Digital information is increasingly important to our culture, knowledge base and economy. The Handbook was first compiled by Neil Beagrie and Maggie Jones and is now maintained and updated by the DPC. The handbook provides an internationally authoritative and practical guide to the subject of managing digital resources over time and the issues in sustaining access to them. It will be of interest to all those involved in the creation and management of digital materials.

Please use the links below, on the navigation bar to the side and at the bottom of each page to navigate through the Handbook.
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Endorsements and Reviews of the Handbook

Holding The Past In Our Digital Future by Christopher Phipps, The Times Higher, 11th October 2002

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"If you are in any doubt of the need for digital preservation, read this handbook. If you need education on the place of digital preservation in the larger scheme of access and management, and on the many issues it raises, use this handbook. And if you want a usable source of definitive references on just about every aspect of digital preservation, pop a copy of this handbook on your shelf."

Marc Fresko EDM & ERM Consulting Services Director, Cornwell Affiliates plc in Managing Information for full review click here

"For some years, Neil Beagrie and Maggie Jones have quietly been making an outstanding contribution to the development of digital preservation - on both sides of the global e-village. This publication amply demonstrates their skills at bringing together the best information, analysing it and synthesising it to produce practical advice, and adding their own highly valued ideas. This is the big picture, close up and intimate."

Colin Webb, Director Preservation Services, National Library of Australia

"The ever-increasing range of digital information is bringing new challenges in terms of understanding and managing the digital lifecycle, and the preservation of electronic resources will be just as important to our future as the existing great collections of our archives, libraries, and museums. It is impossible to imagine how generations to come will gain insight into our society and our lives without getting access to that growing range of resources. Preservation Management of Digital Materials is an essential tool both to raise awareness of the risks we run if we do not take digital preservation seriously and to give a sense of direction for those directly involved in the digital lifecycle."

Chris Batt, Director of Learning and Information Society, Resource: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries

"This publication represents a significant step on the road from 'talking' to 'doing' in the area of digital preservation. It is a clear, authoritative, up to date and pragmatic handbook, drawing on the extensive practical experience of the authors."

Helen Shenton, Chair Digital Library System Project, British Library

"This will undoubtedly become a key reference text on all aspects of digital preservation"

Alison Horsburgh, National Archives of Scotland

"All institutions will greatly benefit from its practical approach, the thorough treatment of the subject and the numerous references on different issues of digital preservation."

Dr. Michael Wettengel, Germany

"Over the past few years the U.K. has been a hot spot for digital preservation activity. With the publication of Preservation Management of Digital Materials, Maggie Jones and Neil Beagrie have provided some of the most pragmatic information available today to assist cultural institutions in addressing digital preservation threats. It not only offers vetted guidance on available resources, but encourages the reader to think carefully about the issues, through a combination of case studies, commentary, checklists, and decision trees."

Anne Kenney Associate Director, Department of Preservation, Cornell University, USA

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The Silk Route
# Change History of the Handbook

Please note all URL links from the electronic edition of the Handbook are checked weekly by robot software to identify broken links and resources which have been moved from their original web location. Individual URL changes are part of our routine maintenance and updating but are not noted below except in cases where newer versions of documents are available.

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 2005</td>
<td><strong>Organisational Activities: Exemplars and Further Reading</strong>&lt;br&gt;Link to &quot;<a href="http://www.nof-digitise.org">http://www.nof-digitise.org</a>&quot; (New Opportunities Fund) disabled and link to new page added.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2005</td>
<td><strong>Institutional Strategies: Exemplars and Further Reading</strong>&lt;br&gt;Link to &quot;Jefcoate, G. (1997). 'Training for a national library website: the experience of the British Library.' Gabriel workshop, session V - Human Resources and Training.&quot; disabled as Gabriel has cease as a project and the page is no longer available.&lt;br&gt;Link to &quot;Essex Data Archive, Guide to Depositing Data. A guide and forms for depositors with the Essex Data Archive. This includes a pro forma licence agreement.&quot; disabled - and link to new page added.</td>
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<td>April 2005</td>
<td><strong>Institutional Strategies: Exemplars and Further Reading</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Organisational Activities: Exemplars and Further Reading</strong>&lt;br&gt;Three links to &quot;NOF-digitise Technical Standards and Guidelines. Version One; June 2000.&quot; disabled and links to a page with newer versions added.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2005</td>
<td><strong>Organisational Activities: References</strong>&lt;br&gt;Link to &quot;A striking example of the potential pitfalls of reliance of converting email to paper can be found in the PROFS case involving the National Archives and Records Administration in the USA.&quot; disabled as the document is no longer accessible. A link to a document with information on PROFS was added.</td>
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<td>December 2004</td>
<td><strong>Organisational Activities: Exemplars and Further Reading</strong>&lt;br&gt;Link to &quot;Reference Model for an Open Archival Information System (OAIS) Draft Recommendation for Space Data System Standard. May 1999.&quot; replaced by link to a page from which the document is accessible as either a pdf or word document. (Two instances).&lt;br&gt;Link to <a href="http://www.hcu.ox.ac.uk">http://www.hcu.ox.ac.uk</a> disabled as HCU no longer in existence.</td>
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Preserving Digital Collections. Version 4.0 (Final Draft). ELib Supporting Study P3. Library Information Technology Centre, South Bank University, London.* disabled and link to Version 5 added.


