Economics, Sustainability, and the Cooperative Model in Digital Preservation

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Presentation Overview

- Background: The MetaArchive Cooperative as Exemplar of the Cooperative Approach

- Components of Economics and Sustainability...
  - Funding streams and membership growth
  - Cost areas and specific program components

  - Organizational structures...
So, what is the “Cooperative Model” anyway?

“a jointly owned enterprise engaging in the production or distribution of goods or the supplying of services, operated by its members for their mutual benefit…”
Funding Streams: MetaArchive Example

- **Sponsored funding** (tapering lower...)
  - LC/NDIIPP
  - NARA/NHPRC

- **Cooperative-derived** (scaling upward...)
  - Membership dues
  - Storage fees
  - Consulting / Education

- **Original cost areas**
  - Establish 1st PLN, technology focus (2004–2007)
  - Transform into sustainable business model
  - Provide training and services to members, others
Program Components and Costs

1. Collaborative relationship-building w/ members
2. Planning and policy-making
3. Staff training
4. Selecting and implementing networked systems
5. Developing and maintaining software
6. Selecting digital assets for preservation
7. Documenting digital assets (tech., admin., pres. metadata)
8. Preparing assets for harvest/ingest
9. Assessing/monitoring assets afterward
10. Infrastructural costs (utilities, PCs, space, servers, cloud, etc.)
Components and Costs...

- The 1st 9 of the 10 areas are the cost of expert personnel. Expertise/knowledge is biggest cost!

- MetaArchive example -- Central staff:
  - program manager
  - collaborative services librarian
  - Systems/network administrator
  - software engineer (1/2 time)

- “Distributed” staff (from member institutions)
  - local administrator, collections mgr., legal counsel
  - systems admin., programmer (ingest), “data wrangler”
Organizational Structures: Funds

- **Sustaining Members:**
  - Pioneers. $5,000/year; 3-year term; host node for research, development, and preservation activities; representation on the Steering Committee; access to 40 GB space*

- **Preservation Members:**
  - Central preservation partners. $1,000/year, 3-year term, host node for preservation activities, access to 20 GB space*

*more space can be purchased by GB as needed (ca. $1/GB)
Value Proposition?

- Reduce both short-term, long-term costs by inviting investment in commonly-owned solution

- Keeps “power” in hands of cultural institutions
  - Safer when insts. develop at least some of the solution
  - Reduces “dependencies”
  - Shares tech developments, tasks among membership
  - Shares knowledge, expertise among membership
  - Virtual organization, not “bulky” central infrastructure
  - Distributed, yet engaged, through legal agreements
  - Nimble, flexible, communicative
Questions and Comments?

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