

Digital Asset Management: Elements of an Institutional Program
A project undertaken by Dartmouth College
and Duke University supported by an
Officers Planning Grant (Don Waters) of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in 2006

- Dartmouth and Duke take national lead on digital asset management in higher education.
- Among the greatest challenge for all disciplines of higher education and society generally will be archiving and creating access to huge amounts of information.
- Developing a broad, long-range strategy for managing both the administrative records of the university and the academic output of departments and faculty is an institutional imperative.
- Challenges of funding—the size and the complexity of an infrastructure for a centralized archive is significant.
- Challenges of the culture—individual faculty are use to keeping and managing their data themselves. Shared repositories of data is a new concept. Some faculty are uncomfortable at the idea of placing their intellectual property into a shared repository.
- We are quickly approaching a tipping point at which faculty will expect the university to meet this need, particularly if we can accommodate it in an easy and cost-neutral way. This is already the case for administrative areas.
- The Dartmouth–Duke–Mellon grant concluded that the creation of a Provost-level steering committee, charged with developing a model of digital asset management including of a campus-wide effort to inventory, evaluate, preserve, and make accessible the university's digital assets, both administrative and academic, is the first step. The committee would be composed of campus stakeholders, including the chief research officer, the chief information officer, the university librarian, records manager, dean of the faculty and other key administrators. The committee will be charged with articulating, developing, and implementing a digital asset management program and oversee the work of subgroups and implementation teams that will establish policies and priorities.
- Bring together other institutions at senior levels to discuss and react to the model developed by Dartmouth and Duke. Form a Digital Asset Management Partnership of similar institutions working on the problem.

Elements of an Institutional Program

1. Establish a formal structure which becomes integrated into the institution in a permanent way. Form the steering committee as described above.
2. Steering Committee must tackle priorities—what is critical to maintain and make choices and judgments.
3. Establish set of principles and policies for digital asset management.
4. Define the scope and complexity of the program. Think globally and act locally.
5. Define and support incentives for participation—participation is in the best interest of faculty, should save faculty time and be cost-neutral.
6. Repository should be confidential and openness—should provide for different levels of access and security depending on the submitter's and university's needs for openness or confidentiality.
7. The repository should balance potentially conflicting requirements of individuals and the institution, including intellectual property rights.

Dartmouth and Duke believe it is critical to begin this planning, institutionally-wide, immediately. The risk of losing financial, administrative, and academic information is too great not to act and act decisively.

We would like Mellon to consider support for a position to develop the model and begin the implementation of this planning strategy.

Jeffrey L. Horrell
Dean of Libraries and Librarian of the College
October 13, 2006