Roadmap

Project Summary

ARK (Archival Resource Key) identifiers are widely used for objects and abstractions related to scientific and scholarly heritage. ARKs were developed at the US National Library of Medicine and the California Digital Library (CDL) especially, but not exclusively, for the library, archive and museum community. Their built-in flexibility and ease-of-use has proven popular with researchers and scholars across all academic disciplines, as well as government, commercial and nonprofit sectors. Indeed, over 500 institutions across the world have registered to use ARKs, conservatively estimated to number 3.2 billion.

CDL and DuraSpace launched this pilot project as a first step toward ensuring the ongoing health and development of the ARK infrastructure. By “ARK infrastructure,” we mean open source software tools and systems, the ARK specification, and production-grade resolver services for N2T.net (Name-to-Thing, a generic resolver for over 600 identifier types and also the global ARK resolver). ARKs represent the only mainstream persistent identifier scheme that is truly open, decentralized, non-siloed, and non-paywalled. Community ownership of this infrastructure has been under discussion for over a decade, and the project makes a start by establishing an active ARK community group with the aims of

1. Maintaining two key assets: the ARK specification and the NAAN registry, and
2. Submitting the current ARK specification to the IETF as in Internet Informational RFC.

CDL plans to be a core member of the ARK community and invites anyone with an interest in promoting long-term access to information objects to join us.

How to Get Involved

- Talk with us (and each other) via the ARKs forum/mailing list
- Fill out an Expression of Interest form
- Give us feedback on our Project Vision
- Learn more about ARKs

Timeline

Advisory Group

What we’re working on now

- Reviewing and iterating on our pitch
- Defining a governance model
- Defining a financial model

Technical Working Group

Short Term

- Finishing work on the ARK IETF specification
- Broadening NAAN organizational registry maintenance beyond just CDL

Longer Term

- Guiding the ARK specification through the IETF Informational RFC process
- Work with the Outreach Working Group to implement mechanisms to measure ARK usage

Outreach Working Group

Short term

- Combining second round survey begun by the Sustainability WG
- Clearly articulating how ARKs can be used, why they are essential (the “value proposition”), and implementing a plan to promote their adoption and use
- Developing a process to gather requirements, priorities, and models for shared community and infrastructure management

Longer term

- Launching an initiative to measure ARK usage world-wide
  - Consider how to use this as a community outreach mechanism
  - Make the survey/measurement repeatable so that watching long-term trends is possible
  - Develop a dissemination plan
Sustainability Working Group

Short term

- Determining the most cost-effective way to deliver ARK services that provide value to the community while keeping the required contribution from the community affordable

Longer term

- Consulting with the community to pursue long-term organizational and financial stability

Aspirational items - we imagine ourselves working on these!

We envision an active and involved global community that sustains ARK identifiers as part of the open scholarly and research infrastructure.

- Sharing responsibility for and automating regular processes, including assignment of organizational NAANs
- Creating an active open source project around the N2T resolver code base
- Creating and maintaining an open source library of ARK integrations with external systems