

University of Texas at Arlington Libraries

Digital Preservation Policy



Completed and reviewed by the Digital Preservation Task Force, 2021

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Introduction

The following digital preservation policy was created and approved by the Digital Preservation Task Force in 2021. The task force was organized in December 2020 and charged with assessing the current state of digital preservation at UTA Libraries, creating policies for a sustainable digital preservation program, and selecting solutions for processing, ingest, storage, and continued preservation of digital materials.

Frequency of Policy Review

The field of digital preservation is constantly adapting as practitioners find new ways to preserve digital content for future access and usability. To keep up with technological changes and evolving best practices, this policy will be reviewed annually.

Revisions to Date

2021-06-30: approved by UTA Libraries Administration

2021-06-18: approved by Digital Preservation Task Force

2021-05-12: edits suggested and made by Digital Preservation Task Force

2021-04-14: completed by Kathryn Slover, Digital Archivist

Digital Preservation Policy

Purpose

The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries supports the University's goals of advancing knowledge and pursuing excellence. UTA Libraries holds a variety of digitized and born-digital content that can advance scholarship for our students and the larger research community. We aim to serve as a trusted digital repository that enables long-term access to the digitized and born-digital material created and held by the University. The Digital Preservation Policy supports the missions of UTA and the UTA Libraries by reaffirming our commitment to research, long-term access, and continued growth.

Related Documentation

[UTA Mission Statement](#)

[UTA Libraries Mission and Vision](#)

Objectives

- Establish a sustainable digital preservation program.
- Identify and select digital objects for preservation and identify the level of preservation necessary for each object.
- Prepare each object for preservation storage in chosen digital repository.
- Maintain multiple, geographically distributed copies of all digital objects falling within the scope of the digital preservation policy.
- Monitor digital objects for format obsolescence and data integrity to ensure future usability. Repair or replace corrupted data when necessary.
- Ensure authenticity and provenance is maintained.
- Adhere to standards and best practices for the acquisition, description, preservation, and access of digital materials.
- Work towards an environmentally sustainable digital preservation program.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of those engaged with ensuring the sustainability of the digital preservation program.
- Conduct assessments of procedures and workflows to ensure efficiency and sustainability.

Mandate

UTA Libraries' digital preservation mandate is drawn from the following:

- **Organizational Commitment:** UTA Libraries digital preservation mandate is drawn from the UTA Libraries strategic plan:
 - **UTA Libraries advances UTA scholarship and creative works.** We live in a digital world where people are creating and consuming digital content at rapidly increasing rates. By supporting long-term digital preservation, UTA Libraries can

maintain the digital objects we create and collect and provide long-term access to them for use in scholarship and creative works.

- **UTA Libraries offer services and resources that increase academic and professional success.** Maintaining the authenticity and integrity of digital records through digital preservation is essential for academic success. Researchers need to be assured of the integrity of our digital records and have continued access to them in the long-term.
- **UTA Libraries is a center for experiential learning and creativity.** Digital preservation can provide opportunities for student employees and interns to learn valuable future-oriented skills that are relevant beyond archives and libraries. Digital preservation can also be a tool for capturing the creativity of UTA community members and can capture formats that aren't even possible to create in an analog format.
- **UTA Libraries nurtures belonging and engagement and fosters collaboration and community.** Digital preservation is a university wide effort that will require collaboration between departments in the library and the larger university community. This digital preservation program will help build relationships among faculty, staff, administrators, and students.
- **UTA Libraries builds organizational excellence.** To be a leading institution in our field and maintain organizational excellence, it is critical to create a sustainable digital preservation program that continually supports our robust digitization efforts and provides preservation of and access to born-digital and digitized materials. Digital preservation is essential to our ongoing programs that support the high quality of work produced by UTA Libraries.
- **Scholarship:** As an institution of higher education, UTA is obligated to support scholarship, teaching, and learning. As more resources and services associated with these functions become digital, UTA's responsibilities must expand to include the identification, stewardship, and preservation of selected digital content.
- **Institutional Records:** The University of Texas at Arlington has charged UTA Special Collections with maintaining the University Archives by collecting and preserving university records that document the history of UTA, regardless of format.
- **Legal Obligations:** As a state and government institution, the University of Texas at Arlington has legal obligations derived from federal and state laws such as the State Records Retention Schedule and the Freedom of Information Act that require us to maintain the authenticity and integrity of archival files.

