

Fedora

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The Flexible Extensible Digital Object and Repository Architecture (Fedora) began as a DARPA and NSF-funded research project of Carl Lagoze and Sandy Payette at Cornell University's Digital Library Research Group in 1997, where the first reference implementation and a CORBA-based technical implementation were built. Fedora was designed on the principle that interoperability and extensibility is best achieved by architecting a clean and modular separation of data, interfaces, and mechanisms (i.e., executable programs).

The University of Virginia Library's research and development group discovered a paper about Fedora in the summer of 1999, early in their design process, and with the Cornell research group's assistance, the Virginia team installed the research software version of Fedora and began experimenting with some of Virginia's digital collections. Convinced that Fedora was exactly the framework they were seeking, the Virginia team reinterpreted the implementation and developed a prototype that used a relational database backend and a Java servlet that provided the repository access functionality. The prototype provided strong evidence that the Fedora architecture could indeed be the foundation for a practical, scalable digital library system.

In September of 2001, The University of Virginia Library and Cornell University collaborative development team received a grant of \$1,000,000 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to enable the development of a sophisticated digital object repository system based on Fedora.

The Mellon grant was based on the strength of the original Cornell research and the success of the Virginia prototype, as well as on the vision of a new open-source version of Fedora that exploited the latest web technologies. Virginia and Cornell joined forces to build this robust implementation of the Fedora architecture with a full array of management utilities to support it.

Fedora 1.0 was released in May 2003, and in September 2004, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded the project an additional \$1.4 million 3-year grant to continue refining and building on Fedora's

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functionality.

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