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Canadian Digital Information Strategy
E-mail to CDIS

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Comments on the Canadian Digital Information Strategy

Dear editors of the **Canadian Digital Information Strategy**,

I enjoyed reading the document. My comments refer to issues of implementation of the strategy, which you mention in the section on implementation. You say "work on the Strategy must therefore continue. As you review this draft, we ask you to consider how to advance its implementation and to suggest concrete follow-up steps that will ensure that the Strategy is acted upon."

Research on the topic of implementation of such strategies suggests that implementation may fail if aspects of historicity and heterogeneity are not taken into account.

Heterogeneity involves a multiplicity of information needs, multiplicities of standards, multiplicity of institutions and organizing forms, variety of work practices surrounding SDI, multiplicity of technologies and legacy systems, diverse business models (copyrights, pricing) inhibiting data exchange. Usually the trend is to "kill" heterogeneity by starting from scratch.

Historicity involves the conservative influence of historically accumulated & deeply entrenched (manual) work practices, (legacy) systems, technologies and data, perceptions, social institutions, etc leading to lock-in effects.

I wish to draw you attention to a report of a workshop on **“History & theory of Infrastructure: Lessons for New Scientific Cyberinfrastructures”**
<http://www.si.umich.edu/InfrastructureWorkshop/documents/UnderstandingInfrastructure2007.pdf>
where such issues are treated brilliantly. I hope this is useful.

Best regards

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