

Seminar Evaluation

Introduction

On the afternoon of the second day participants were handed out a feedback form and asked to complete it. ERPANET received back 42 forms, which amounts to a response rate of slightly under 50% of the 87 participants. It has to be borne in mind, however, that between ten and twenty participants had already left the seminar at that time.

The feedback form is reproduced in the annex to this report. It is split up into two sections, addressing the seminar itself and the background of participants.

About the Seminar

The first five questions aimed at various aspects of the seminar. Participants were asked to judge these with values ranging from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).

1. How would you rate the organisation of the event?	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	48%
	5	52%
	none	
2. How would you rate the structure of the seminar?	1	
	2	
	3	5%
	4	62%
	5	31%
	none	2%
3. How well did you feel that the seminar addressed the main topic?	1	
	2	
	3	2%
	4	53%
	5	43%
	none	2%
4. How useful was the seminar documentation?	1	2%
	2	
	3	5%
	4	57%
	5	36%
	none	

5. How effective were the speakers?	1	
	2	
	3	12%
	4	62%
	5	12%
	none	2%
	diverse	12%

Questions 6 and 7 asked for summary judgements of the overall seminar and the costs.

6. Was the cost acceptable? ¹	No	
	Yes	100%
	none	

7. Did this seminar meet your expectations?	No	
	Yes	98%
	none	2%

Questions 8 to 11 supplemented these numbers with short statements on positive and negative aspects of the seminar.

8. What will you be able to take from this seminar back to your own organisations?

Many respondents mentioned general knowledge, highlighting namely a global knowledge of the specific topic (10 mentions), new information about current development and initiatives (7), experience and best practice (7), references and resources (6), and technical information (3). Some details were mentioned more specifically, namely the archiving of documents, the consensus on a high-quality master strategy, the preservation of non-text formats, the standards, in particular PDF/A, the tool to preserve relational databases, and file format registries as a starting point. Two respondents summarily mentioned a variety of perspectives of practice and theory.

Other respondents underlined the use of lessons learnt for current projects, strategies, and planning they are involved with (6 mentions) and the confirmation of their own understanding in many cases, mentioning in particular recommendations for preservation formats, and audio and video best practices. One respondent mentioned a potential collaboration.

Finally, seven respondents highlighted the value of contacts, networking, and informal exchange.

9. What else would you like to have seen covered at this seminar?

Respondents on the one hand would have liked to see additional types of documents discussed, namely HTML, databases, geographical information systems, and digital signatures. On the other hand they stated that some points could have been treated more in-depth, such as basic requirements for archival file formats, conversion software, cost issues, file format versions management, authenticity, metafile formats, and a comparison between XML and the relational model as underlying structure for defining file formats. In particular, more technical details, practical experience, and demonstrations have been called for. One participant would have liked to see a definitive list of pros and cons per file format, while another was interested "to hear

¹ The seminar registration fee was 100 Euro.

Microsoft's opinion". Finally, one respondent pointed out that OAI was announced to be an issue but was not covered by the seminar.

Other suggestions that went beyond the seminar topic included hardware migration and digital media longevity issues.

From these results it seems that the seminar managed to cover the most important issues in connection with file formats for preservation.

10. What did you like best about this seminar?

Twelve respondents left this field blank. Many of the remaining highlighted the event's programme and topic in a general way, mentioning the high level of most papers and the good range of speakers, the information on some technical areas, or the entire first day that they found very interesting. The detailed analysis of some formats, the PRONOM, and the FITS presentations received particular praise.

From an organisational point of view, the clear focus was mentioned as making it easier to decide whether to attend. Five respondents also mentioned the diversity and variety of the programme. The good timing and time discipline were highlighted.

On a more social level, the interesting range of participants from many countries was seen as great benefit, as was especially to hear about other peoples' experience and project (5 mentions). Socialising, contacts, and atmosphere were mentioned by 6 participants as highlights, while four others praised the unique location, "which gave a really imperial environment to the seminar".

11. What did you like least?

While seventeen respondents left this field blank, many others mentioned some problems with the conference venue: the conference room was too small for the number of people, and the acoustics and the climate have been criticised. The setup for lunch was not ideal, and ten participants found the seats inconvenient.

Concerning the seminar content, one participant criticised that there were many theoretical considerations without the goal to verify them by practice. Others said that there was too much focus on audiovisual documents, that the second day was less interesting from a library point of view, and that in general some speakers were rhetorically bad and some presentations were poor. Two respondents criticised the format and organisation of the breakout discussions that they found too late in the programme and too vague. Finally, an obvious Vienna fanatic would have loved to see the Globe Museum and generally more of the city.

