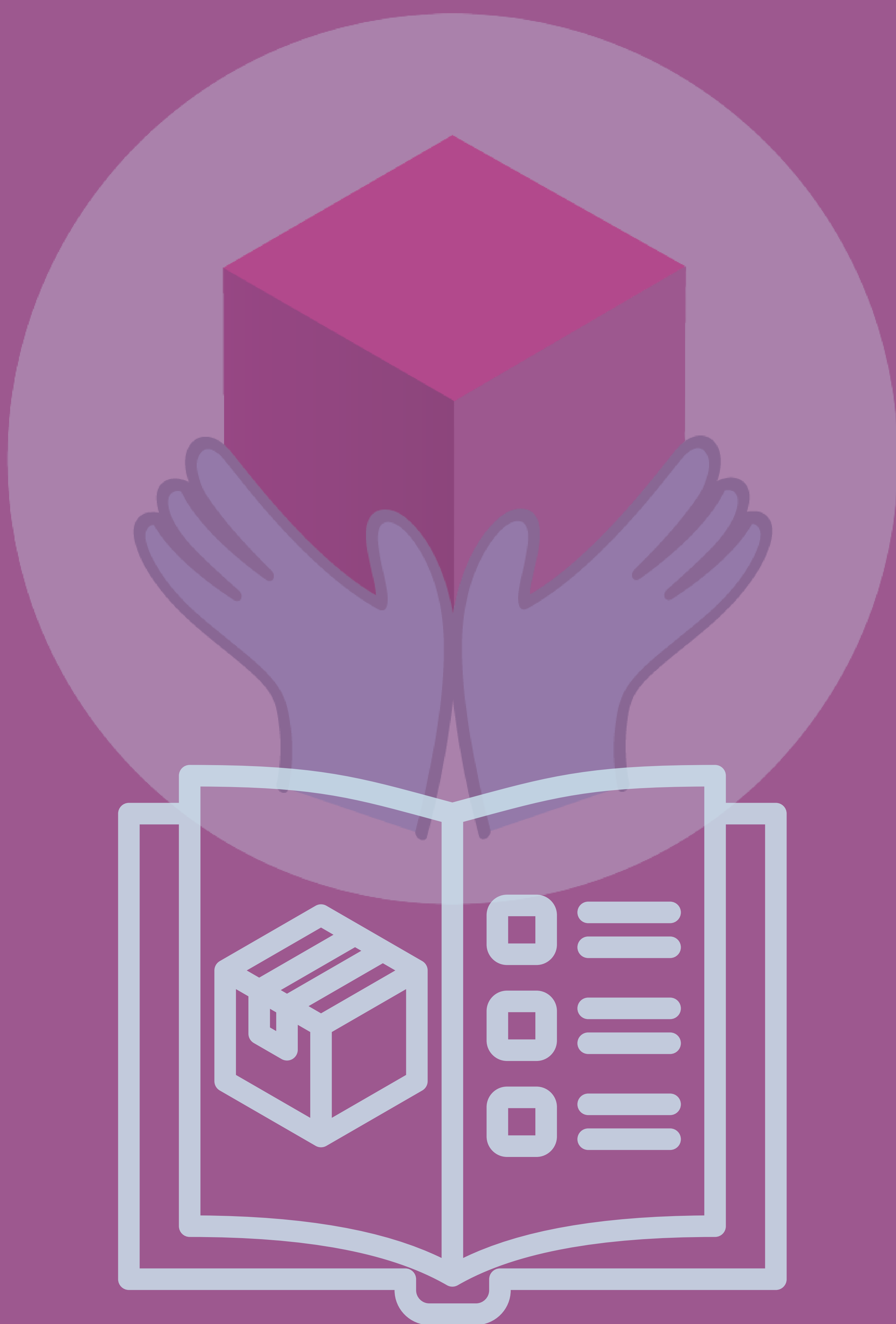


DIGITAL PRESERVATION FOR COMMUNITY ARCHIVES



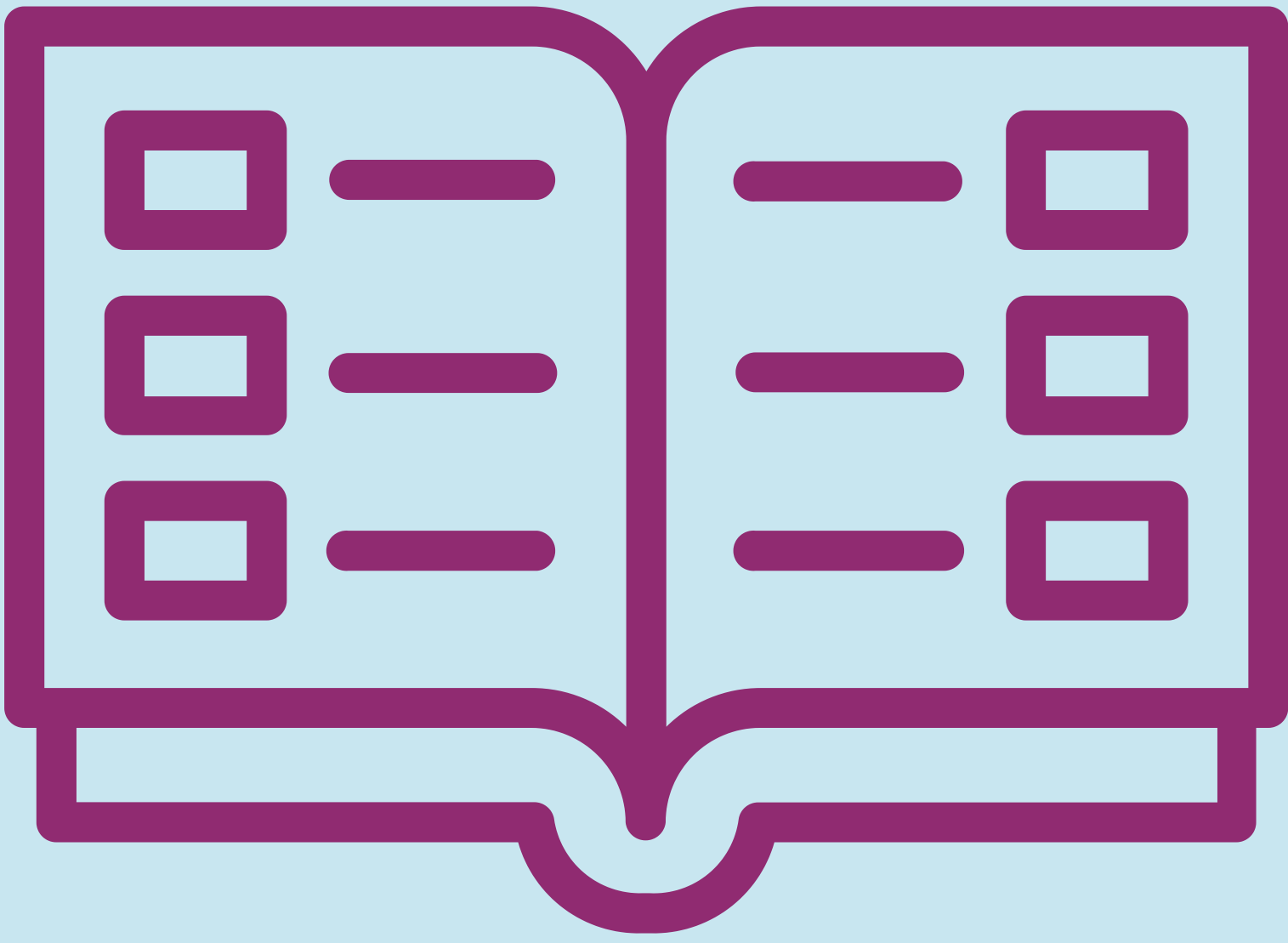
ADDING DIGITISED RECORDS TO A CATALOGUE

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Cataloguing is not specifically a digital preservation task, but it is an essential part of providing access to your records. A clear catalogue helps people understand what you hold, how to find it, and whether it is useful for their research.

