

## Evaluation of the *espida* Model

### What is being evaluated and why?

All methodologies must be evaluated in order to understand their efficacy and to develop them to be as effective as possible. In the case of *espida*, engagement with experts and target users in the field was undertaken and the outcomes of the engagement fed into refinement of the methodology.

The *espida* Approach has been developed to aid the communication of intangible benefits that are the product of a proposed action. It was originally created to help the digital preservation community make business cases for sustained funding, with the intention of being rolled out at the University of Glasgow. The remit has since been developed beyond digital preservation into the wider information environment and from the University of Glasgow to HE/FE and public sector organisations. This means the evaluation must be broad enough to encompass that scope of applicability. In order for it to be relevant and meaningful, the methodology must therefore fit a number of requirements. It must:

1. articulate effectively intangible outcomes;
2. help the digital preservation community understand the context they must argue their case in, and in turn understand if sustained resources for preservation will be achievable;
3. be relevant within the University of Glasgow;
4. have relevance outwith the University into the HE/FE environment and beyond;
5. be usable, practical and offer as little scope as possible for erroneous interpretation.<sup>1</sup>

### How was the evaluation to be done?

*espida* put in place three distinct groups to serve as evaluators of the work from the creation stage through various iterations of the methodology. The three groups were the 'stakeholder champions', the Project Board and the External Expert Panel. Each group brought different attributes to the project.

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<sup>1</sup> Kaplan and Norton have spent many years trying to explain the proper usage of their Balanced Scorecard through various articles and books Kaplan, R.S., and D.P. Norton. *Alignment. Using the Balanced Scorecard to Create Corporate Synergies*. Boston, M.A.: Harvard Business School Press, 2006. ———. "The balanced scorecard - measures that drive performance." *Harvard Business Review* 70, 1992: 58-63. ———. "Having trouble with your strategy? Then map it." *Harvard Business Review*, no. September-October, 2000: 167-176. ———. "The office of strategy management." *Harvard Business Review* 83, no. 10, 2005: 72-80. ———. *The strategy-focused organization. How balanced scorecard companies thrive in the new business environment*. Boston: Harvard Business School, 2001.

## ***Stakeholder Champions***

The stakeholder champions comprised staff from the Library, Archives, Information Services with specialism in different aspects within these areas (finance, digital repositories, electronic record provision, information strategy). This group had strong involvement in all stages of the development of the methodology. Their knowledge was used to expand different areas of value that information objects can have which the project had developed, the change in value over time and asset typologies. The group commented on all major stages of the modelling, reflecting on how it related to their requirements and if it offered a better model than that which they already used for making cases for projects. This group represented proposers of business cases.

## ***Project Board***

The Project Board brought together senior figures from within the University of Glasgow. Its purpose was to use their seniority to help integrate the methodology in University practices and to comment on the efficacy of the work. Directors of the Library, Archive Services, and Information Services agreed to be on this board and were joined by a member of the senior management group, a representative of the Faculty of Arts Research Committee, a member of computing science and finally a member of the Principal's Office. The Board represented a decision-makers view within the University, analysing the model from the obverse of the stakeholder champions. The wide-range of expertise on this board challenged the thinking of the team and ensured a relevancy across a large portion of the University Campus.

## ***The External Expert Panel***

This group functioned as a channel of communication with the digital preservation community and senior management within areas dealing with information objects. The group has extensive expertise in business modelling, decision-making, attracting resources for information-rich work and academic research in the fields of economics and information science (the two most relevant disciplines). The panel engaged with the work as the final evaluation stage before the launch of the beta version of the methodology and brought a rich mix of standpoints.

## **Strategies**

Two strategies defined very early on in the project helped define the mode and timing of evaluation. The Engagement Strategy detailed the role of stakeholders within the University. Alongside the stakeholder champions and the Project Board staff from all areas across campus were approached to help inform the methodology. Advocacy meetings with these stakeholders tested the first iteration of the *espida* Balanced Score Card and its ability to define and articulate the values all types of information assets in the University brought.