Participants' Background

12. What kind of organisation do you work for?	Public Sector Organisation	43%
	Commercial Company	5%
	Academic Institution	43%
	Consultancy	5%
	Other	4%

As usual for erpaEvents, participants mainly come from the public sector and academia, with only a small part of commercial companies represented. The participants that ticked "other" specified "International Organisation".

13. What is your function?

Fifteen respondents are IT specialists with different functions, while nine are archivists, and another five have functions directly related to digital preservation. In addition, there were five librarians, three consultants, and four researchers among those who returned the questionnaire.

14. How did you hear about this seminar?	Listserve	31%
	An Organisation or Institution	10%
	Colleague	38%
	Web search	5%
	ERPANET Website	26%
	Other	5%

Multiple answers were possible. Word of mouth has been the most effective means of attracting participants to this ERPANET seminar, which can be seen as reflecting the growing profile of ERPANET among the digital preservation community. ERPANET is posting its event announcements to some 60 listserves and web fora, and this proved responsible of attracting another important part of the participants. Listserves specified on the feedback forms include diglib, inetbib, digital-preservation, and Archivliste. Participants who ticked "Other" specified that they had been invited as speakers.

15. What motivated you to attend?	Interest in the topic	83%
	Interest in the ERPANET project	21%
	General interest in preservation activities	43%
	Location	10%
	Speakers	7%
	Other	7%

Participants were asked to name the reasons that motivated them to attend the seminar, whereby multiple answers were possible. Unsurprisingly, most declared an interest in the topic, while a general interest in preservation activities was a second important reason.

16. Are you likely to attend other ERPANET events in the future?	No	5%
	Yes	83%
	none	12%

17. Are there any topics that you would like to see ERPANET provide events in?

15 participants suggested possible subjects for further events. Some of them have already been treated during earlier erpaEvents, namely XML ("Perhaps a new seminar dedicated to XML, focusing on possible standardisation of elements in different fields of interest"), Solutions/implementations of OAIS, Preservation of databases, Web archiving, including the Deep Web (3 mentions), and Metadata for accessing digital objects. Other suggestions include:

- Solutions made from or for smaller archives
- Media obsolescence
- User expectations and needs in preservation
- Appraisal of electronic records in relation to preservation strategies
- Workflow of a digital archive
- Authenticity
- Best practice and standards versus costing for electronic archiving
- Presentation of archival material

Developing tools for preservation
Emulation
Preservation of digital signatures
METS
Preservation problems related to non-western scripts (UNICODE)

One participant broadly suggested "Anything on long-term archiving of digital material".

Annex

Feedback Form

This form is intended to gather information about the seminar from the participants. It will only take a couple of minutes to fill in, and will provide us with valuable information about the usefulness and benefits of the seminar. This, in turn, will enable us to better adjust future erpaEvents to participants' needs.

Please fill in your answers or circle the appropriate number (where 1 = poor and 5 = excellent).

About the Seminar

1. How would you rate the organisation of the event?
1 2 3 4 5
2. How would you rate the structure of the seminar?
1 2 3 4 5
3. How well did you feel that the seminar addressed the main topic?
1 2 3 4 5
4. How useful was the seminar documentation?
1 2 3 4 5
5. How effective were the speakers?
1 2 3 4 5
6. Was the cost acceptable?
No Yes
7. Did this seminar meet your expectations?
No Yes
If not, why not?
8. What will you be able to take from this seminar back to your own organisations?
9. What else would you like to have seen covered at this seminar?
10. What did you like best about this seminar?
11. What did you like least?

please turn over!

About you

12. Do you work for a
- Public Sector Organisation
 - Commercial company
 - Academic Institution
 - Consultancy
 - Other (Please specify)
13. What is your function?
(Please specify; e.g. Archivist, Content Provider, Consultant, etc.)
14. How did you hear about this seminar?
- Listserv (Please specify)
 - An Organisation or Institution (Please specify)
 - Colleague
 - Web search
 - ERPANET Website
 - Other (Please specify)
15. What motivated you to attend? (Please tick as appropriate)
- Interest in the topic
 - Interest in the ERPANET Project
 - General interest in preservation activities
 - Location
 - Speakers
 - Other (Please specify)

The Future

16. Are you likely to attend other ERPANET events in the future?
- No Yes
17. Are there any topics that you would like to see ERPANET provide events in?

Please feel free to make any additional comments. We also welcome any additional feedback to coordinator@erpanet.org or swiss.editor@erpanet.org.
Many thanks for giving us your opinion!