

DIGITAL PRESERVATION FOR COMMUNITY ARCHIVES



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Whether you are at the beginning of your journey into the world of digital community archives or are further down the road, it can sometimes feel like you are on your own and which route to take next is unclear. Preserving digital content is a complex and ever-changing task, but you are not alone, and help is out there.

It is important to remember that the best option may differ depending on the group you are part of and the records you collect. Every community group working with records is different, but they all share the same passion for collecting and sharing the collections in their care. Your group is best placed to decide what the best option is for the records in your care going forwards.

Broadly speaking, there are 4 ways your community group can operate. They are;

Collect and Manage Locally – Create, collect and curate your own content and manage it within your own community. You will handle all areas of collection management and promotion on your own.

Collect and donate to archive - Create and collect your own content and pass it to a cultural heritage institution to preserve longtime. You have the option to curate and manage the content before transfer, or you can ask the institution to do this after transfer.

Collect, manage locally and promote nationally - Create, collect and curate your own content and manage it within your own community. You will handle all areas of collection management. You will send your collections data to an institution like TNA's Manage Your Collections, or the Archives Hub, who will provide access to your catalogue and provide opportunities for Nationwide promotion.

Work with other communities – Collaborate with other community groups to share knowledge and tasks related to management of your digital content.

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No matter how your group chooses to operate, there is help and support available at all stages of your digital content preservation journey. We are a global, friendly and welcoming sector and there are a range of organisations and resources available both online and in person. Just some of these are listed below.

National Organisations

The National Archives UK	https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/
The National Records of Scotland	https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/
The National Library of Wales	https://www.library.wales/
The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland	https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/public-record-office-northern-ireland-proni
Digital Repository of Ireland	https://dri.ie/
Scottish Council on Archives	https://www.scottisharchives.org.uk/
Digital Preservation Coalition	https://www.dpconline.org/
Community Archives and Heritage Group	https://www.communityarchives.org.uk/
Archives and Records Association	https://www.archives.org.uk/

Local Help

If you would prefer to seek help locally, every local authority or county council in the UK has an archive with at least one member of staff who will do their best to help you solve any problems you have.

In addition, peer support may be available from other community archive groups in your area. The Community Archives and Heritage Group website has an interactive map where you can search for community groups in your area and find contact information.