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University  
of Glasgow

Humanities Advanced Technology  
& Information Institute

# Providing technical support during research projects

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HATII





## Introduction

- What is a Technical Appendix?
- Overview of a Technical Appendix
- Where to get help

## What is a technical appendix?

- Documentation that outlines the technical aspects of a project
- Forms part of any application that involves the creation of a digital resource (website, database, app)
- An opportunity to demonstrate that your proposed project team possesses the know-how to deliver on the technical aspects of your project

## Overview of a technical appendix

Questions divided into six sections:

1. Project management
2. Data development methods
3. Infrastructural support
4. Data preservation and sustainability
5. Access
6. Copyright and intellectual property issues

# Overview of a technical appendix

## 1. Project Management

### a. Management & Reporting Structure

- Could refer to the *Project Management* section of the Case for Support
- Focus is on delivery of the **technical aspects** of the project
- May consider including details of the project steering committee

# Overview of a technical appendix

## 1. Project Management, cont'd

### b. Project timetable

- Provide a textual overview of the proposed timeline
- Might refer to a Gantt chart or other visual evidence
- Make provision for planning at the beginning of the project and for evaluation at the end

# Overview of a technical appendix

## 1. Project Management, cont'd

### c. Project deliverables

- Includes the obvious technical outputs (website, database)
- Might also include ancillary technical deliverables such as the results of any evaluation and your documentation

### d. Monitoring process

- Could refer back to the management section
- Role of the steering committee may be expanded upon
- Might also include existing line management structures



# Overview of a technical appendix

## 2. Data development methods

### a. Content selection

- This will largely be driven by the researcher, but should be developed in conjunction with the systems developer or equivalent
- Consider things such as maintaining high-resolution archival copies of images in addition to those intended for everyday web consumption, for example

## Overview of a technical appendix

### 2. Data development methods cont'd

#### b. Data/file formats

- Emphasise open standards and compliance
- Consider well-supported open source tools (e.g. MySQL) over proprietary solutions
- Think about metadata (e.g. Dublin Core) where appropriate
- XML is a standard and a preferred archival format for text-based material

## Overview of a technical appendix

### 2. Data development methods cont'd

#### c. Documenting the resource

- Good documentation can help ensure life of any digital output beyond the end of the project
- Might include the requirements specification as well as any user manuals or even contextual help
- Be aware that requirements will likely shift somewhat over the course of any project: documentation should be updated to reflect changes

## Overview of a technical appendix

### 2. Data development methods cont'd

#### d. Advice sought

- Locally-available expertise, in addition to external contacts
- Collaborators with established form in the field can carry considerable weight

#### e. Consultation with projects using similar methods

- Again, we have a wealth of successful projects within the University to highlight

## Overview of a technical appendix

### 3. Infrastructural support

This is where technical support – e.g. Arts Support or IT Services – come in

- Software & hardware support, including hosting websites and databases
- Back-up facilities, redundancy, etc.
- This is also where you might justify the acquisition of new hardware

## Overview of a technical appendix

### 4. Data preservation & sustainability

- Demonstrate that you have sought advice from relevant organizations
  - External: JISC Digital Media, National e-Science Centre, Digital Curation Centre (DCC)...
  - Internal: HATII, University of Glasgow Archive Services
  
- Following the cessation of AHDS funding, institutions are encouraged to preserve and maintain resources “in house”
  - Project partners may play a role
  
- Open standards and open source software are also worth mentioning (again), with particular reference to sustainability

## Overview of a technical appendix

### 5. Access

- Publicly-available, free-to-use website is most obvious digital output
- Should state aim to adhere to Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) guidelines
- Avoid extraneous or proprietary technologies where possible

## Overview of a technical appendix

### 6. Copyright & IP issues

- Plenty of advice available:
  - JISC Legal, JISC Digital Media (formerly TASI), UK Patents Office, and the University's Research & Enterprise Department
- Issues to consider include:
  - Assertion of Database Right
  - Assertion of the project team's right to claim authorship
  - Proper permission sought and acknowledgement given where other authors' materials are used



## Where to get help

What do we mean by ‘technical support’?

- Good **IT support** is essential:
    - Server maintenance
    - Sourcing new hardware
    - Dealing with your researchers’ technical queries
  - A good **technical partner** is equally important if there’s a digital component to your project:
    - Writing the Technical Appendix
    - Developing bespoke databases, novel user interfaces, websites & other tools
    - Providing intellectual input and technical advice
- A **collaboration** with your technical partner

## Where to get help

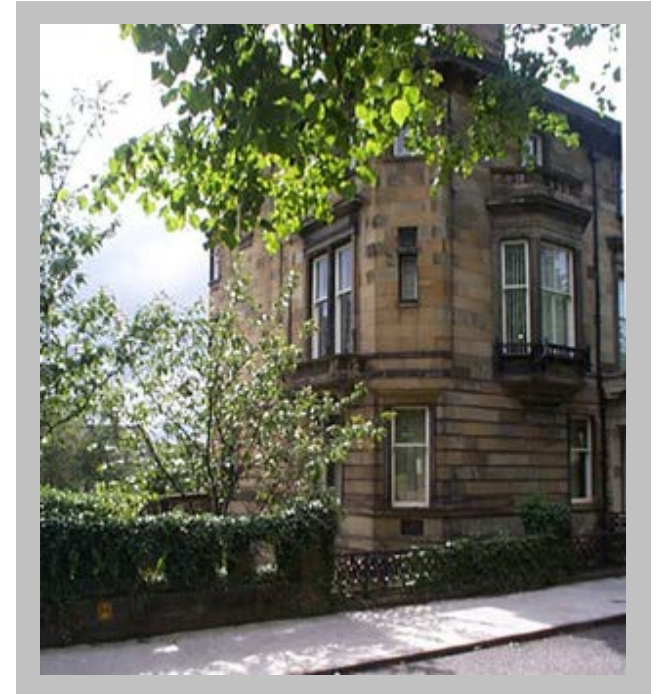
### How HATII can help

- Within the College of Arts, IT support is based at HATII
- In addition, we are also technical partners in many, many projects
- Our research has informed and strengthened many successful bids
- Partners in a wide range of projects, from interdisciplinary collaborations within the university to large-scale EU-funded programmes



**Thanks!**

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<http://www.gla.ac.uk/departments/hatii/>

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## Digital Curation Centre

– <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/>

## DMP Online

– <http://dmponline.hatii.arts.gla.ac.uk/>

## JISC Legal

– <http://www.jisclegal.ac.uk/>

## National E-Science Centre

– <http://www.nesc.ac.uk/>