Almost every human activity generates information. Some of that information may need to be kept, used and re-used for long periods of time. It is important to ensure that adequate information is captured to document the activity. If the information is to remain usable and understandable over time, new information will have to be captured or produced to accompany the original information. We use the outline of a generic project below to illustrate this concept.

The 4 stages of the project are proposal, implementation, operation, and something I might call the ‘data focus’ stage.

Proposal

At the proposal stage there is, minimally, the proposal itself. The proposal should include a preliminary view on the various categories of data and additional information to be retained at each of the stages in anticipation of long term preservation and reuse.

Implementation

At the implementation stage there is, minimally, the design and testing data.

Operation

At the operation stage there is data about the operation and data generated by the operation.

“Data Focus”

At the data focus stage, there is data organization, data analysis, and data preparation of a subset intended for long term preservation.