The Dissemination Strategy identified stages of releasing iterations of the model and writing articles and giving presentations. These steps were of major importance in the development of the model and allowed the community to respond to the methodology. The feedback fed directly into development of the model.

## **Steps in evaluation**

Evaluation work was undertaken at all major steps in the modelling process, these explored:

- aspects of value
- value over time
- asset typologies
- the value template (various iterations)
- the cost template
- Beta version of *espida* model

**Figure 1. Stages in evaluation and groups involved**

<b><u>STAGES IN EVALUATION</u></b>	<b><u>GROUPS INVOLVED</u></b>
<b>Aspects of value</b>	Stakeholder Champions Project Board
<b>Value over time</b>	Stakeholder Champions Project Board
<b>Balanced Score Card and UofG Elements</b>	Stakeholder Champions University stakeholders VP Strategy and Advancement
<b>Asset typologies</b>	Stakeholder Champions
<b>The value template (various iterations)</b>	Stakeholder Champions Project Board External Experts Panel
<b>The cost template</b>	Stakeholder Champions Project Board External Experts Panel
<b>Beta version of <i>espida</i> model</b>	Stakeholder Champions Project Board External Experts Panel External communities

## What changes have arisen because of these meetings?

### Project Board

This group helped evaluate the direction of the work, and later the shape of the templates. Key to note from this group was the questioning of ‘summing up’ of the strengths of value within the Value Template. Utility Analysis was discussed in this vein that has forced a re-consideration of how to discourage reductionist tendencies of decision-makers. Fundamentally, the methodology has been created to move away from basing decision on numbers (be they pecuniary or otherwise). Following these discussions, an exemplar of why reducing the *espida* BSC to a single figure in order facilitate decision-making was developed. This compares two different types of project that are applying for funding. One brings mid-strength benefits that are spread over a large number of elements with a good chance of their coming to pass. The other presents a very high benefit for one or two elements, but also offers a large negative benefit in the short term. As the example displays, the first project would collect a high-score, the second a very low score. However, this reduction would not allow decision-makers to judge the merits of both cases equally. Only by presenting all the information would they be able to decide if the risk of negative benefit is worth taking in the second proposal for the very high return in a key organisational objective.

### Vice-Principal Strategy & Advancement

The University’s Vice-Principal for Strategy and Advancement is the primary architect of the new Strategic Plan implemented in the University. The methodology as it is presented has at its core elements that are directly aligned to the strategic goals of the University. The Vice-Principal attended the Experts’ Meeting and met separately with us. The personal meeting confirmed that the elements we had developed did draw out and reflect the key aims outlined in the Strategic Plan.

### External Experts’ Panel

A major evaluation of the work was undertaken by the Expert panel in February 2006. This meeting brought together the Project Team and the Experts in a full day meeting that was chaired by Prof. Andrew Prescott. The purpose of the meeting was to present to the Panel the concept of the scorecard approach and the initial mapping of objectives and outcome descriptors to it.

After initial presentations on the progress of the work, the rest of the day was used for group working where the experts worked through examples that they had brought with them. The issue was to explore how people would use the templates and any issues surrounding implementation and terminology, rather than creating outputs of full case studies of any arising business cases.

Principal outcomes included the terminology used for expressing the characteristics of outcomes, a more detailed accompanying text to explain the scorecards, the applicability of the approach to option appraisal decisions, and a better understanding of the relevance to different organisation types.

## **Evaluation Workshop, October 2006**

Once the beta version of the Approach was launched, it was decided to hold a workshop to which people that had downloaded the Approach and used it, or engaged with us about our work would be invited. The fourteen participants were given a training exercise to familiarise them with the syntax of the scorecards and the process of using them. The rest of the day was spent working through examples that we had outlined for them or exploring particular examples that participants had brought with them. The day was a frank and very positive exploration of the applicability and practicability of the Approach in a number of different scenarios. The primary outcomes were a clarification of the difference between ‘impacts’ and ‘outcomes’, different ways that Approach was the development of the training exercise and a full case that is now part of the Handbook.