Developing a National Preservation Policy: Experiences in Germany

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Outline

- The nestor Project – Background
- The nestor Project – Activities
- nestor Activities for a National Preservation Policy
- First Results

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The nestor Project

- nestor - Network of Expertise in Long-Term Storage of Digital Resources
- nestor is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research
- The funding amounts to approx. 800,000 EUR
- Project duration: June 2003 until May 2006

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The nestor Partners

- Die Deutsche Bibliothek
- Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen (Goettingen State and University Library)
- Computer and Media Services of Humboldt-University, Berlin
- Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Bavarian State Library)
- Institut für Museumskunde (Institute for Museum Information)
- Generaldirektion der Staatlichen Archive Bayerns (Bavarian State Archive – Head Office)
- Bundesarchiv (German Federal Archive) (since 2005)

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Tasks of the nestor Project

- make expertise and information available
- facilitate cooperation
- present models
- promote standards
- raise awareness
- establish a durable organization
- ...

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nestor Activities – Information

- Subject Gateway
- Who Where What
- News
- Calendar
- Project
- Newsletter

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nestor Activities – Communication

- Mailing Lists
- Workshops
- Workspace
  - WG Repositories
  - WG Multimedia
  - ...

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nestor Activities – Working Groups

Active Working Groups:
- WG Trusted Repositories Certification
- WG Multimedia

Planned Working Groups:
- National Preservation Policy
- Curation of Scientific Raw Data
- ...

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nestor Activities – Expert Reports

Published Expert Reports:
- Digital Preservation and Law
- Digitisation and Preservation in the museum sector
- A comparison of archiving systems

Planned Expert Reports:
- Electronic Journals
- Perspectives of long-term preservation of multimedia objects
- Study about the curation of scientific raw data
- ...

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nestor Aim: Proposal for a National Preservation Policy

nestor wants to strengthen the discussion about a national Preservation Policy by:

- Commissioning an expert report on the development of a description profile for a national Preservation Policy (to be published soon)
- Preparing a report on collecting guidelines and selection criteria (to be published soon)
- Organising Workshops: e.g. Workshop on a national Preservation Strategy (June 2004), iPRES conference (September 2005)
- Setting up a working group on policy and selection issues (soon after the iPRES conference)
Preservation Policy

- Digital Preservation is, on the one hand, a technical issue – on the other hand it is foremost a national and international organisational and political challenge!

- A Preservation Policy is the declared intention to preserve the digital heritage!

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National Preservation Policy

- What is to be preserved?
- Why shall the objects be preserved?
- How shall the objects be accessed in the future?
- Who is responsible for the preservation?
- How long shall the objects be preserved?
- ...

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General Framework set by a National Preservation Policy

- The legal background must be defined!
- The responsibilities must be identified!
- Adequate and durable financing must be provided!

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Legal Background

- Intellectual property rights must be adjusted. Today some preservation workflows can be illegal, because objects are copied and altered during the preservation process.
- It must be legal to bypass Digital Rights Management Systems (DRMS) for preservation purposes.
- ...

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Responsibilities

- Because of the federal structure of Germany, there is a need for a precise arrangement between the responsibilities of the Federal Government and of the Federal States to achieve a compatible structure.

- Is it possible to adopt the responsibilities from the analog to the digital matters, as it is presumed by many institutions? Or do we face a process of concentration?

- ...
Financing

- Digital Preservation is urgent, risky and expensive
- A suitable and durable funding of the digital preservation must be guaranteed
- The amount of funds needed for preservation depends on the present will and future needs (indexing, access, rendering, ...)

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Expert Report: Development of a Description Profile for a National Preservation Policy

- Contractor: Institute for Science Networking Oldenburg GmbH
- Authors: Eberhard R. Hilf and Thomas Severiens
- Initially intended as a statistical evaluation of a survey, later performed in an inductive, synoptic and argumentative manner
- To be published in fall/winter 2005

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Expert Report: Recommendations I

- Digital Preservation has to preserve the functionality and the content of the resources as complete as possible.
- Digital Preservation needs national and international redundancy.
- Open formats, regular migration, well trained staff and active participation in international developments are essential for long-term readability.
Expert Report: Recommendations II

- Selection must be made on the basis of content and potential impact – independent of distribution and publication channels.
- A preservation law is necessary.
- Access must be durable, comfortable and open (exception: confidential or sensitive data).

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Expert Report: Structural Recommendations

- Germany needs a distributed and at the same time integrative preservation architecture which is based on division of labour. This architecture should be the result of a broad discussion between all parties involved.
- Because of the complex distribution of responsibilities between the involved ministries on Federal Government level as well as on Federal States level, the expert report pleads for a federal digital preservation law.
Thank you very much for your attention!
Questions, comments ...?