Scope

UTA Libraries recognizes the following materials will be managed, stored, preserved, and made accessible in accordance with this digital preservation policy:

- Digitized master files created by UTA Libraries, specifically the Special Collections and Digital Creation departments.

- Unique born-digital material that are part of the University Archives, Texas Labor Archives, Texas Political History Collection, Historical Manuscript Collections, and the Virginia Garrett Cartographic History Library.
- Any other digital content created or acquired by UTA Special Collections that falls under the parameters of the UTA Special Collections Collection Development Policy.
- Scholarly Materials are currently stored and preserved in DSpace and made accessible through Research Commons. At this time only electronic dissertations and theses (EDTs) are being considered for long-term digital preservation outside of DSpace. When this policy is reviewed annually, the scope of the materials selected for long term digital preservation will also be reviewed.
- The UTA Dataverse is part of the Texas Data Repository, and it serves as an open access repository for the sharing and preservation of UTA research data. The Texas Digital Library actively provides services to ensure the accuracy, integrity, authenticity, and permanence of the digital content that it manages, as well as the security of the services and platforms. See [UTA Data Repository Scope & Policy](#). These materials will continue to be preserved through the Texas Data Repository. When this policy is reviewed annually, the scope of the materials selected for long term digital preservation will also be reviewed.

Challenges

Implementing a sustainable digital preservation program has a variety of different challenges that include:

- **Technological change:** This digital preservation program must keep pace with the rapid changes in technology. Technology not only influences what we are preserving, but also how we are preserving it. As technology changes the material we are preserving and the software it was created with changes over time. Additionally, the technology available to preserve this material is also evolving.
- **Complexity and flexibility:** Digital preservation is a complex web of policies, workflows, and technical solutions. A variety of variables can impact processing, intellectual control, preservation, and storage. This digital preservation program must be able to adapt and be flexible in the face of these complex issues.
- **Rapid Growth:** Digital material is being produced at a rapid rate in addition to the backlog of material already in our possession for preservation. We are working to preserve the material we already have but planning for material we are going to acquire in the future.
- **Ongoing Training:** Maintaining a digital preservation program requires expertise and ongoing training to ensure staff are staying up to date with technological change and monitor new developments in the digital preservation field.
- **Management:** Managing and preserving born-digital and digitized records from UTA and outside donors requires cooperation and collaboration between library departments, as well as common understanding between all stakeholders. This involves clear communication between all stakeholders and a continued common understanding and

commitment to digital preservation efforts. This also requires outreach to create awareness throughout the library and university.

Guiding Principles

To fulfill the purpose of the digital preservation program, UTA Libraries will adhere to a series of guiding principles that support long-term preservation and access to materials.

Documentation and Transparency

- Clearly and consistently document policies, procedures, and practices and review them on a regular basis.
- Make documentation publicly accessible whenever possible.

Management

- Manage files throughout their lifecycle by determining their retention, use, and preservation, ideally at acquisition or creation.
- Comply with intellectual property, copyright, and ownership rights related to digital objects.
- Provide access to digital objects while also respecting privacy concerns of donors.
- Establish procedures to meet archival requirements pertaining to provenance, chain of custody, authenticity, and integrity.
- Select the most appropriate strategy for the preservation of digital assets.

Standards and Best Practices

- Adhere to prevailing digital preservation community standards for preserving access to digital assets.
- Commit to a digital repository with appropriate storage management and preservation capabilities.

