

HP, MIT bolster DSpace open-source archives

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Users of DSpace digital-archiving technology will now receive help and support via a not-for-profit organization set up by the creators of the tool, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Hewlett-Packard.

Announced Wednesday, the DSpace Foundation will provide support to more than 200 institutions around the world that use the open-source online tool to manage their digital document archives, HP and MIT said.

The organizations also announced that [Michele Kimpton](#), formerly of the [Internet Archive](#), has been appointed as director of the DSpace Foundation.

"The creation of the DSpace Foundation and Michele Kimpton's appointment are important steps in the evolution of DSpace," said [Ann Wolpert](#), MIT's director of libraries. "Together, these actions signal that both the platform and the community have successfully reached the point where an independent organization is needed to direct the project."

[DSpace was developed in 2002](#), after MIT concluded that it needed a robust software platform to store its collections and research data, which had previously existed only in hard-copy format.

Essentially, [DSpace](#) is a centralized, electronic repository for the massive amounts of intellectual property created by research institutions. The heart of DSpace is an open-source storage and retrieval system, according to MIT.

The importance of open-source approaches to digital archives was highlighted earlier this month, when the United Kingdom's National Archives released a [joint press release with](#)

Microsoft, hinting that it intended to migrate some of its documents to [the software maker's Open XML format](#).

Open-source advocates claim that the Microsoft-championed format is not as open as it should be and doesn't compare well to rival formats such as the [community-developed OpenDocument Format \(ODF\)](#).

"If it were, Microsoft wouldn't need to make Novell and Xandros and Linspire sign NDAs (nondisclosure agreements) and then write translators for them," [Pamela Jones](#), an open-source expert and editor of the Groklaw blog, wrote recently.

But the National Archives said that it is not wedded to any particular data format and that all technology options are being considered at this time.

"For people involved in the debate, it can be a very emotive issue, particularly the opponents of the Microsoft approach. We are neutral--we welcome open-source software because it makes our lives easier," said [David Thomas](#), chief information officer of the National Archives.

Andrew Donoghue of [ZDNet UK](#) reported from London.