

Isle of Man Public Record Office Digital Preservation Policy

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1. Isle of Man Public Record Office Mission Statement

The Isle of Man Public Record Office (IOMPRO) preserves the national archives of Isle of Man public bodies. Our role and activities are defined by statute - the Public Records Act 1999 and the Public Records Order 2015.

Our mission is to ensure records of Isle of Man public bodies that have historic or cultural significance are **identified**, **preserved** and **made accessible** for all who wish to use them, whilst ensuring compliance with the law in respect of sensitive or personal records.

We commit to preserving and making accessible records in all formats, both physical and digital, through active programmes of **selection and transfer of records**, **conservation and collections care**, **collections information**, **access and outreach**.

The work of the IOMPRO contributes to the Isle of Man Government's vision for a **vibrant, secure and sustainable Island nation**, as set out in 'Our Island Plan'.

2. Purpose of Digital Preservation Policy

This policy sets out our commitment and intent to select and preserve digital records of Isle of Man public bodies that are of long-term historical and cultural significance.

It explains why the Isle of Man Public Record Office (PRO) is making a commitment to invest and develop digital preservation for the Isle of Man Government.

It outlines:

- The legal and strategic context for digital preservation;
- The benefits of and drivers for digital preservation;
- Roles and responsibilities for digital preservation;
- The scope of our digital preservation activities;
- How selection, appraisal and transfer of digital records will be carried out;



- How risks in relation to digital preservation will be reduced; and
- How we will measure our success.

3. Context of Isle of Man Digital Preservation Policy

This policy is related to other legislation for the Isle of Man Government and Public Record Office.

- Public Records Act 1999
- Public Records Order 2015
- GDPR and LED Implementing Regulations 2018
- Freedom of Information Act 2015
- Data Protection Act 2018

3.1 Legal and Strategic Context

The work of the Isle of Man Public Record Office contributes to the Isle of Man Government's vision for a vibrant, secure and sustainable Island nation, as set out in 'Our Island Plan'.

We assist public bodies across the Island with record-keeping, helping to ensure they have access to the right information at the right time to deliver the 'Our Island Plan' vision.

We preserve vital information assets that support the One Government principles of strategic thinking, stewardship, productivity, delivery and accountability in Government policy and services.

We contribute to:

- **'An Island of health and wellbeing'**
 - We encourage arts, culture and heritage enrichment through research, our social media, events and outreach activities;
 - We enable people to understand their community, family and cultural background and sense of identity;



- We preserve critical documentation, such as records of life events, which protects human rights.
- **‘Outstanding lifelong learning and development opportunities for all’**
 - We provide research facilities to support Island students and residents with their lifelong learning;
 - We offer opportunities for work placements and skills development through our volunteer programme.
- **‘An environment we can be proud of’**
 - We strive towards sustainable buildings and digital infrastructure for the Island’s national archives.

4. Definition of and statement of commitment and intent

4.1 Regarding Digital Preservation

Digital Preservation is the long term management of digital objects both born-digital and digitised. It is the activities needed to guarantee long term access to the content within the digital record for as long as needed regardless of technological or organisational change.

4.2 Regarding Digitisation and Digitised Content

Digitisation is the process of turning analogue records into digital records, usually with some form of scanning. The digital copy is considered to be a digital object for the purposes of digital preservation.

5. Benefits, Drivers and Reduction of Risks

From the mission statement we can see that the role of the Isle of Man Public Record Office is to preserve and make accessible public records that have been identified as having long term historic of culture significance. This is regardless of the format that the



records has been created in. The Public Record Office has a moral, ethical and legal duty to preserve these records for future generations.

5.1 Tangible Benefits

- Legal and statutory compliance
- Efficiencies and savings
- Protection of investment
- Reputational protection
- Reduced risk of financial penalties
- Improved user access
- Supporting digital ways of working

5.2 Productivity Benefits

- Business continuity and information re-use
- Efficiencies
- Preservation of our heritage and culture
- Improved user access
- Efficiencies
- Supporting digital ways of working

5.3 Intangible Benefits

- Transparency
- Reputational protection
- Enhanced reputation
- Demonstrate innovation
- Improved user access
- Business continuity



6. Role and Responsibilities

The implementation and management of Digital Preservation within the Public Record Office will require an ongoing commitment from the Isle of Man Government to maintain the specific skills and resources needed to ensure the long term preservation of digital objects.

A specialist role will exist for the duration of the Digital Archive Project, the conclusion of which will give the skills necessary for the maintenance to be continued by Public Record Office Staff. The continued need for a specific role will be assessed on regular intervals after the initial project ends.