Sustainability

- Select solutions that will allow UTA libraries to support long term sustainability.
- Provide staff working in digital preservation with regular training opportunities.
- Provide equipment, funding, and additional resources as needed.
- Provide and manage necessary hardware, software, and storage components in accordance with environmental standards, quality control specifications, and security requirements.
- Stay up to date with technological change and monitor new developments in the digital preservation field.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- Place an emphasis on the preservation of digital archival materials related to members of racial, ethnic, religious, sexual, gender minorities, and those with disabilities.
- Use metadata practices to enhance access to digital materials inclusive of diverse experiences and voices.

Metadata

- Use standardized metadata schema.
- Generate preservation metadata for future use of digital materials.
- Preserve descriptive, administrative, and structural metadata.

Access

- Provide open access to digital objects and make them available for research.
- Preserve digital resources so that they remain accessible to researchers over the long term.
- Communicate relevant information about rights and access restrictions to users.

Environmental Sustainability

- Weigh environmental costs as one of the criteria considered for preservation of digital materials.
- Be selective in appraisal of digital content and critically examine the content worthy of long-term digital preservation to ensure that only content with enduring value is permanently retained.
- Be mindful of how frequently and when checksums are verified.
- Select storage solutions that increase reliability to reduce the environmental impact of more frequent fixity checks.
- Assessing the number of redundant copies to reduce environmental impacts of storage and fixity checks.

Categories of Commitment

- **Born-digital Special Collections materials** – Meticulous effort will be made to ensure continued preservation efforts for material selected for preservation, including library resources and archival materials acquired by UTA Libraries Special Collections. This effort may include preservation strategies such as: migration, emulation, and geographically distributed and redundant bit-level replication.
- **Digitized materials (with no available analog copy)** - Digitized materials with no available analog copy will be treated with the same level of preservation care as born-digital materials.

- **Digitized materials (with available analog copy)** – Reasonable measures will be taken to extend the life of the digital objects with a readily available print analog. However, the cost of re-digitizing as needed will be weighed against the cost of preserving the existing digital objects. UTA Libraries has a robust digitization program. In order to ensure a manageable data budget, digitized material may temporarily be stored in local storage or a cloud-based storage system until they can be moved to the digital repository for preservation.
- **Legacy digital materials** – Legacy digital materials are materials donated to Special Collections prior to the development of a digital preservation program. Many of these materials were not officially appraised or evaluated for long-term value. Some of these materials are stored on obsolete media, encoded in obsolete file systems or formats, or are otherwise inaccessible. When possible, UTA Special Collections will attempt to recover this data and evaluate it for inclusion into the digital repository.
- **Scholarly materials** – Scholarly Materials are currently stored and preserved in DSpace and made accessible through Research Commons. At this time Scholarly materials are not being considered for long-term digital preservation beyond storage and access through DSpace apart from electronic dissertations and theses. Electronic dissertations and theses are part of the University Archives and will be preserved electronically through the digital repository.
- **UTA Dataverse** – The UTA Dataverse is part of the Texas Data Repository, and it serves as an open access repository for the sharing and preservation of UTA research data. The Texas Digital Library actively provides services to ensure the accuracy, integrity, authenticity, and permanence of the digital content that it manages, as well as the security of the services and platforms. See [UTA Data Repository Scope & Policy](#).
- **Other items and materials** – Other items and materials will be handled on a case-by-case basis. UTA Libraries will evaluate material outside of these categories based on this digital preservation policy and the mission of the UTA Libraries.

Levels of Preservation

Because of the quantity of digital material UTA Libraries has and plans to create and acquire in the future, we have created a tiered preservation system with three levels of processing and three levels of storage. When material comes to the Digital Archivist for preservation one of these levels in each category will be assigned. In some cases, a level will be assigned temporarily because of resource constraints, but a plan will be put in place to upgrade to another level at a different time.