This guide is for groups who already have a catalogue and want to add digitised versions of their items. It explains the basic principles to follow and outlines several options for including digital copies in your catalogue records.

Catalogues open a door to your collections. They should be clearly structured, easy to understand, and contain enough information for someone to determine the value of each record.



PRE-CATALOGUING

Before adding digitised records to your catalogue, gather all the information about your digitized files in one place. Your Digital Asset Register is the best location for this (see Understand Your Content, Level 3 of the Toolkit Matrix).

Decide what information you want to record about each digitized file and add the appropriate columns to your Digital Asset Register. The data you collect will depend on the cataloguing approach you choose.

Common examples include:

File Format	File Size	Date of Digitization
File Name / Reference Number	Number of Digitized Copies	File Resolution

PRINCIPLES OF CATALOGUING DIGITISED RECORDS

These principles should be followed when cataloguing digitized records. If you have a cataloguing policy, add these principles to it.

- The original physical item remains the primary record, with digital versions treated as access copies.
- Be consistent with the terms you use and the information you provide for each item.
- Keep descriptions clear and short.
- Record all versions of a file in your catalogue, even if you are not providing access to them.
- Clearly identify relationships between versions of the same record.



These principles support long-term digital preservation by ensuring that digital copies are not lost, forgotten, or separated from their physical originals.

APPROACH OPTIONS

Different groups will choose different cataloguing approaches depending on their resources, catalogue structure, and number of digitised items. Two approaches are described below.

Single Record Approach is best when:

- Your catalogue is simple
- You have limited time or staff
- You want all information in one place
- You have only one or two digitized versions per item

Linked Records Approach is best when:

- You have many digitized versions
- You want clear separation between physical and digital items
- You plan to expand your digital collections
- You need detailed access or rights information for digital files

SINGLE RECORD APPROACH

Using this approach, every item in your collection has one catalogue entry containing information about all versions of that item. Digitized versions do not have their own separate entries.

You will need to add new fields to your catalogue to include digital file information.

Important Notes

- Use clear headings to distinguish format information.
- Add format specific notes and access information to the same fields in every record.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Reference Code	Title	Date of Creation	Description	Format	Extent	Access Conditions	Original Item Condition	Date of Digitisation
1	Scot	Scotland Series	1970	Collection of photographs taken around Scotland	Physical, Born Digital and Digitised Records	12 items, 4 printed images, 8 digitised images	Access to digital files only. Contact us for info.		
2	Scot/1	Edinburgh	1975	Photographs taken across Edinburgh	Physical and digitised records	6 items, 2 printed images and 4 digitised files	Access to digital files only. Contact us for info.		
3	Scot/1/1	Arthurs seat	1975	Colour image of Arthurs Seat	Physical and digitised records	1 printed image, 2 digitised files 1 TIFF, 1 JPEG	Access to digital files only. Contact us for info.	Fragile, some tearing	2017
4	Scot/1/2	Calton hill	1975	View from Calton Hill	Physical and digitised records	1 printed image, 2 digitised files 1 TIFF, 1 JPEG	Access to digital files only. Contact us for info.	Good condition	2017
5	Scot/2	Stirling	1976	Photographs taken across Stirling	Physical and digitised records	6 items, 2 printed images and 4 digitised files	Access to digital files only. Contact us for info.		
6	Scot/2/1	Wallace Monument	1976	View of The Wallace Monument and surrounding landscape	Physical and digitised records	1 printed image, 2 digitised files 1 TIFF, 1 JPEG	Access to digital files only. Contact us for info.	Good condition	2017
7	Scot/2/2	Stirling Castle	1976	View from Stirling Castle esplanade	Physical and digitised records	1 printed image, 2 digitised files 1 TIFF, 1 JPEG	Access to digital files only. Contact us for info.	Fragile, some tearing	2017
8									

Columns A – G contain all the data about all versions of the item being described in the catalogue
 Column H contains data specific to the original item
 Column I contains information specific to the digitised versions of the record
 Additional Columns can be added for other data about either the original item or the digitised versions

LINKED RECORD APPROACH

This option creates separate catalogue records for the physical and digital versions of each item. Each version has its own entry, and cross-referencing is used to link them.

