

Roadmap

Project summary

ARK (Archival Resource Key) identifiers are widely used for objects and abstractions related to scientific and scholarly heritage. ARKs were developed at the US National Library of Medicine and the California Digital Library ([CDL](#)) especially, but not exclusively, for the library, archive and museum community. Their built-in flexibility and ease-of-use has proven popular with researchers and scholars across all academic disciplines, as well as government, commercial and nonprofit sectors. Indeed, over 600 institutions across the world have registered to use ARKs, with usage conservatively estimated to number 3.2 billion assigned ARK identifiers.

CDL and DuraSpace/LYRASIS launched this pilot project as a first step toward ensuring the ongoing health and development of the ARK infrastructure. By "ARK infrastructure," we mean open source software tools and systems, the ARK specification, and production-grade replicated resolver services for [N2T.net](#) (Name-to-Thing, a generic resolver for over 700 identifier types and also the global ARK resolver). ARKs represent the only mainstream persistent identifier scheme that is truly open, decentralized, non-siloed, and non-paywalled. Community ownership of this infrastructure has been under discussion since 2007, and the project made a start by establishing an active ARK community group with the aims of

1. Maintaining two key assets: the ARK specification and the NAAN registry, and
2. Submitting the current ARK specification to the IETF as in Internet Informational RFC.

CDL is a committed member of the ARK community and invites anyone with an interest in promoting long-term access to information objects to join us.

How to get involved

- See our [communications](#) page for ways to connect, including mailing lists, formal expression of interest, and surveys.
- [ARK identifiers Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)
 - [FAQ version française](#)
 - [FAQ versión en español](#)
- To get started assigning ARKs, [request a NAAN](#)

What we're working on now

Advisory Group

- Defining a governance model
- Applying for grants to develop open-source, replicated, next-generation resolver software

Technical Working Group

Short Term

- Finishing work on the ARK IETF specification
- Developing a new inflection to make requesting metadata more straightforward

Longer Term

- Guiding the ARK specification through the IETF Informational RFC process
- Work with the Outreach Working Group to implement mechanisms to measure ARK usage

NAAN Registry Working Group

Short Term

- Recruiting curators to build up a team of people to respond to NAAN
- Broadening NAAN organizational registry maintenance beyond just CDL

Longer Term

- Guiding the ARK specification through the IETF Informational RFC process
- Work with the Outreach Working Group to implement mechanisms to measure ARK usage

Outreach Working Group

Short term

- Clearly articulating how ARKs can be used, why they are essential (the "value proposition"), and implementing a range of materials to promote their adoption and use

Longer term

- Launching an initiative to measure ARK usage world-wide
 - Consider how to use this as a community outreach mechanism
 - Make the survey/measurement repeatable so that watching long-term trends is possible
 - Develop a dissemination plan

Aspirational items - we imagine ourselves working on these!

We envision an active and involved global community that sustains ARK identifiers as part of the open scholarly and research infrastructure.

- Sharing responsibility for and automating regular processes, including assignment of organizational NAANs
- Creating an active open source project around the N2T resolver code base
- Creating an active open source project around an ARK management tool (similar to EZID)
- Creating and maintaining an open source library of ARK integrations with external systems
- Creating community-run scholarly infrastructure