6.1 Responsibilities of the Public Record Office:

The Registrar General has the overall statutory responsibility under the Public Records Act 1999 for the preservation and management of records identified for long term preservation, this covers either analogue or digital. The Public Records Officer and Digital Preservation Officer lead strategy under delegated authority from the Registrar General. The Records and Archive Officers and Records Assistants will undertake selection, transfer, ingest, preservation actions and management of digital records.

6.2 Responsibilities of Isle of Man Public Bodies:

It is the various public bodies' responsibility under the Public Records Act 1999 to care for the digital records they create and receive, and to engage with the Public Record Office in relation to digital preservation. This includes, but is not limited to:

- **Safekeeping:** the public body is required to maintain records in good order.
- **Selecting for permanent preservation:** the public body is required to work in conjunction with the IOMPRO to select records for permanent preservation.
- **Transferring selected records to the IOMPRO:** this is arranged by agreement with the IOMPRO and will normally happen when the records are 25 years old although it can happen earlier by agreement. It can also happen later where the records can be shown to still be in use at this age.



- **Access to records:** transferred public records are normally open to the public when they are 30 years old. Exceptions to this are records which are open earlier than this and records which contain information which warrants extended/special closure. It is the responsibility of the public body to document (and justify as required) where records are open before transfer or where they meet the criteria for extended/special closures.

7. Scope of Digital Preservation Activities

The responsibility of the Public Record Office is to look after the records that have been designated for long term preservation, including digital records. This includes records from:

- Tynwald;
- Council of Ministers;
- Attorney General;
- Isle of Man Government departments;
- Statutory boards;
- Local authorities;
- Schools;
- Isle of Man Courts of Justice;
- Isle of Man Constabulary;
- Manx Museum and National Trust; and
- Many other public bodies included in the Public Records Act 1999.

This policy applies to the management of digital records held by the Public Record Office within the collections.

Bespoke digital file formats or systems that have been developed by the Isle of Man Government are out of scope of the current digital preservation project. These will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances with prior case-by-case approval by the Public Records Officer. Any digital records that are encrypted or otherwise password protected are unable to have preservation actions taken and so are out of scope for digital



preservation, unless the password protection and/or encryption can be removed by the records creator prior to transfer of the records to the Public Record Office. In addition any records not selected for permanent preservation are out of scope for digital preservation.

Some types of complex digital objects, such as architectural designs produced using CAD and mapping using GIS, will require more bespoke approaches to preservation, including systems preservation or emulation.

In the case of a bespoke format or complex digital object that does not currently have the appropriate infrastructure the file itself may be held by the repository, but under the knowledge that no preservation actions will be undertaken.

8. Selection, Appraisal and Transfer

Due to the ever increasing volume of digital records being created, the Public Record Office will use “Macro-appraisal”, as outlined in our Collections and Selection Policy. It is not practical or cost effective to examine all records individually to make decisions around the value of preservation.

Selection decisions will be made on an individual record series informed by the existing records surveys, asset registers and discussions with the depositor. This means that the selection decision will be made at the series level if possible, but some examination of individual records such as a small sampling may be done to confirm the type of record and content prior to decision.

Relevant sections from the Public Records Act 1999 regarding transfers:

There are two types of transfers available Section 3(4) and Section 6(1). Section 3(8) transfers cannot be accepted for digital records, as they do not empower the Public Record Office to undertake preservation actions upon the contents without explicit permission, which would be done automatically as a part of the preservation processes.

Section 3(4) - Subject to the following provisions of this section, public records selected for permanent preservation under this section shall be transferred to the Record Office not later than 25 years after their creation.



Section 6(1) - The Registrar General may transfer to the Record Office any records held, filed or deposited in the Central Registry; and thereupon the records shall become public records for the purposes of this Act.

9. Criteria for Success

Criteria for success for Digital Preservation at the Public Record Office:

- Ability to ingest, select, accession and preserve digital records deposited with the Public Record Office.
- Able to manage the processes and relationships required to engage with depositors and allow for the regular transfer of digital records designated for permanent preservation.
- Digital preservation and digital records business-as-usual for the Public Record Office.
- Provide public access to appropriate digital records designated for permanent preservation.
- Ongoing preservation of digital records after the end of the digital preservation capital project.

10. Standards

- Open archival information system Reference model ISO 14721:2003:
http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csn=24683
- International Standard on Records Management ISO 15489:2016
<https://www.iso.org/standard/62542.html>
- International Standard on Metadata for Records ISO 23081:2006
http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csn=40832



11. Links to other Policies

- Isle of Man Government Public Record Office Mission Statement
<https://www.gov.im/media/1371654/20220124-iompromissionstatement-170222.pdf>
- Isle of Man Government Public Record Office Collection and Selection Policy
<https://www.gov.im/media/1363841/collectionandselectionpolicy-v2-0.pdf>
- Isle of Man Government Information and Records Management Policy



Review Period

Version 1.1 issued 17/07/2023.

