National Library of Scotland

Digital Preservation Policy

1. Document history

This document was approved for publication by the Deputy National Librarian on 22 January 2014 as major version 1. It is edited by the Digital Preservation Officer.

2. Scope and definitions

The National Library of Scotland (NLS) Digital Preservation Policy outlines:

- Why NLS is involved in digital preservation
- What digital information NLS preserves
- Who is involved in digital preservation
- What other documents relate to the policy
- How do we know if we are performing well

The Digital Preservation Policy sits directly beneath the NLS strategy - there is no intermediate digital preservation strategy. Separate plans describe how the policy is practically implemented.

Digital preservation concerns a range of daily, weekly, monthly and yearly activities, occurring within a well understood digital preservation environment, that enable NLS to access and use its digital information in the way it needs, for as long as it needs.

The digital preservation environment is an arrangement of people, policies, plans, workflows, hardware and software systems acting in concert to preserve digital information for present and future use.

Digital collections are groupings of information with common properties such as a common subject, storage media, format, producer, user community, or legal limitation.
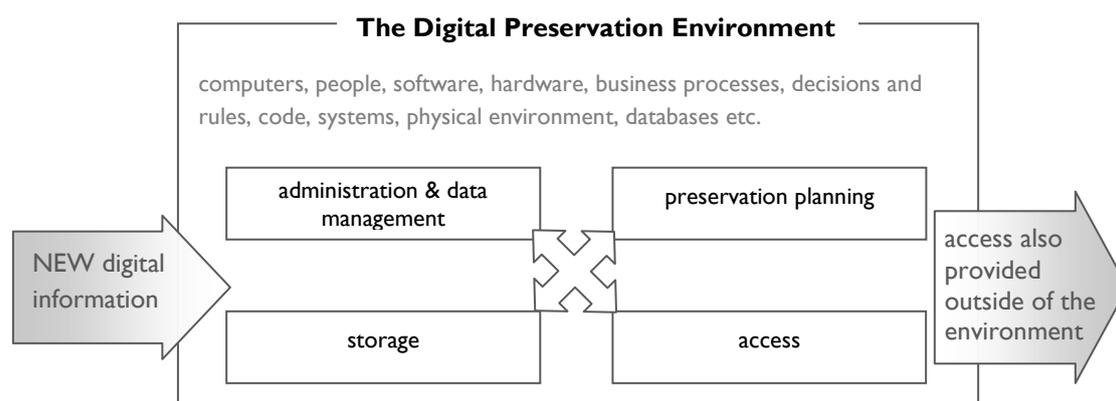

Figure 1: Overview of the inter-related components of the Digital Preservation Environment

3. Why is NLS involved in digital preservation?

NLS is a memory institution. Its role is to collect, to preserve and to make accessible information resources. NLS undertakes these duties through its function as a legal deposit library, and as a custodian of Scottish culture and information. Information is increasingly created and delivered digitally, challenging NLS to meet these duties and its strategic commitment to ensure that digital collections are preserved for the long term.

NLS digital collections include:
- Contemporary and historic archives of individuals organisations and government
- Digitised versions of physical collections
- Old websites
- Library catalogues
- Business information created by NLS staff

Lost or corrupted digital information affects the services, not least the increased access to knowledge, that we provide to customers across the globe. It also reduces the efficiency of the organisation - the cost and time to recreate digital information is typically greater than its original cost and possibly greater than the cost of good-practice preservation. The loss of born-digital information, without a physical copy to fall back on, is permanent and irreplaceable. Such loss would cause reputational damage, invite legal action from existing donors and depositors, and discourage future donations and deposits.

By developing skills and services around digital preservation NLS can better contribute to national and international objectives and policy relating to digital preservation, and offer assistance to others.

4. What digital information does NLS preserve?

NLS identifies, assesses and then lists the digital collections it wishes to preserve in a Digital Preservation Content Register. The register allows NLS to publically communicate what digital information it is preserving and how. It is also related to the development and implementation of specific strategies and plans to preserve defined levels of access to the digital collections, levels that NLS can sustainably support.