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Organisational Activities: Creating Electronic Records


Organisational Activities: References


May 2002

Online Edition Version 1.0 developed by Neil Beagrie and Brett Scillitoe for the Digital Preservation Coalition
All URL's checked and updated
Web hotlinks and navigation for online edition
Decision tree (figure 4) explanatory text added to Question 5
Search Other Resources facility (search archives of Digital Preservation JISCmail list and search Preserving Access to Digital Information (PADI) Gateway) added to Exemplars and Further Reading sections

February 2002

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October 2000

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Acknowledgements

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Other Peer Review Respondents

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**Neil Beagrie** took up appointment as an Assistant Director in the Executive of the Joint Information Systems Committee in June 2000. He is responsible for JISC digital preservation programmes and for establishing and developing the Digital Preservation Coalition. He was previously Assistant Director of the Arts and Humanities Data Service. At the AHDS he developed digital collections policy and standards and published extensively on digital preservation issues. He was joint author with Daniel Greenstein of the LIC funded study "A Strategic Policy Framework for Creating and Preserving Digital Collections". Prior to joining the AHDS in 1997, he was Head of Archaeological Archives and Library at the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England.

**Maggie Jones** is currently working as manager of the Cedars digital preservation project. Prior to this she was employed as a researcher and co-author of Preservation Management of Digital Materials, at the Arts and Humanities Data Service. Before returning to the UK in 1998 she worked at the National Library of Australia for seventeen years. Her last position at the NLA was Director of Collection Management and Retrieval Services which combined the preservation of the Library's collections, and the stack retrieval service. She became very interested in the preservation of digital materials during this time and was one of the founder members of the PADI (Preserving Access to Digital Information) working group.

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4. Organisational Activities

Figure 4

Decision Tree for Selection of Digital Materials for Long-term Retention

1. Is there an institutional policy and guidelines for selection of digital materials for long term preservation?

   YES
   Go to 2

   NO
   Go to 3

2. Need to ensure that it is:
   - Endorsed by senior management
   - Actively promulgated throughout the organisation
   - Reviewed at regular intervals
   - Has appropriate resource commitments

3. Develop a policy
   Go to 2

4. Does this material fall within the institutional selection policy?

   YES
   Go to 5

   NO

Clearly defined selection policies will enable cost savings in terms of time taken to establish whether or not to select and also potential costs further down the track of needing to re-assess digital resources which are either in danger of becoming or are no longer accessible. Assuming a digital resource is being considered for selection, the decisions reflected here will assist the ultimate decision to accept or reject long-term preservation responsibility.

Question 5 is unusual in that both YES and NO branches have the same outcome. Institutions need to consider at this point in the decision tree whether or not responsibility has been accepted elsewhere. In either case they need to consider whether preservation responsibility is attached to the acquisition (Q. 6). If preservation responsibility has been accepted elsewhere, it is not assumed automatically that the institution does not take on a preservation role; they need also to consider other formats.

Decisions on long-term value will include consideration of the following:

- Is there a legal requirement associated with the material?
- Is the material of high value to your institutions’ business/mission?
- Is the information content of high quality?
- Could it reasonably be considered to be an important example of its type?
- Is it likely to be required for future research?

YES to one or more of the above questions should automatically mean
selection for long-term preservation if no one else has accepted preservation responsibility.

If the resource has been assessed as being of high value and preservation responsibility has been accepted elsewhere, decisions on whether you might also wish to take on preservation responsibility will include consideration of the following:

- Has preservation responsibility been undertaken only for the short-term?
- Does the infrastructure of the organisation pose any doubts as to the ability to guarantee long-term access to the resource?
- Are there any access conditions imposed which your organisation would consider unacceptable?
- Has responsibility been taken only to mirror the resource, i.e. to provide access but not necessarily to guarantee long-term preservation?

   YES to any of the above might justify duplication.

If the same resource exists in multiple media formats which one should be selected for preservation?

Decisions will include consideration of the following factors:

- Predicted preferred format of users;
- Technical considerations regarding ease of use and ability to maintain over time;
- Whether the resource is required short-term only;
- Whether there are significant variations between formats for them to be considered different versions.
Organisational Activities - Figure 4

- Whether functionality of one version offers greater scope for use.

- Assessment of the cost-benefit of reformatting standard storage media will vary from institution to institution. The following issues indicate factors which may be taken into account before deciding whether it is cost-effective:
  - Stability of format (e.g. optical disks tend to be more stable than floppy disks*)
  - Storage capacity of the media
  - Volume of material
  - Ease of access if high use is anticipated.
  - Copyright. Whether permission has already been received from the owner to reformat to other offline or online storage.
  - Operational considerations (e.g. it may be more efficient to re-format all onto a common carrier rather than selecting only certain categories)

the costs and risks of trying to manage the resource in this file format?

**YES**
Go to 20

---

20. Is the resource on a carrier that is acceptable for transfer and/or storage?

**NO**
Go to 21

**YES**
Go to 24

---

21. Can you negotiate for the source to supply an acceptable carrier?

**NO**
Go to 22

**YES**
Go to 24

---

22. Is it technically feasible and cost-effective for you to transfer the material to a more manageable carrier?

**NO**
Go to 23

**YES**
Go to 24

---

23. Are you willing and able to accept the costs and risks of trying to manage the resource on this carrier?

**YES**

**NO**
24. Has sufficient documentation been supplied (including metadata)?

YES  Go to 25

NO  Go to 26

25. Acquire the resource for long-term preservation

26. Can you negotiate for the source to supply the required documentation?

YES  Go to 25

NO  Go to 27

27. Is it technically feasible and cost-effective for you to construct the required documentation?

YES  Go to 25

NO  Go to 28

28. Is the material so valuable that you will accept it without adequate documentation?

YES  Go to 29

NO  Go to 10

Consider development of guidelines. See Depositing Data with the AHDS (<http://www.ahds.ac.uk/depositing/index.htm>) for an introduction to suggested best practice and also links to individual service providers' documentation guidelines. The Data Archive also has a guide to depositing data at: <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk> see also 4.4.
29. Acquire it but add note indicating potential requirement for costly recovery at a later date.