We will review this policy every year, during the Digital Archive Project. After the conclusion of the project this policy will be reviewed every three years, and at interim dates where necessary.

The policy and strategy will inform the annual forecasting for storage and planning including any assessment models utilised to aid this process, such as NDSA.

Approval

Approved by: Edward Clague, Registrar General

Date: 17 July 2023



Appendix A - Glossary

A

Access is assumed to mean continued, ongoing usability of a digital resource, retaining all qualities of authenticity, accuracy and functionality deemed to be essential for the purposes the digital material was created and/or acquired for. (DPC Handbook)

Accession 'material that comes into an archive as a single acquisition is described as an accession. A number of accessions may form one single collection with shared provenance, e.g. the records of a business may be transferred to an archive over time.' (ArchivesHub)

Appraisal the process of identifying which content has continuing value and needs to be preserved and which content can be disposed.

Authentication A mechanism which attempts to establish the authenticity of digital materials at a particular point in time. For example, digital signatures.

Authenticity The digital material is what it purports to be. In the case of electronic records, it refers to the trustworthiness of the electronic record as a record. In the case of "born digital" and digitised materials, it refers to the fact that whatever is being cited is the same as it was when it was first created unless the accompanying metadata indicates any changes. Confidence in the authenticity of digital materials over time is particularly crucial owing to the ease with which alterations can be made. (DPC Handbook)

B

Bit A bit is the basic unit of information in computing. It can have only one of two values commonly represented as either a 0 or 1. The two values can be interpreted as any two-valued attribute (yes/no, on/off, etc).

Bit Preservation A term used to denote a very basic level of preservation of digital resource as it was submitted (literally preservation of the **bits** forming a digital resource). It may include maintaining onsite and offsite backup copies, virus checking, fixity-checking, and periodic refreshment to new storage media. Bit preservation is not **digital preservation** but it does provide one building block for the more complete set of digital preservation practices and processes that ensure the survival of digital content and also its usability, display, context and interpretation over time. (DPC Handbook)

Born-Digital Digital material which were not originally intended to be in analogue form either as the original or a conversion. This term is used to differentiate between analogue records that have been digitised.

Byte (B) A unit of digital information that most commonly consists of eight bits. Historically, the byte was the number of bits used to encode a single character of text in a computer and for this reason it is the smallest addressable unit of memory in many computer architectures.



C

Catalogue / Description ‘a description of the material within an archival collection, providing essential information about the collection. Often also called an archival description, a catalogue, or a finding aid.’ (ArchivesHub)

Checksum A unique numerical signature generated from a file. Used to compare copies.

Crawl The act of browsing the web automatically and methodically to index or download content and other data from the web. The software to do this is often called a web crawler which are generally used in website preservation.

D

Depositor the person or organisation donating or depositing the content to the archive.

Digital Archiving This term is used very differently within sectors. The library and archiving communities often use it interchangeably with digital preservation. Computing professionals tend to use digital archiving to mean the process of backup and ongoing maintenance as opposed to strategies for long-term digital preservation. For the purposes of this project it is the latter definition that will be used.

Digital Materials A broad term encompassing digital surrogates created as a result of converting analogue materials to digital form (digitisation), and "born digital" for which there has never been and is never intended to be an analogue equivalent, and digital records.

Digital Preservation Refers to the series of managed activities necessary to ensure continued access to digital materials for as long as necessary. Digital preservation is defined very broadly and refers to all of the actions required to maintain access to digital materials beyond the limits of media failure or technological and organisational change. Those materials may be records created during the day-to-day business of an organisation; "born-digital" materials created for a specific purpose (e.g. teaching resources); or the products of digitisation projects. (DPC Handbook)

- **Short-term preservation** - Access to digital materials either for a defined period of time while use is predicted but which does not extend beyond the foreseeable future and/or until it becomes inaccessible because of changes in technology.
- **Medium-term preservation** - Continued access to digital materials beyond changes in technology for a defined period of time but not indefinitely.
- **Long-term preservation** - Continued access to digital materials, or at least to the information contained in them, indefinitely.

Digital Records Records created digitally in the day-to-day business of the organisation and assigned formal status by the organisation. They may include for example, word processing documents, emails, databases, or intranet web pages.



Digital Repository A digital collection and information storage system that ingests, stores, manages, preserves and provides access to digital content. Covering the primary processes for **digital preservation**.