Levels of Processing:

- **Baseline Processing:** This level represents the minimum recommended processing actions that should be taken for any digital material. These materials are low-risk, have no known copyright issues, do not contain sensitive or confidential information, and can be made available as is.

- **Moderate Processing:** This level requires forensic tools and requires specialized procedures. Materials at this level require additional investment in time and resources. These materials are somewhat higher risk, may contain copyright issues, sensitive, confidential, or personally identifiable information, or may have some access requirements.
- **Intensive Processing:** This level is the most time consuming and resource intensive. Processing at this level typically cannot be accomplished without specialized tools. Materials at this level are high value and require substantial investments of time and resources. These materials might be high risk including containing sensitive or confidential information or the physical media may be deteriorating. This material may have specific access restrictions or requirements that require a high degree of effort.

Levels of Storage:

- **Baseline storage:** Materials will remain on removable media or local drive until it is ready for processing.
- **Moderate storage:** Material is not ingested into digital repository. Material is stored in secure storage with redundancy and fixity monitoring. Digital Archivist should review material stored in this level regularly to establish if material should be processed and ingested into the digital repository.
- **Intensive storage:** Material is stored in digital repository, which includes continued preservation with fixity monitoring and duplication of material in multiple geographic locations. Born-digital material will almost always require intensive storage once it is processed.

Roles and Responsibilities

UTA Libraries Administration

UTA Libraries allocates appropriate funds and resources to ensure that preservation activities are sustainable for long-term preservation and access.

Special Collections

Special Collections will play a critical role in the digital preservation program.

- **Archivists**

Archivists with a specific area focus have and will continue to build relationships with content creators and donors. They will be essential in identifying, acquiring, and describing digital content.

- **Digital Archivist**

The Digital Archivist will serve in a technological role than other archivists in the department. The Digital Archivist will take the lead on digital processing, ingest, and

continued monitoring of digital material held in the digital repository. The Digital Archivist will also oversee policy, workflow, and documentation creation and maintenance.

- **Photograph Collections Specialist**

The Photograph Collections Specialist is responsible for digitizing materials for Special Collections in accordance with policies and procedures set in place for preservation of digitized material and corresponding metadata.

Library Systems and Technology

Technology is essential to a digital preservation program. The program relies on Library Systems and Technology to support software, hardware, and storage needs so that it aligns with UTA Libraries Digital Preservation Policy as well as best practices and standards for digital preservation.

Digital Creation

An important piece to the digital preservation program is UTA Libraries' robust digitization program. Digital Creation supports the digitization of UTA resources and makes them accessible for exploration and research. Digital Creation will work with the Digital Archivist to establish policies, workflows, and documentation methods to ensure preservation of digitized materials and corresponding metadata.

Digital Publishing

Publishing is responsible for maintaining Research Commons and associated DSpace storage.

Research Data Services

Research Data Services is responsible for maintaining the Mavs Dataverse and the relationship with the Texas Data Repository, managed by the Texas Digital Library.

Content Creators and Donors

Content creators and donors include, but are not limited to, faculty, students, staff, alumni, collectors, publishers, and others. Content creators and donors will be responsible for complying with established policies for donation or transfer to Special Collections for preservation. Policies can include specifications regarding file formats, file size, transfer method, and associated metadata.

External Partners

UTA Libraries may contract with external partners. Any external partners selected to work with UTA Libraries in its digital preservation efforts will be contractually defined and may vary over time.

Sources Consulted

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<https://library.columbia.edu/services/preservation/dlpolicy.html>
- **The University of Manchester Library: Digital Preservation Statement (March 2020):** <https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/about/policies/files/Digital-Preservation-Statement-1.0.pdf>
- **University of Houston Libraries Digital Preservation Policy (February 2018):**
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- **Planning and Implementing a Sustainable Digital Preservation Program:**
<https://www.alastore.ala.org/content/planning-and-implementing-sustainable-digital-preservation-program>