

Good news the already popular PDF file format adopted by consumers and business alike is one of the most logical formats to preserve today's electronic information for tomorrow.

According to the latest report released today by the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC), Portable Document Formats (PDF) is one of the best file formats to preserve electronic documents and ensure their survival for the future. This announcement will allow information officers to follow a standardised approach for preserving electronic documents.

Information management and long-term preservation are major issues facing consumers and businesses in the 21st Century. This report is one of a series where The Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) aims to think about and address the challenges facing us.

This report reviews PDF and the newly introduced PDF/Archive (PDF/A) format as a potential solution to the problem of long-term digital preservation. It suggests adopting PDF/A for archiving electronic documents' as the standard will help preservation and retrieval in the future. It concludes that it can only be done when combined with a comprehensive records management programme and formally established records procedures.

Betsy Fanning, author of the report and director of standards at AIIM, comments, "A standardised approach to preserving electronic documents would be a welcome development for organisations. Without this we could be walking blindly into a digital black hole."

The National Archives works closely with the DPC with issues surrounding digital preservation and will continue to do so. Adrian Brown, head of digital preservation at The National Archives said: "This report highlights the challenges we all face in a digital age. Using PDF/A as a standard will help information officers ensure that key business data survives. But it should never be viewed as the Holy Grail. It is merely a tool in the armoury of a well thought out records management policy."

The report is a call to action, organisations need to act now and look hard at their information policies and procedures to anticipate the demand for their content (documents and records) in the future. Everybody has different criteria, types and uses for documentation so you need to

find one that works for your organisation.

If you would like to read the full report please go to the Digital Preservation Coalition website. This can be accessed here

<http://www.dpconline.org/graphics/reports/index.html#twrpdf>

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For further information about:

- The National Archives please contact, Tim Matthews, tim.matthews@nationalarchives.gov.uk, or 020 8392 5277.
- Digital Preservation Coalition please contact Carol Jackson, carol@dpconline.org

Notes for editors:

The National Archives, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk, is a government department; and also an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The National Archives brings together the Public Record Office, Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Office of Public Sector Information and Her Majesty's Stationery Office. See also www.opsi.gov.uk

The National Archives is at the heart of information policy - setting standards and supporting innovation in information and records management across the UK, and providing a practical framework of best practice for opening up and encouraging the re-use of public sector information. This work helps inform today's decisions and ensure that they become tomorrow's permanent record.

The National Archives is also the UK government's official archive, containing 900 years of

history from Domesday Book to the present, with records ranging from parchment and paper scrolls through to recently created digital files and archived websites. Increasingly, these records are being put online, making them universally accessible.

The vision of The National Archives is to:

- Lead and transform information management
- Guarantee the survival of today's information for tomorrow
- Bring history to life for everyone

About The Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC)

The Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) is a cross-sector member organisation established in 2001 to foster joint action to address the urgent challenges of securing the preservation of digital resources in the UK and to work with others internationally.

For further information, see www.dpconline.org