Digital Domesday Book lasts 15 years, not 1,000

by Robin McKie and Vanessa Thorpe

IT WAS meant to be a showcase for Britain’s electronic prowess – a computer-based, multimedia version of the Domesday Book. But 16 years after it was created, the £2.5 million BBC Domesday Project has achieved an unexpected and unwelcome status: it is now unreadable.

The special computers developed to play the 12in video discs of text, photographs, maps and archive footage of British life are quite simply – obsolete.

As a result, no one can access the reams of project contents, 60 minutes of video, 3,000 data sets, 60 minutes of moving pictures, and an unknown number of words. Around a million people contributed. The trouble was that the discs could only be viewed using a special BBC Micro computer, which cost £5,000 to buy. Few were purchased, and only a handful are left in existence. The information on this incredible historical object will soon disappear forever," Grossman said last week.

In a bid to rescue the project, Paul Wheatley has begun work on Camileon, a program aimed at recovering the data on the Domesday discs. "We have got a couple of rather scratchy pairs of discs, and we are confident we will eventually be able to read all their images, maps and text," he said. "Unfortunately, we don't know what we will do after that. We could store the data on desktop computers – but they are likely to become redundant in a few years."

"That means we have to find a way to emulate this data, in other words to turn into a form that can be used no matter what is the computer format of the future."

"It won't be an easy task. Jeff Rothenberg of the Rand Corporation, one of the world's experts on data preservation, points out: "There is currently no demonstrably viable technical solution to this problem; yet if it is not solved, our increasingly digital heritage is in grave risk of being lost."
And his children kept coming year by year till there were eight, and Josef was but ten. And then he died and left this helpless family, and the boy sold papers on the street, ten years of age. The widow washed. And first he sold the _Times_. And helped to spread the doctrines of the _Times_. Of ordered liberty and epicene reforms of this or that. But when the _Star_ with millions back of it broke in the field he changed and sold the _Star_, too bad for him--discovered something. At last he broke this moment's musing and spoke up: “Your case appeals to me. You may step out, and wait till I prepare the papers, then I'll have a check made for a thousand dollars.” Widow Fortelka rose up and took the crucifix she wore and kissed it, wept and left the room. "Digital Domestay Book Lasts 15 Years Not 1000." The Observer, March 2, 2002. Video (in-class): The Making of the Renaissance Book. McDermott, Joseph P. "The Making of an Imprint in China, 1000â€”1800." In A Social History of the Chinese Book: Books and Literati Culture in Late Imperial China. Hong Kong University Press, 2006, pp. 9â€“42. (notes 196â€“211). Digital Domestay Book lasts 15 years not 1000. R Mckie. V Thorpe. Commodore 64 Programmerâ€™s Reference Manual. Commodore Business Machines. Inc. A new approach to the functional design of a digital computer, Papers presented at the. After three years' service the new kiln furniture's performance is assessed by comparison with the former â€œInconelâ€ firing basket and stainless-steel wire gauze equipment. Read more. Article. Book Review:Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum: Part XLIX: Late-Babylonia January 1971 Â· Journal of Near Eastern Studies. Robert D. Biggs. Read more.