

Novice to Know-How - Glossary

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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 which ones can be disposed. See [The National Archives – What is Appraisal?](#) for more information.

Born Digital – "Digital materials which are not intended to have an analogue equivalent, either as the originating source or as a result of conversion to analogue form" ([Digital Preservation Coalition Handbook](#)).

Catalogue – "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](#))

Characterization - the process of identification and description of what a file is and its defining technical characteristics, such as file format and creation software. Characterization tools such as DROID can generate this information to be saved as technical metadata.

Checksum – "A checksum is a string of characters that relate to a digital object, and which act as the object's unique signature or digital fingerprint. Checksums can be used for checking the integrity of a digital object through comparison of the checksum over time" ([Community Archives and Heritage Group - Digital Preservation for Community Archives](#)).

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

Digital Asset Register - A high-level register of the digital collections held by the organization. This may include metadata such as: collection name, provenance, number of files, size, storage location, value, and key risks.

Digital Objects – "describes an aggregated unit of digital content comprised of one or more related digital files. These related files might include metadata, master files and/or a wrapper to bind the pieces together" ([Bodleian Libraries - Introduction to Digital Preservation](#)).

Disk Image – "A disk image is a file containing an exact copy of the entire contents of an electronic storage device" ([Community Archives and Heritage Group - Digital Preservation for Community Archives](#)).

Emulation - The use of software (an emulator) to recreate an obsolete software and hardware environment, allowing access to original digital content and providing an authentic user experience.

Encryption Software – a security tool to prevent unauthorised access to digital content.

(Verifiable) File Manifest - A list of the files within a folder/collection, including basic technical metadata and checksums (often captured using Characterization tools) held in a processable format such as .csv. This allows the file manifest to be verified over time using tools such as CSV Validator.

Fixity Checking - see Integrity Checking

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](#))

Hash Value - see Checksum

Ingest - The steps required to process deposited digital content so that it is ready for preservation.

Integrity Checking - The process of using checksums to ensure that digital content has not been altered, lost, or damaged over time.

Intellectual Property Rights - Any legal rights an individual or organization holds in the content including copyright and design rights.

Metadata - Data about data. It is required “to manage and preserve digital materials over time and [...] assist in ensuring essential contextual, historical, and technical information are preserved along with the digital object”. ([Digital Preservation Coalition Handbook](#)).

Maturity Model - A tool that allows benchmarking of digital preservation capabilities against levels of good practice. Using a maturity model helps monitor progress and plan for future developments.

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. Normalization, 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](#)).

Open Source - Software for which the original source code is made available and may be redistributed and modified by users in accordance with an approved open source licence.

Package – “Any arbitrary container of digital data” and “the act of creating an arbitrary container of digital data ” ([NDSA](#))

Redaction – “The separation of disclosable from non-disclosable information by blocking out individual words, sentences or paragraphs or the removal of whole pages or sections prior to the release of the document.” (The National Archives – The Redaction Toolkit)

Refreshing – “Copying information content from one storage media to the same or another storage media” ([Bodleian Libraries - Introduction to Digital Preservation](#)).

(Digital) Repository System - A large software solution that carries out one or more workflows for digital preservation. This may include ingest, regular integrity checking, preservation actions, and providing access.

Selection – A decision making process to decide which content is transferred to the archive.

Storage Media – Devices that store the original digital content e.g. CDs, DVDs, floppy disks and hard drives.

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

Write Blocker – “An electronic device which prevents the ability for digital objects to be changed or altered during the process of transfer from one storage device to another. Write blockers were developed as a digital forensics tool, but can be used for digital preservation purposes during the ingest of digital objects into a repository” ([Community Archives and Heritage Group - Digital Preservation for Community Archives](#)).