

Version 2

File Name: Special_Collections_Advice_for_Digital_Deposits_v2

Last amended: Jan 2024

Review Date: Annually 2025

Advice for Digital Deposits

This document gives advice on how to prepare your digital files to be transferred to Special Collections. It also offers advice on good practice when creating and looking after your digital files if you are not ready to deposit them with us, but plan to in the future.

We collect digital material that falls within our Collections Development Policy. If you have digital material that you wish to donate to us, we advise you to [contact us](#) in the first instance and begin discussions with one of our archivists before reorganising, moving or deleting files.

1. Guidance on creating and looking after your digital files

File Formats

When choosing a file format at the point of creation use formats that are either:

- Open standard, meaning the specification for the format is publicly accessible (such as PDF, Open Document, TIFF)
- Well-established proprietary formats, which are reliant on the purchase of licenses, but are so heavily used it is unlikely they will become obsolete in the short to medium term (such as Word, Excel and JPEG).

File Naming

Naming your files appropriately aids searching and helps others understand them:

- Make your file names short but meaningful, however avoid abbreviations or acronyms
- Never use spaces or special characters like !*% (except for dashes – or underscores _)
- Never change the file extension through re-naming
- Use the ISO 8601:2004 standard format for dates: YYYYMMDD
- When creating similar types of documents (i.e. reports, articles, letters) try to develop a consistent naming convention that clearly identifies them, such as 20161212LetterJSmithV2.doc or October2016TimesArticle.pdf
- When creating different versions of the same file use a suffix to identify the version, such as *****V2.doc or *****version2.pdf

Organising files

Saving your files in a folder appropriate to their purpose or use will help retain their context and discoverability:

- Make your folder names short but meaningful
- Avoid abbreviations, acronyms or personal names, such as ‘Margaret’s stuff’
- Consider naming folders so you can group files according to activity or subject

- Consider adding additional information such as Title, Subject, Tags and Comments through File Properties, if this is permitted
- Consider deleting any files that are no longer of importance or are ephemeral
- Consider nesting folders beneath a parent if this suits, such as:
 - Articles
 - 2014
 - 2015
 - 2016

Backing up files

It is recommended that you keep backup copies of your files to protect against loss. There are several backup methods available:

- **Portable external hard drives (HDD)** connect to your laptop or PC via a USB connection. Documents can simply be copied to this device via your file manager. External HDDs have different capacities so be sure to purchase one with appropriate memory, especially if you produce a lot of images or video files (minimum 1TB). For added security, especially if saving sensitive personal data, you can get drives that offer password protection and data encryption.
- **Cloud-based storage:** Apple's iCloud, Google Drive or OneDrive are examples of this type of service. These are typically off-site servers located on the premises of the company providing the service. If considering using the cloud be sure to read the terms and conditions of service as this will outline your rights, costs involved, storage limits, how to get your data back if the provider ceases to offer the service you're using, the level of security and what support is available to you.
- **Physical media:** flash drives/memory sticks and other types of physical storage media (CD-R, DVD-R for example) can degrade over time and are susceptible to damage if not properly cared for. It's not recommended that you rely on these types of media to back your files up for long term storage, however they may be suitable as a method of short-term storage or a method of transfer to more permanent storage.

Once you have decided on a method be sure to set up a regular schedule for backing up your files. In some cases, there may be a way of automating this process.

Considering giving us your digital collection?

2. Guidance for those preparing to transfer their digital collections to Special Collections

There is a formal accessions process for all donations to Special Collections and we can accept digital material via various transfer methods, so please get in touch with us before transferring any material.

- The records you transfer to us must be at the end of their life cycle. This means you must have finished using them and not need to make any further changes. It is easier for us to take a larger body of material rather than lots of smaller groups of material. As it is easy to create multiple

copies of digital material, we need to be confident that we are the only repository you will be giving your digital files to.

- We will need to know whether you are using Windows, Linux, a Mac or another operating system, in case there are any requirements for opening your files.
- Delete any duplicate files and any Thumbs.db files. If duplicate files are in different file formats contact us to discuss which format would be preferred as the one that is kept.
- If many versions of a draft document exist only include those that are important and show significant changes.
- We prefer to take files in the order they were originally stored so we advise against putting them into a new structure for the purposes of transfer.
- We prefer to receive files in the format they were created in. We advise against migrating them to a new format for transfer.
- Create a list of your files ideally using a tool called DROID (contact us for further information) which will automatically create a spreadsheet of useful information such as file formats, file sizes and file names.
- If any of your files have been password protected or encrypted please make us aware of this and give us any passwords or encryption keys needed to access the files before transfer.
- Do not delete your files after transfer until you have had confirmation that the transfer has been successful.

Intellectual Property and Privacy

Whilst the majority of the items within your digital collection will have been created by you, some material (published or not) will have been created by others. Such material will be the copyright of the creator and will have limitations as to what you, and the archivist curating your collection, can do with it. Make the archivist aware of any third-party copyrighted material, and if known, who owns the copyright.

Your digital collection may contain personal information about individuals. Such material may be subject to data protection regulations. If you think you may have personal or sensitive information about other individuals, particularly if they may still be living, alert the archivist prior to transferring your digital collection to the archive.