



The National Archives

Press release

10 November, 2009

The Future Archive

The National Archives has ushered in a new era for archiving with the arrival of a machine aimed at securing the government's digital heritage.

The digital data storage system will hold one petabyte of digital data – equivalent to 20 million four-drawer filing cabinets, or 13 years of HD-TV – allowing The National Archives to handle the flood of digital government records which it will be receiving in the coming years.

David Thomas, Director of Technology at The National Archives, said: "This is a fantastic step forward for us as we work to ensure continued access to digital information in the future.

"The capacity of this machine is huge. But in this digital age we live in we are producing vast amounts of information every day, and these types of machines will have a growing role in the archives of the future."

The tape library will store both 'born-digital records', such as websites and digital documents, along with digital copies of paper records.

The tape system was chosen, rather than a disk version, as it is a greener option. The National Archives estimates a comparable disk machine would have used 25-times as much energy, as the disks use energy for spinning and cooling even when they are not reading or writing data.

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About The National Archives:

The National Archives, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk, is a government department and an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). As the official archives of the UK government, it cares for, makes available and 'brings alive' a vast collection of over 1000 years of historical records, including the treasured Domesday Book.

Not only safeguarding historical information, The National Archives also manages current digital information and devises new technological solutions for keeping government records readable now and in the future. It provides world class research facilities and expert advice, publishes all UK legislation and official publications, and is a leading advocate for the archive sector.

At the heart of information policy, The National Archives sets standards of best practice that actively promotes and encourages public access to, and the re-use of information, both online or onsite at Kew. This work helps inform today's decisions and ensures that they become tomorrow's permanent record.

The National Archives brings together the Public Record Office, Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Office of Public Sector Information and Her Majesty's Stationery Office. See also www.opsi.gov.uk

The National Archives and Digital Preservation

Find out more about The National Archives' work in Digital Preservation on the website, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/preservation/digital.htm>

Part of The National Archives work includes archiving websites, and the UK Government Web Archive already holds more than 270 million documents dating back to 1997. Visit the web archive here, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/webarchive/default.htm>