Important Notes

- Use consistent reference coding.
- Add clear cross-references between physical and digital entries.
- Keep descriptive content identical across linked records

Digitised Record Cataloguing – Linked Record Approach							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Reference Code	Title	Date of Creation	Description	Format	Extent	Access Conditions
0	Scot	Scotland Series	1970	Collection of photographs taken around Scotland	Physical, Born Digital and Digitised Records	2 original items, 4 digitised items	Access to digital files only. Contact us for info.
1	Scot/1	Edinburgh	1975	Photographs taken across Edinburgh	Physical and digitised records	2 original items, 4 digitised items	Access to digital files only. Contact us for info.
2	Scot/1/1	Arthurs seat	1975	Colour image of Arthurs Seat	1 printed image	1 original item	Access to digital files only. Contact us for info.
3	Scot/1/1/D1	Arthurs seat	1975	Colour image of Arthurs Seat	1 Tiff File	1 digitised item	Access to digital files only. Contact us for info.
4	Scot/1/1/D2	Arthurs seat	1975	Colour image of Arthurs Seat	1 JPEG File	1 digitised item	Access to digital files only. Contact us for info.
5	Scot/1/2	Calton hill	1975	View from Calton Hill	1 printed image	1 original item	Access to digital files only. Contact us for info.
6	Scot/1/2/D1	Calton hill	1975	View from Calton Hill	1 Tiff File	1 digitised item	Access to digital files only. Contact us for info.
7	Scot/1/2/D2	Calton hill	1975	View from Calton Hill	1 JPEG File	1 digitised item	Access to digital files only. Contact us for info.
8							

Columns A – G contain all the data about all versions of the item being described in the catalogue

In Column A- the reference code including D+Number denotes a digitised record

Columns E and F further identify a record as relating to a digitised item

Note the consistency in grammar, spelling and words used.

MINIMUM METADATA FOR DIGITIZED ITEMS

To support long-term access and preservation, record at least the following information for each digitised file:

- File format
- File size
- Date of digitisation
- Resolution or quality
- Number of versions
- Access status
- Storage location
- Reference number or identifier



This information helps you track digital files over time and supports future migration or re-digitization.

HOW CATALOGUE RECORDS SUPPORT DIGITAL PRESERVATION

Catalogue entries play an important role in digital preservation:

- They help track all versions of a file.
- They ensure digital copies remain connected to their physical originals.
- They support future format migration by identifying file formats and versions.
- They help users understand which version is appropriate for access.
- They reduce the risk of digital files becoming “orphaned” or forgotten.

COMMON PITFALLS

Community groups often encounter the following issues:

- Not recording all versions of a file
- Mixing physical and digital notes without clear headings
- Using inconsistent naming or reference numbers
- Forgetting to update catalogue entries when new digital versions are created
- Losing track of where digital files are stored

Avoiding these pitfalls will make your catalogue more reliable and easier to maintain.



MAINTAINING YOUR CATALOGUE OVER TIME

Cataloguing is not a one-off task. To keep your catalogue useful:

- Review catalogue entries annually
- Update entries when new digitised versions are created
- Keep your Digital Asset Register aligned with your catalogue
- Train volunteers to follow the same process
- Document your chosen approach so future volunteers can continue it consistently

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Keep cataloguing simple and consistent
- Record all versions of each item
- Choose an approach that fits your resources
- Use clear cross-references
- Link catalogue work to your wider digital preservation activities

