CoreTrustSeal v3.0

In a Preservation and Community Context

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**Abstract – The authors will present the CoreTrustSeal Requirements including changes in version 3.0 in the wider context of an ongoing task force to promote digital preservation and an emerging community of trustworthy digital repositories. The input from the iPres audience during the panel discussion will be collated, aligned and fed back into these active areas of assessment, community building and policy development.**

**Keywords – CoreTrustSeal, Trustworthy Digital Repository, Preservation, Community**

**Conference Topics – Community; Innovation.**

# Introduction (Heading 1)

The release of CoreTrustSeal version 3.0 represents a significant step in Trustworthy Digital Repository (TDR) standards and certification; this work exists within a wider ecosystem of data services and community needs that are best addressed through open discussion and cooperation. The revised requirements are presented and further context is provided through the current preservation task force and community development that will support the wider vision of trustworthy research data infrastructures.

# CoreTrustSeal v3.0

The CoreTrustSeal [1] Requirements [2] emerged [3] as the result of a goal set by the Research Data Alliance (RDA) [4] to deliver a single, sustainable, low barrier to entry set of ‘core’ TDR Requirements, and Certification process. Two [5] [6] prior assessment approaches were integrated and improved through an open community working group under the auspices of the Certification of Repositories Interest Group [7]. Version 2.0 of the CoreTrustSeal Requirements sought to support the transition from prior certifications while integrating the experience of initial applicants, reviewers and Board members. Version 3.0 of the Requirements for 2023-2025 emerges at a critical point for repositories, the preservation community and global scientific infrastructure. The CoreTrustSeal has been recognised [8] as an exemplar certification solution and as an enabler of FAIR [9] (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and ReUsable) digital objects of all kinds.

A CoreTrustSeal certification is valid for three years, independent of any changes to the Requirements. The Requirements themselves are subject to community review and revision every three years; new and renewing applicants assess against the most recent version. The Revision process is led by the CoreTrustSeal Board, itself selected from the Community of Reviewers, each of whom represents a successful CoreTrustSeal repository. Submissions for the revision of Requirements are open to all individuals and repositories though bodies such as the RDA are key stakeholders and enablers of the process. Suggestions for changes must be evaluated in light of several, sometimes competing priorities: the rapidly changing nature of data and information management infrastructure, the presence of clear community expectations against which assessments can be made, and the need to deliver a low-barrier to entry and ‘core’ set of requirements. Like other TDR standards [10] [11], the CoreTrustSeal focuses on sustainable organizational and technical infrastructure that provides for digital object management services that facilitate the long-term preservation of digital assets for a defined designated community of users.

Version 3.0 addresses a number of proposals raised by the Board but are subject to community review and feedback. In addition to structural and textual changes there are updates to improve clarity and maintain alignment with the repository and data infrastructure landscape. The panel will begin with the requirements, key changes and associated work to support reviewers and applicants being presented.

# CoreTrustSeal in Context

The CoreTrustSeal seeks to provide a sustainable global service for managing requirements and a certification process management for TDRs. Current challenges include support for a full range of generalist and specialist (e.g. disciplinary) repositories, interactions with a range of non-TDR data services, the machine-actionable assessment of TDR certification status and how more specific and detailed requirements can be developed around the ‘core’ of CoreTrustSeal.

The CoreTrustSeal’s mission, and the way it approaches these challenges, must be addressed within the wider context of the communities providing digital object management and the other activities that seek to drive awareness and delivery of sustainable long term digital preservation. The other speakers’ presentations emerge from the perspective of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) [12], where a number of projects [13] have offered support to CoreTrustSeal applicants and have provided valuable discussions on the topics of preservation [14]. Many aspects of the EOSC are reflective of a global trend for consolidation of research infrastructure and a greater need for shared expertise, outsourcing and interoperability.

# CoreTrustSeal, FAIR and Preservation

Trustworthy repositories are a critical dependency for the full lifecycle of interoperable research infrastructures and they also have a long history of involvement in the development of best practices, standards and assessment. But repositories are not the only actors in this space and there is ongoing work to define other types of data services [15] and the degree to which their compliance with standards should be assessed and certified. [16]. The FAIR Principles themselves do not explicitly address preservation. Work to align CoreTrustSeal with FAIR [17] has demonstrated the need for active preservation to ensure digital assets of all types remain FAIR over time. The FAIR Forever report [18] concluded that the emerging EOSC vision lacks clarity around digital preservation, and made a number of significant recommendations for different actors. The first of these, directed towards the EOSC Secretariat, was to “establish a working party or task group, reporting directly to the EOSC Association Board with respect to digital preservation”. The resultant EOSC Association Long Term Data Preservation (LTDP) Task Force [19] is now in place. Delivering on these goals will involve a range of international actors across policy makers, funders, repositories, and other data service providers. The FAIRsFAIR project has taken a significant first step in its Coordination Plan for a sustainable network of FAIR-enabling Trustworthy Digital Repositories [20].

# Long Term Data Preservation Task Force

Though the importance of preservation is referenced in the EOSC Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) [21] there is not yet an explicit strategy. The vision of the EOSC Association LTDP Task Force [22] will address the service infrastructure, financial implications, and stakeholder roles and responsibilities necessary to provide sustainable policies, practices and strategic execution.

# Network of Trustworthy Digital Repositories

The proposed network of FAIR-Enabling TDRs, (initially with a European scope) is currently at the exploratory stage. Such a network would benefit multiple stakeholders: the repositories themselves, the researchers, and the EOSC.

It can provide an active and unified voice for FAIR-enabling Trustworthy Digital Repositories in Europe who are key stakeholders of EOSC. The adoption of FAIR and TRUST [23] practices could be promoted through training and support programmes. This would increase repository compliance with the rules of participation of EOSC and it would facilitate the implementation of widely agreed and common TRUST and FAIR assessment frameworks. The network could ultimately facilitate researchers’ access to long term preservation by enhancing the connections between TDRs and data services and technology providers in EOSC.

# Outcomes

Presentations from the three authors will provide the basis for discussion of the key topics raised. The input from expert audiences such as those represented at iPres are critical to guiding the scope and focus of efforts across the standards, task forces and community developments represented.

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