

Configuration management and digital continuity

Configuration management is the process of defining and managing the components of a system. This includes identifying their relationships and assessing the impact of change.

Digital continuity is the ability to use your information in the way that you need, for as long as you need. You need to ensure that your technology environment supports the usability of your information, and continues to do so over time and through change. You therefore need to understand both the individual components that make up the environment, and how they interact and depend on each other.

You may find some of the necessary information in hardware or software asset registers, technical environment registers, or service catalogues; a configuration management database (CMDB) pulls all of this information together in one centralised location.

Configuration Items (CIs)

The CIs which make up your technical environment include not just the hardware and software assets, but also the people, processes, documentation and information assets that contribute towards the services provided to, or by your business. This may include elements held or managed by external suppliers.

For each CI you should include information on the following:

- lifecycle – excepted end of life
- warranties and licenses
- contracts and cost information
- physical locations
- ownership and users

Relationships and dependencies

The most important aspect of the CMDB is to record how all the CIs depend on and support each other. This will enable you to quickly and easily identify how a change or failure of one component of the environment might have far reaching effects to the services your business relies on. It gives you greater control and management of your technical environment.

How does this support digital continuity?

The CMDB should include your information assets as CIs, enabling you to understand and track the full support system they require and map how changes to any one of the components may impact upon your assets.

Managing your CMDB

A CMDB not only helps you identify areas of risk, but can help you identify redundant systems. With careful management you may be able to retire these systems, saving on support time, licensing costs and contributing to [Green IT agendas](#).

For more information see The National Archives' guidance on [Mapping the Technical Dependencies of Information Assets](#)