Digital Preservation Policy

Heriot Watt University Museum and Archive
February 2021

POLICY

Approving authority:	Infrastructure Board
Consultation via:	Infrastructure Board
Approval date:	15 February 2021
Effective date:	15 February 2021
Review period:	Three years
Responsible Executive:	Secretary of the University
Responsible Office:	Information Services

POLICY

HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY
MUSEUM AND ARCHIVE COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

CONTENT

POLICY

1. **INTRODUCTION**

This policy sets out a framework for the management and preservation of the University's permanent digital records and those vital records that need to be retained for a significant length of time. The policy supports the objectives of the University Museum and Archives Collections Management and Development, Information Governance and Records Management and Research Data Management policies.

Digital preservation is the process of actively managing digital resources for as long as they need to be retained for evidential, operational or research purposes. Digital information has become a valuable tool in allowing Heriot-Watt University to effectively deliver its core functions of research, learning and teaching. Access to information created and stored digitally is now central to the effective delivery of most University services. Digital resources allow staff the increased flexibility to work at home or other sites, support knowledge transfer partnerships and collaboration with industry and other higher education institutions both in the UK and abroad and have allowed the expansion of distance learning. The University also has contractual obligations to Research Funding Councils to maintain and provide public access to research datasets and outputs and to allow the reuse of datasets under relevant information laws.

Digital resources however require more active intervention in their management than analogue formats to ensure that the information they contain remains accessible, secure and authentic throughout their lifecycle. Digital information can easily be altered and both the digital objects and the storage media will in time degrade. Digital objects can only be accessed through the use of technology. The associated software, operating platforms, hardware and physical storage media, also known as the representation network, are essential to allow us to read the object. Technology is changing at such a speed that systems are often unsupported after as little as five years. Rapid obsolescence can therefore mean that digital objects are quickly rendered inaccessible if there are no strategies in place to manage them. Intervention to decide which records are archival is required at a much earlier stage in the records' life cycle that with traditional analogue formats. There can also be legal and intellectual property issues over the continued use of proprietary systems.

Failure to act now will lead to records essential to supporting the University's key business functions becoming unreadable in the future or lost because the information has only been captured in a now redundant version. This will affect the University's ability to provide key services, hinder effective decision making and pose a risk to business continuity. The survival of the documented heritage of the University and access to key collections supporting research, teaching and learning will also be threatened.

Digital preservation is regarded internationally as a key resource management issue and is now underpinned by ISO 14721: 2012 Open Archival Information System (OAIS), the Library of Congress Recommended File Formats and the recommendations in the UK Archive Accreditation

Standard and Guidance. A successful programme requires investment in three aspects – technology to allow the correct preservation actions and storage, organisational support, and resources in terms of sustainable investment in both systems and adequate staff and staff training.

2. PURPOSE

This policy aims to create a sustainable framework to future proof the University's key digital resources to ensure they remain authentic, accessible and reliable for as long as required for operational, legal and archival purposes.

3 OBJECTIVES

3.1 Support the development of a trusted digital repository for the University's archives.

3.2 Establish procedures to prevent obsolescence of digital archives by ingest into the digital repository and through migration or emulation where appropriate.

3.2 Raise awareness for the issues surrounding digital preservation through advocacy.

4 SCOPE

4.1 The policy applies to all born digital records in all formats created by the University that are of archival value or records such as vital records or research data that need to be retained for a significant length of time for research, legal and evidential reasons.

4.2 The policy applies to physical records which have been digitised. Records can be digitised for many reasons, to facilitate on-line working, for e-learning resources and for preservation reasons. Records of archival value should not be destroyed after scanning without the approval of the University Archivist. However even if the originals are retained, re-scanning them can have significant cost implications and in this case the digital resource should be managed as born-digital.

4.3 The policy applies to digital resources created externally and donated to the University Archive.

4.4 The policy applies to digital resources created and received by associated companies and organisations such as the Student Union and transferred to the University Archive under relevant service level agreements or donation.

4.5 The policy applies to records of archival value that are maintained by other services such as student records, research data, still images and moving images and sound.

5   LINES OF RESPONSIBILITY

5.1   The University Court has overall responsibility for this policy.

5.2   All staff are responsible for creating and maintaining digital resources in compliance with relevant University policies and procedures, including the University Records Retention Schedules which set out how long information needs to be retained and identify records of archival value which need to be transferred to the University Archive for permanent retention.

5.3   The University Archivist is responsible for selecting records of permanent value and ensuring that digital objects in the University archive are preserved, accessible, authentic and reliable.

5.4   Information Governance is responsible for developing, maintaining and publishing retention schedules and recommending best practice for the creation and management of records, including born digital records.

5.5   Research data management is the responsibility of Research Support.

5.6   The Media Studio is responsible for storing and managing moving image.

6   MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed after a maximum of five years to ensure a continued compliance with best practice and regulatory requirements.

7.   IMPLEMENTATION

The policy will be implemented through the application of the underpinning procedures and communicated through advocacy, and partnership working with the services that create or manage digital archives.

8.   RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FURTHER REFERENCE

Policies

Collections Management and Development Policy (pending approval)

Information Governance and Records Management Policy
https://www.hw.ac.uk/documents/information-governance-records-management-policy.pdf

Student Records Management Policy
https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/docs/learning-teaching/policies/studentrecordsmanagement.pdf

Research Data Management Policy
https://www.hw.ac.uk/documents/research-data-management-policy.pdf

Data Protection Policy
https://www.hw.ac.uk/documents/heriot-watt-university-data-protection-policy.pdf

Office 365 Policy
https://www.hw.ac.uk/documents/office-365-policy.pdf

Procedures

University Records Retention Schedule
https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/information-governance/manage/what-to-keep.htm

Research Data Management Guidance
https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/is/research-support/research-data-management.htm

Further reference

Archive Accreditation Standard
https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/archive-service-accreditation-standard-june-2014.pdf

Archive Accreditation Guidance
https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/archive-service-accreditation-guidance-2020.pdf

Library of Congress Recommended Formats Statement
https://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs/TOC.html

Digital Preservation Coalition Handbook
https://www.dpconline.org/handbook

8.   **DEFINITIONS**

ingest	Process to capture digital resources into a preservation environment
authenticity	Ensuring that a digital resource remains a full and accurate representation of the business activity it pertains to and has been protected against unauthorised changes
accessibility	The digital resource can be located, retrieved and the data within it is readable
archives	Resources in all formats worthy of permanent retention in accordance with the University Collections Development Policy
corporate record	A record is information created or received and maintained by the University, regardless of media, used

	to control, support, or document the activities and transactions of the University
Archives	Records, in any format, which have been created by an organisation or individual in the course of their activities and functions and selected for permanent preservation for their historical or evidential value.
Governing Body	The University Court, which has delegated oversight of acquisition and disposal of the museum and archive collections to the Finance Committe.

10. FURTHER HELP AND ADVICE

Helen Taylor, University Archivist h.e.taylor@hw.ac.uk x3638
Anne Gzybowski, Records Manager a.grzybowski@hw.ac.uk
Jose Manuel Menendez Montes, Research Computing Manager
j.menendez_montes@hw.ac.uk

11. POLICY VERSION AND HISTORY

Version No	Date of Approval	Approving Authority	Brief Description of Amendment
V. XX	15 February 2021	Finance Committee	

POLICY