

Using DROID to profile your file formats



Profiling your file formats helps you to manage your information more effectively. It helps you to identify risks (and therefore plan mitigating actions). It can also help you to save money, for example by supporting data reduction.

DROID is a free profiling tool, developed by The National Archives, available from: nationalarchives.gov.uk/pronom

About DROID

DROID stands for Digital Record Object Identification. It's a software tool developed by The National Archives that will help you to automatically profile a wide range of file formats. For example, it will tell you what versions you have, their age and size, and when they were last changed. It can also

provide you with data to help you find duplicates.

Use DROID to manage digital continuity

Using DROID can help you to manage a specific information risk – the risk to digital continuity. Digital Continuity is the ability to use your information in the way that you need, for as long as you need. DROID helps you to gather information you need to understand your information assets. This can help you to define your digital continuity requirements, assess where your information is at risk and plan mitigating action.

The information you get from DROID can also help you to reduce the amount of data you hold, enabling you to work more efficiently and cost-effectively.

What will DROID tell me?

You can use DROID to understand your assets in a variety of different ways. For example:

- You can produce a full list of everything you've got, where it is, and what format it is in, including the version of the format used. This includes over 200 different formats, including most document, audio, video and image files in common use.

- You can produce summary reports, for example to see how many different file formats you use and how many files are in each format. Use this to assess whether you hold a lot of information in formats that are no longer supported by your existing technology, and to identify formats that may require active intervention going forwards to ensure digital continuity.
- You can produce a report that displays files according to the year they were last modified. This may prompt you to assess the business value of any information that hasn't been modified for over five years.
- You can use the information DROID provides to understand and manage the risks to your digital information. For example, DROID might tell you that you have a number of files in Word 95/6.0 format. Combine this with other knowledge about your technical environment and the value of your data in order to determine the appropriate actions to take on these files.

How does DROID work?

DROID can scan individual files or directories, or entire repositories holding millions of files. It recognises files using 'signature' information provided by digital preservation researchers at The National Archives. This information is

For more information on digital continuity visit: nationalarchives.gov.uk/digitalcontinuity

updated regularly, so DROID can recognise an increasing number of different file formats.

How do we install it?

DROID has been designed so you can install it with minimal impact on your systems. It is written in Java and is platform independent. DROID does not depend on any software being already installed on your system and it can be uninstalled by simply deleting it.

DROID is provided under a BSD licence, which means that it is open source, and you can download and run it without restriction completely free of charge. Only The National Archives can make changes to the authorised version.

You may need to ask your IT provider to set up appropriate permissions on your repositories so that DROID can access them.

Next steps

Try DROID for yourself. Download it from:

nationalarchives.gov.uk/pronom

If you work in central government and want to use DROID as part of your digital continuity management, email

digitalcontinuity@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk