

Hampshire Record Office

Digital Preservation Policy

* See glossary at end of policy for explanations

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Digital preservation and access issues are critical to many aspects of the work of Hampshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) and Wessex Film and Sound Archive (WFSA) at Hampshire Record Office (HRO). HRO exists to preserve and provide access to records relating to the history of the county and its inhabitants.
- 1.2 The bulk of HRO's holdings has so far been received in traditional formats, such as paper or parchment. However, an increasing quantity across HALS and WFSA is now being received in electronic format, and access is being provided to the analogue holdings of WFSA in digital format. Digital copies of hard copy originals are also being created for preservation or access reasons or deposited with HRO in place of the original.
- 1.3 This digital heritage is at risk of being lost to future users. Contributing factors include the obsolescence of hardware, software and storage media, issues relating to resources, responsibility and methods for maintenance and preservation, and legislative barriers to digital preservation activity.
- 1.4 Digital preservation refers to the actions required to ensure continued and reliable access to authentic digital records. Unlike paper and parchment records, active management is required throughout the record's lifecycle to ensure the maintenance of the integrity, authenticity and accessibility of digital materials.
- 1.5 Best practice is developing in the area of digital preservation and access, so this policy can only provide recommendations based on current thinking and will be reviewed regularly in the light of new research. We will ensure that professional standards for digital preservation are met and that compliance is monitored.

2. Aim

- 2.1. To address the risk of losing digital materials, HALS has developed a digital preservation policy. This will ensure preservation of digital material held at HRO, whether received from the Records Management Service as part of Hampshire County Council's electronic corporate memory, deposited or donated by organisations or individuals, or created as digital surrogates. It will also ensure that digital material can be made available to customers, both internal and external, now and in the future.
- 2.2. There are significant costs of delivering archives services, including preserving and providing access to digital records. This policy provides the framework within which we will operate, but always subject to available resources. Applying the policy will therefore entail prioritising, assessing the resources required, and seeking means to supply those resources, such as grants or other financial contributions, and volunteer input.
- 2.3. This policy also aims to raise awareness of digital preservation issues and encourage the timely transfer of digital archives by individuals, organisations and businesses. Appropriate advice and guidance will be given to depositing bodies where relevant.

3. Types and sources of digital material

- 3.1 We will receive at HRO and preserve in a digital repository a range of types of digital material including:
 - Born-digital items (such as still images, moving images, documents, audio files)
 - Digital versions of collections or items where the original format has been superseded and the digital version has become the preservation copy, such as videos for which the playback equipment is obsolete
 - Digital surrogates of items (such as images of documents or glass photographic plates) where the original has not have been retained or deposited.

These may come from a variety of sources, including:

- Material received internally as part of the HCC archive, for example databases, CAD (computer-aided design) files, the outputs from the corporate electronic document and records management system (EDRMS), images and footage from events, press releases
- Material received externally from many and varied sources, including other local authorities, official organisations, groups, and individuals, e.g. digital photographs of listed buildings, parish plans
- Audio-visual material held in WFSAs, and also received from sources as above, eg HCC promotional materials, which might include video

or audio recordings, or VR (virtual reality) footage from public enquiries.

- 3.2 We will preserve copies of documents created in-house for use in and beyond HRO as surrogates and for outreach purposes. More details of this are outlined in Hampshire Record Office's *Surrogacy Policy*.

4 Preservation

4.1 Storage

- 4.1.1 The criteria in our collections development policy will still apply, as the potential for increasing storage capacity does not mean that we should keep everything, and the appraisal guidance in that policy will govern our approach to deposits. Storage costs are not insignificant, and this policy will be applied subject to available resources.
- 4.1.2 Digital material covered in section 3.1 above, which has been selected for permanent preservation, will be stored in a managed digital preservation environment (digital repository). The management software will be provided by a third party, with suitable measures in place to mitigate supplier failure and allow full data transfer.
- 4.1.3 We will ensure as far as possible that one of the copies of a born-digital item is the original bit-stream.*
- 4.1.4 We will store digital surrogates, covered in section 3.2 above, on locally-managed mass storage or in a corporate electronic document management system. These are likely to be image files (currently probably tiffs, jpegs or pdfs), so will have less need of the complex migration and access processes available in a digital preservation repository.

4.2 Migration

- 4.2.1 We will ensure that HALS and WFSAs key records are stored and maintained in a manner suitable for long-term preservation. We will also advise other departments of HCC on appropriate methods for the creation and preservation of their records in digital formats including Internet, intranet, and audio and video formats. We will also advise on the legal admissibility of scanning and storage of data in digital format.
- 4.2.2 We will aim to become involved as early as possible in advising projects which will result in output in electronic format. We will encourage them to adhere to standards that promote open systems and interoperability of data, and we will select the most appropriate records for preservation.

- 4.2.3 We will encourage good practice and provide advice to owners of archives on the care of their digital documents, whether or not they form part of the holdings of HALS or WFSA.
- 4.2.4 For images, we will recommend: TIFFs for the original version for a master copy and JPEGs as a second copy for access.
- 4.2.5 We will also suggest Adobe Acrobat PDFs, especially for preserving text-based material and digital publications.
- 4.2.6 Earlier intervention is preferred in order to give the best chance of preserving digital material in future.
- 4.2.7 Electronic material stored on removable media such as CDs, floppy disks, USB sticks and external hard drives will be transferred to the digital repository or document management system as soon as possible to mitigate the risk of permanent loss of content through hardware corruption, degradation and damage.
- 4.2.8 When appropriate, we will migrate digital objects to more recent file formats as the preferred method of preservation. Migrating to another format involves, in most cases, minimal or no loss of content and simplifies access by ensuring that format technologies are current at the time of copying.

4.3 Access and use

- 4.3.1 Copies of born-digital material and digital surrogates will be available for public access via appropriate means including online and on-site at HRO according to any permissions and restrictions in place.
- 4.3.2 We will seek to provide online access, potentially via our collections management system, for images of documents or born-digital accessions where a catalogue record exists in the collections management system.
- 4.3.3 Copies of digital files made for preservation purposes shall be authentic, reliable and traceable to the original via metadata stored with the digital copy.
- 4.3.4 We will endeavour to capture and preserve all appropriate metadata required for on-going preservation, discovery, access and rights management of digital assets from all sources.

5 Sustainability

- 5.1 We will continue to monitor the growth of the digital archive and use this information to inform sustainability planning in terms of technical infrastructure, staffing, financial resources and environmental

challenges.

- 5.2 We are aware of the sustainability costs associated with digital preservation and access, and the impact of these in terms of energy use and organisational sustainability. We will address these costs where possible and within the framework of Hampshire County Council initiatives.

6 Disaster Planning

- 6.1 There is an IT disaster plan which will be regularly updated and tested. We will take reasonable measures to ensure that no such disaster occurs. Appropriate staff will be trained in the actions to be taken in the event of a disaster.
- 6.2 The managed storage of the digital repository will cover the storage of multiple copies for preservation purposes.

Glossary

Bit-stream: series of 0s and 1s, usually refers to original digital item

Owner	Job Title
Paula Crompton	Strategic Manager, Archives and Records

Name / Governance Group	Date Approved	Next review date
Record Office Management Team	1 August 2023	1 August 2024

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v1.4	1 March 2019		Reviewed and agreed by Record Office Management Team
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v1.5	11/5/2022	Heather Needham	No changes. Filename updated
v2.0	31/07/2023	Heather Needham	New version to reflect acquisition of Preservica; agreed by Record Office Management Team