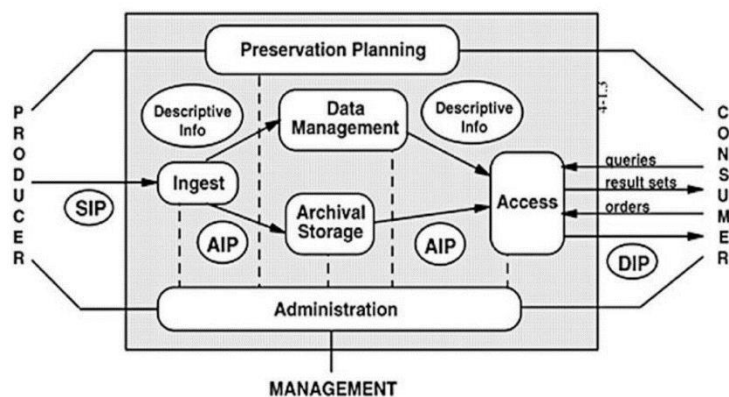# Digital Preservation Policy

1. Goals and Objectives

Digital preservation is the actions carried out to ensure digital records remain accessible and reliable. St Helens Archive Service strives to keep digital records reliable and accessible by:

- Establishing processes and procedures to support digital preservation activities in ways that best manage current resources and can be sustained into the future.

- Adhering to relevant standards, best practices, and regulatory requirements including but not limited to the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) Reference Model (shown below).

- Identifying, physical and digital materials to be digitally preserved across formats and apply appropriate strategies.

- Committing to ongoing training with digital preservation strategies and tools, and developing staff, organisational and community knowledge and expertise.

- Reviewing and assess digital preservation policies and procedures on a regular basis, accounting for changes in available technology, resources, and needs.

2. Terminology

- **Archives** are the record of everyday activities of organisations, businesses, and individuals. Archives take many different forms, - handwritten, typed, printed, photographic or electronic and include audio visual material such as video and sound recordings. They are preserved permanently due to their evidential and or historic value.
- **Born Digital** records are created digitally, for example word processor, email, or digital camera.

- **Digitised records** are digital copies made from an analogue original, for example a photograph of a parish register.

3. Challenges

Due to the fragile nature of digital materials along with continually evolving hardware, software, standards, and file formats, there are recognised challenges in implementing an effective digital preservation plan.

- As digital formats continue to change, formats may become obsolete and inaccessible.
- Digital data can become corrupted, erased, contain errors, or become infected with malware.
- Different materials may need different tools, skills, time, and knowledge to be digitised according to archival standards for long term preservation (for example images, audio cassettes, VHS cassettes etc.).
- There are storage, delivery method, and security restrictions to consider, to provide public access to digital materials.
- The need for greater storage space will increase as the amount of born-digital material is deposited and the digitisation of analogue collections increases.
- A lack of metadata results in the loss of context and decreases the ability to understand the significance of digital files. Contextual information needs to be retained for born-digital and digitised material.

4. Acquisition & Ingest

- Appraisal and selection of born digital records will follow the guidelines set out in the Collection Development Plan.
- The file format should be carefully considered for its long-term sustainability. Potential depositors are given advice according to the depositor guidelines.
- Digital items are accessioned using an 'Archive Deposit / Provenance Form' and recorded on our Accession log.
- Following the OAIS model, digital items are received as a Submission Information Package (SIP), the digital file along with created or enhanced metadata becomes an Archive Information Package (AIP) for long-term storage.
- Metadata is structured information about material and is fundamental to preserving and providing access to digital material. Metadata should include administrative metadata, technical metadata, provenance, and rights.
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5. Storage

- Digital material selected for permanent preservation is currently stored on a corporate drive on the St Helens Borough Council server, as well as a backup on an external hard drive.
- Digital material is currently being uploaded onto a third-party digital preservation environment (digital repository).
- Electronic material stored on removable media such as CDs, floppy disk and USB sticks will be transferred to a digital workstation, catalogued, and uploaded to the digital repository as soon as possible to reduce the risk of permanent loss.
- To reduce the risks to digital records, St Helens Archive Service will offer advice to creators through depositor guidelines, such as the need to use open and standard file formats

wherever possible.

- Migration to more recent file formats (with no loss of content) may be carried out as a method of digital preservation.
- Digitised files will include reference to the original via filename or other metadata.

6. File formats

To ensure long-term storage of and access to digital content, St Helens Archive Service will adopt consistent file format standards for preservation master copies of digital content in accordance with the Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative. A table of the most common digital content in the three repositories is listed below:

Digital Content	File Format (Preservation Master)	File Format (Access Copies)
Text Files	Microsoft formats, PDF/A,	PDF
Image Files	TIFF	JPEG
Sound Recording Files	WAV	MP3
Moving Image Files	AVI	MP4
Specialist Formats (to be reviewed)	Original format, PDF (if appropriate)	PDF (if appropriate)

7. Access

- Public access to non-restricted digital archives will be via the search room or remotely.

8. Commitments

- Dedicating time of specific staff to the practical work of digital preservation
- Committing to ongoing training and development of staff.
- Outreach opportunities to inform Council, depositors, heritage groups and the wider community of digital preservation issues.
- Financial commitment to support long-term digital preservation (Preservica)
- Following best practice guidance
- Collaboration with colleagues in other repositories (e.g., Digi-Pres North)

Roles and Responsibilities

- St Helens Archive Service
    - o Developing and actioning processes and workflows.
    - o Creating and implementing depositor guidelines.
    - o Allowing users to access digital material.

- St Helens Council Business IT Department
    - o install and maintain software as needed, providing support for staff using the tools.

- Creators or donors of digital material
    - o Provide accompanying metadata.
    - o Complying with deposit requirements.

- Users wishing to access documents

      o   Follow procedures and guidelines outlined by St Helens Archive Service.

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