

TUTORIAL: UP AND RUNNING WITH ARK

PERSISTABLE IDENTIFIERS

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Abstract – This half-day (3-hour) tutorial is a pragmatic introduction to the Archival Resource Key (ARK), a 22-year-old, non-paywalled identifier scheme that is widely used for persistent access to cultural and scientific information. By the end of the tutorial, attendees will know when this highly flexible scheme is appropriate to use and how to create ARKs for their respective memory organizations. No prior experience is required.

Keywords – persistent identifier, open access, URL, URI

Conference Topics – sustainably: Real and Imagined; From Theory to Practice

I. INTRODUCTION

Archival Resource Key (ARK) [1][2] identifiers help web users and content providers combat the commonly observed fragility of web addresses (URLs). The average lifetime of a URL was once said to be 100 days [3]. At the end of its life, a URL link breaks, usually giving you the dreaded "404 Not Found" error that most of us have seen. Irritating at best, it's a minor disaster for memory organizations.

In some ways ARKs are like DOIs (Digital Object Identifiers), URNs (Uniform Resource Names), and Handles. They have all been in use for over 20 years, they exist in large numbers (8.2 billion ARKs, 250 million DOIs, etc.), they are all repaired by vigilant updating of URL redirects, they support research and scholarship, and they appear in such places as the Data Citation Index, Wikipedia, and ORCID.org profiles.

In contrast, ARKs come with no fees, no limits on how many you can create, and no metadata requirements. From the outset, ARKs were designed to be decentralized and to identify any kind of thing, whether digital, physical, or abstract.

II. TUTORIAL FORMAT

This 3-hour event (two 90-minute blocks) will be in-person or, depending on demand, remote.

The tutorial is aimed for learners who directly or indirectly manage workflows of objects used in digital libraries. The target audience includes people engaged in creating, publishing and processing web-referenceable objects from any domain in the sciences, humanities, education, law, etc. Typical attendees will be affiliated with museums, archives, libraries, data centers, and government agencies. No prior experience is required.

III. OBJECTIVES AND TOPICS

Attendees will learn when this highly flexible scheme is appropriate to use and how to create ARKs within their respective memory organizations. The following topics will be covered.

- Why ARKs – non-paywalled, decentralized, and flexible
- Use cases – Smithsonian, French National Library, Internet Archive
- Metadata for early and ongoing object development
- How to get started – one form to fill out

- Minting and assigning ARK identifiers
- Resolvers, resolution, redirection
- Object types – digital, physical, conceptual
- Persistence considerations
- Available tools

1. REFERENCES

- [1] The ARK Alliance. <https://arks.org/>.
- [2] Kunze, John. 2003. *Towards Electronic Persistence Using ARK Identifiers*. <https://n2t.net/ark:/13030/c7n00zt1z>.
- [3] Taylor, Nicholas. November 2011. *The Average Lifespan of a Webpage*. <https://blogs.loc.gov/thesignal/2011/11/the-average-lifespan-of-a-webpage/>.