For each collection the register identifies a range of high-level features that influence its preservation including:

- The broad preservation strategy to be used (bit-stream, migration etc.)
- Security and storage arrangements
- How access is provided and for how long
- Legal constraints and freedoms

As well as the collections themselves, appropriate parts of the digital preservation environment are preserved.

5. Who is involved in digital preservation?

Post	Digital Preservation Role
Deputy National Librarian	• Authorises broad preservation approaches and resourcing for digital collections

Post	Digital Preservation Role
Head of Ingest	• Senior management ownership • Facilitate and drive digital preservation development

Post	Digital Preservation Role
Digital Preservation Officer	• Reports to the Head of Ingest • Provides information to the Deputy National Librarian to allow them to authorise preservation approaches for digital collections • Co-ordinate digital preservation activity by working with the staff below, including the creation and implementation of digital preservation strategies and plans detailing how and when digital preservation activity takes place • Responsible for digital preservation policy

Post	Digital Preservation Role
Digital Assets Manager	• Manage acquisition, creation, ingest, description, storage, preservation and export of digital collections
Digital Access Manager	• Manage access to digital collections and co-ordinate development of systems with an impact on access
SSA Digital Preservation Officer	• Manage acquisition, creation and description of audio visual (AV) digital collections. • Advise on preservation and access of AV
IS Infrastructure and Development	• Support automation, development and modification of systems that interact with data • Ensure the digital preservation hardware and software environment is fit for purpose and operational • Maintain the access and storage layers
Digital Archivist	• Manage assessment, ingest, description and analysis of e-manuscripts, e-archives and manuscripts catalogue • Advise on digital archives including digital media within mixed archives
Intellectual Property Officer	• Advise on intellectual property
Compliance, Audit and Review Manager	• Advise on legal compliance, corporate information, data retention and data protection
Collections Staff & Digital Library Specialist	• Advise on acquisition, disposal and content • Define user requirements • Enhance engagement with Collections and Interpretation department

Figure 2: Digital preservation ownership, roles and responsibilities of NLS staff

NLS works with a range of external people and organisations to benefit the digital preservation work of the library and the people that use its services.

External suppliers of services and products to assist NLS preservation aims are engaged as appropriate once the NLS requirements for parts of the digital preservation environment are clearly defined.

Depositors and donors provide digital information to NLS through agreement(s), and are responsible for confirming any digital information they withdraw is in the form indicated by the agreement.

6. What other documents relate to the policy?

In our digital preservation policy NLS uses the following related standards, policies and documentation. Some of these will need to be developed.

- The National Library of Scotland Strategy
- Collection, acquisition, and disposal/retention policies
- Digital preservation content register
- Digital preservation strategies for each content type and the preservation environment
- Policy and strategy for the preservation of physical collections
- Donation and deposit agreements
- Legal deposit legislation
- Intellectual property rights, Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation
- Register of accepted and preferred formats
- Standard Operating Procedures for the digital preservation environment
- Service Level Agreements (to internal and external customers)
- Resource discovery and access strategy
- Business continuity strategy
- Persistent ID strategy
- National/international standards – including ISO 16363: audit and certification of trustworthy digital repositories
- International preservation models – including the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) and Preservation Metadata: Implementation Strategies (PREMIS)

7. How do we know if we are performing well?

- Monitor the percentage of digital collections that NLS wishes to make available over the long term that are being managed within a defined digital preservation environment
- Compare our progress against a digital preservation programme
- Compare our digital preservation environment and parts of it against national and international standards such as ISO 16363: audit and certification of trustworthy digital repositories
- Compare our digital preservation activity against that of other organisations
- Quantify the amount of information we store and what proportion of that content has unintentionally changed over time
- Monitor our obligations in Service Level Agreements, deposit and donation agreements that rely upon digital preservation
- Review this policy within 2 years

Contact

If you would like to talk about the NLS digital preservation policy please contact Lee Hibberd, Digital Preservation Officer:

Telephone: 0131 623 3765

Email: l.hibberd@nls.uk