- $2,260,274 (82.8%)
THE RISK OF INACTION

Who controls knowledge? What is saved? Who gets to see what, and on what terms? Who decides?

Imbalance between academy-owned and commercial infrastructure (Privatization of Public knowledge)

Siloed behavior in a networked, interdependent world (Loss of national / international competitiveness)

Increasing waste and redundancy (Loss of resources & credibility)

Inability to serve as effective stewards of the scholarly & cultural record (Loss of relevance, integrity & trust in our knowledge institutions)

For further context, see the April CNI presentation: http://bit.ly/OP-CNI
WHY DO WE NEED A NEW APPROACH?

The systems, structures, and collaborative networks necessary to support the knowledge ecosystem have reached a level of complexity and scale that has overwhelmed the ability of existing methods of funding, cooperation, and governance to reliably support shared open infrastructure.
OPEN PLATFORM INITIATIVE

PURPOSE

To provide value to a diverse community of higher educational and cultural institutions to safely and continuously steward the digital content integral to academic inquiry, scientific knowledge, and cultural heritage by

● Promoting shared capacities and services that enable durability and persistence for content and data
● Providing usable discovery and access for users
● Building and enabling capabilities for staff to effectively manage and curate the knowledge stewarded by participating institutions
Open Platform—Desired Future Condition

Through collective action, we propose to create an Open Platform that brings financial, strategic, and institutional coherence to community-built, interoperable, service-driven infrastructure and software projects that support the preservation and access of scholarship and knowledge.

Partners will be inclusive of institutions, projects, communities, vendors, funders, and public & private enterprise.

The Platform must have an intrinsic, robust capacity to execute, sustain, and scale.
The Open Platform is not simply a collection of software and tools, but a fluid ecosystem—a set of technologies, shared principles, and standards that includes both open and commercial solutions.

**Structured Services, Partnerships & Alliances**
- Cultivates Relationships
- Facilitates Share Services
- Works for the Whole

**Standards, Interoperability & Certification**
- Develops & Promotes Interoperability
- Documents the components of the Platform
- Maintains Alignment with International Standards

**Funding & Sustainability**
- Gathers & Distributes Funding
- Evaluates Investment Needs
- Sustains Core Capacities, Seeds Innovation

**Stewardship**
- Articulates the message
- Pools the Risk
ONGOING ACTIVITIES & CONVERSATIONS

Outlining further details of the funding model, commitments, agreements, and standards necessary to make this work

Drafting a case for change with examples of working efforts as well as gaps & challenges

Assembling further data & analysis

Related Initiatives:
Mapping Scholarly Infrastructure Census (Mellon)
Invest in Open Infrastructure / JROST
Lyrasis merger with DuraSpace
SPEED-STATING
A METHOD FOR RAPID IDEA-SHARING

Remember you are **communicating** with the people at your table!
1. Build on what you read
2. Add an idea, then pass to your right (on cue)
3. Write statements, rather than questions
4. Compact and pithy is easier to read than loooong
5. Write first, then circle, then connect
6. Write legibly!
REPORT OUT:
PATTERNS & OBSERVATIONS

Seed prompts:
A. Entities who should be engaged
B. What must we get absolutely right?
C. Ideas and elements that should be included
D. Things that would help make this compelling to my institution
E. Possible blind spots or gaps
NEXT STEPS

Further ideas and more detail are forthcoming
Get updates and join the conversation—
Fill out the form at:

Results and synthesis of this session will be posted in a shared drive folder: