The INFORM Risk Assessment Methodology Project, one of four UIUC-based NDIIPP projects focusing on the development of digital preservation tools, is addressing the uncertainty surrounding the curation of data formats by building a collaborative environment for assessing data format risk. (NDIIPP stands for “National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program,” funded by the Library of Congress.)

Key Project Activities
- Development of an assessment tool, to collect metrics on file format specifications, relationships, and dependencies for digital objects;
- Design of a research protocol, toward a community-building of experts to apply the methodology; and
- Data collection, analysis, and review, based on user testing of the assessment tool.

Methodology behind the Tool

The methodology behind the INFORM tool defines risk categories of digital formats, as well as the risk factors for each category. It also scales to measure probability of occurrence and impact. The assessment tool, described at right, is being tested by media preservation librarians at several institutions.

Librarians’ use of the INFORM tool (interface, above) to evaluate data format risk is intended to provide community-driven guidelines for preservation planning and the objective analysis of risk trends for data formats.

For more about the INFORM project and other NDIIPP projects at UIUC, visit our website: http://ndiipp.uiuc.edu.

INFORM Project Members: Prof. Jerome McDonough (lead), Larry S. Jackson, Mamta Singh, Guojun Zhu, and Patricia Hswe.