The APSR Outreach Program has been a series of events convened by APSR in collaboration with other Strategic Information Infrastructure initiatives. Five highly stimulating events attracted attendees from all over the country. The international and local experts on repository development invited to speak are highly regarded in their field and contributed considerable depth of understanding and experience in a diverse range of fields.

A busy agenda of stimulating events is scheduled for 2006. This includes workshops and seminars with international speakers covering issues such as repository management, costing, preservation metadata, “trusted” repositories, as well as a workshop for researchers on managing fieldwork data. APSR projects will also be highlighted at a Show and Tell Day for partners and interested others.

The APSR National Outreach Program performs a crucial role for the higher education sector by providing opportunities for skills development, knowledge sharing and networking for Australian researchers and information professionals.

The APSR Partner Programs include three test beds which are an innovative way of developing infrastructural elements for digital collections. The test beds develop “in-the-trenches” solutions to digital continuity and sustainability. These solutions are shared back to the sector at large in the form of tools, applications, guidelines, checklists and also through formal outreach events.

The University of Queensland (UQ) test bed project reached a momentous milestone during 2005: the release of the Fez digital repository management software for the Fedora platform. Fedora is a generic framework for managing digital objects. It requires the development of user interfaces for any application (such as an institutional repository). Fez builds upon the sophisticated Fedora base framework to provide an integrated management system to manage common aspects of institutional repository functions such as item deposit, workflow, collections and community management.

Fez has attracted international attention as a ground-breaking free and fully open source digital repository management layer for the Fedora platform. International developers have already started contributing improvements back to the open source code.

During 2006, the Fez digital repository software will be further developed to provide a mature option which will be freely available for other universities around Australia. A number of useful modules are under development such as customised functionality for digital theses and RQF. The UQ test bed will collaborate and coordinate its activities with the ARROW-VTLS development team.

The APSR Partner Programs

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The Australian National University (ANU) has become a major contributor to the open source software project DSpace. Scott Yeadeon of ANU is a member of the seven person committers group that oversees all contributions to the DSpace project. In this way, the ANU test bed has had a unique insider’s opportunity to promote the specific concerns of Australian universities in developing the DSpace platform. ANU’s involvement in DSpace resulted in an international DSpace User Group Meeting in Australia in January, 2006.

The ANU test bed team has been busy over the last twelve months mentoring other Australian universities which have chosen the DSpace platform. The ANU test bed staff have led technical workshops in all Australian capitals throughout 2005 and into 2006. The ANU test bed provides ongoing informal technical advice and collaboration on DSpace development projects. This has made the ANU test bed a key resource and source of expertise for fledging institutional repositories in several universities around Australia.

During 2006, the ANU test bed will continue to show direction in areas of institutional repository management. It also has a cluster of projects for 2006 that will increase the relevance of the institutional repository to the everyday concerns of academics. These revolve around automated ways of integrating a repository with the processes of authoring, DESI reporting, pre-print archiving, journal publishing, etc.

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One of the APSR projects for 2006 is development of the Digital Scholar’s Workbench, designed to make it easier for scholars to manipulate their work into different formats and to deposit to the institutional repository.

This is a web application that will bring together a range of services for scholarly authors. The author writes using a word processor and a template distributed by the institution. When the author saves a document, it becomes visible in the Digital Scholar’s Workbench web site. From here, the author can preview the document in several different formats, including PDF suitable for printing; post the document to a blog; send the document as an email; deposit an automatically converted DocBook version of the document in the institutional repository; use a version control system; upload the document to a web site; or upload a linked set of documents to a learning management system, to name but some of the options which will be available.

The APSR partners:
The Australian National University
The University of Sydney
The University of Queensland
National Library of Australia
APAC
The University of Melbourne
The University of Technology, Sydney

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The APSR is funded by the Australian Federal Government’s Department of Education, Science, and Training.

APSR was allocated $2.4m over three years from January 2004 to December 2006 to develop a centre of excellence in the management of digital collections.

APSR is a coordinated set of programs and projects that address strategic issues of digital sustainability, eResearch facilitation, repository management and system development.

The Australian Partnership for Sustainable Repositories (APSR) is a coordinated set of programs and projects that address strategic issues of digital sustainability, eResearch facilitation, repository management and system development.

The APSR Digital Sustainability Program has an exciting year ahead with three major projects that address practical issues of digital sustainability in actual working collections:

• AONS: Automated Obsolescence Notification System (pilot implementation for various partner collections)
• PRESTA: PREMIS Requirement Statement (for DSpace, Fedora and Pandora)
• SARA: Sustainability and Risk Analysis

The APSR Digital Sustainability Program has this very practical focus because of its tight integration with the APSR test bed programs.