Digitisation The process of creating digital files by scanning or otherwise converting analogue materials. The resulting digital copy, or digital surrogate, would then be classed as digital material and then subject to the same broad challenges involved in preserving access to it, as "born digital" materials.

E

Electronic Records See **Digital Records**

Emulation A means of overcoming technological obsolescence of hardware and software by developing techniques for imitating obsolete systems on future generations of computers.

F

File Format A file format is a standard way that information is encoded for storage in a computer file. It tells the computer how to display, print, and process, and save the information. It is dictated by the application program which created the file, and the operating system under which it was created and stored. Some file formats are designed for very particular types of data, others can act as a container for different types. A particular file format is often indicated by a file name extension containing three or four letters that identify the format. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File_format

Fixity Check a method for ensuring the integrity of a file and verifying it has not been altered or corrupted. During transfer, an archive may run a fixity check to ensure a transmitted file has not been altered en route. Within the archive, fixity checking is used to ensure that digital files have not been altered or corrupted. It is most often accomplished by computing checksums such as MD5, SHA1 or SHA256 for a file and comparing them to a stored value. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File_Fixity

Format migration ‘a means of overcoming technical obsolescence by preserving digital content in a succession of current formats or in the original format that is transformed into the current format for presentation. The purpose of format migration is to preserve the digital objects and to retain the ability for clients to retrieve, display, and otherwise use them in the face of constantly changing technology.’ (NDSA)

G

GDPR General Data Protection Regulation, is an EU law for data protection and privacy detailing the rights for collecting, processing and storing personal identifiable information on individuals.

Gigabyte (GB) A unit of digital information often used to describe data or data storage size, equates to approximately 1,000 **Megabytes** (MB).



I

Ingest the process of turning a Submission Information Package (**SIP**) into an Archival Information Package (AIP), i.e. putting data into a digital archive (**OAIS** term).

ISO International Organization for Standardization. <http://www.iso.org/iso/home.html>

Integrity Checking See **fixity checking**

K

Kilobyte (KB) A unit of digital information often used to describe data or data storage size, equates to approximately 1,000 **Bytes**

L

Lossless Compression A mechanism for reducing file sizes that retains all original data despite compression.

Lossy Compression A mechanism for reducing file sizes that typically discards data during the compression process.

M

Megabyte (MB) A unit of digital information often used to describe data or data storage size, equates to approximately 1,000 **Kilobytes** (KB).

Metadata Information which describes significant aspects of a resource. Most discussion to date has tended to emphasise metadata for the purposes of resource discovery. The emphasis the documentation will be on what metadata are required successfully to manage and preserve digital materials over time and which will assist in ensuring essential contextual, historical, and technical information are preserved along with the digital object. (DPC Handbook)

Migration A means of overcoming technological obsolescence by transferring digital resources from one hardware/software generation to the next. The purpose of migration is to preserve the intellectual content of digital objects and to retain the ability for clients to retrieve, display, and otherwise use them in the face of constantly changing technology. Migration differs from the refreshing of storage media in that it is not always possible to make an exact digital copy or replicate original features and appearance and still maintain the compatibility of the resource with the new generation of technology. (DPC Handbook)

N

NDSA National Digital Stewardship Alliance a US based organisation active in digital preservation. <http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/nds/>



Normalisation ‘some digital repositories will place a limit on the number of formats which they will support, and as such may only support the formats which most best overall promote functionality, longevity and preservability. Normalisation, in this instance, is the process of converting a digital object from its original format to an accepted format, so that a repository can ingest and support the object.’ (Community Archives and Heritage Group - Digital Preservation for Community Archives)

P

Petabyte (PB) A unit of digital information often used to describe data or data storage size, equates to approximately 1,000 **Terabytes** (TB).

R

Refreshing Copying information content from one storage media to the same storage media.

S

Selection a decision-making process to decide which content is transferred to the archive.

Significant properties Characteristics of digital and intellectual objects that must be preserved over time in order to ensure the continued accessibility, usability and meaning of the objects and their capacity to be accepted as (evidence of) what they purport to be. <https://www.archives.gov/files/era/acera/pdf/significant-properties.pdf>

Storage media devices that store the original digital content e.g. CDs, DVDs, floppy disks and hard drives.

T

Terabyte (TB) A unit of digital information often used to describe data or data storage size, equates to approximately 1,000 **Gigabytes** (GB).

V

Validation checks whether the digital content conforms to their file format specification.

W

Writeblockers Tools that prevent an examination computer system from writing or altering a collection or subject hard drive or other digital media object. Hardware writeblockers are generally regarded as more reliable than software writeblockers.

