

Press Release

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The National Archives brings web archiving to local authorities

The National Archives is to pilot a web archiving model for local authorities to ensure important online information is preserved for future generations.

Currently, The National Archives works in partnership with the Internet Memory Foundation (IMF) to archive central government websites but its remit does not extend to cover all the local government or community websites which may be of interest to local record offices.

The pilot will run in seven local authority archives* - covering more than 20 local authorities - where staff will be trained in how to develop a curated web archive for their area and will be provided with free support from The National Archives and the Internet Memory Foundation for the duration of the pilot.

Oliver Morley, Chief Executive and Keeper of The National Archives, said: *"We are working to share the expertise we have built up in archiving government websites with local archive services up and down the country, empowering them to create web archives of their own which will provide a digital history of their communities"*.

Web archiving is the process of collecting websites and the information they contain from the World Wide Web and preserving them in an archive. The [UK Government Web Archive](#), which is run by The National Archives, contains more than a billion pages of archived material from 2,000 central government websites dating back to 1997.

Websites are increasingly used by local authorities, businesses and charities as a means of communicating with the public and the need to ensure their long term preservation has become increasingly urgent. The websites are themselves an important historical record of each institution and its interaction with the community. However the constantly changing nature of the medium has led many people to regard them as ephemeral or insignificant. Without proper capture and storage the information they contain will be lost to future generations of researchers and historians.

The pilot will be used as the basis for creating a template for procuring web archiving services and guidance on best practice to help archive services across the country develop their own web archives. The pilot will archive local authority websites as well as community or private websites which the archive services think may be of interest to future local historians.

In parallel with this work, The National Archives is conducting an automated web crawl of local authority and NHS sites in the next two years to capture a wide variety of locally-held information, including datasets which are not currently preserved by [data.gov.uk](#). The resulting captured data will complement the in-depth work of the pilot.

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Notes to editors

*The local authority archives services taking part in the pilot are:

- Greater Manchester Archives Group (multiple services in a joint partnership)
- West Yorkshire Archives Service (covering the authorities of Leeds, Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield)
- Sheffield Archives
- North Yorkshire County Record Office
- Surrey Heritage
- Dorset History Centre (including the Borough of Poole and Bournemouth Borough Council)
- Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archives Service

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 and onsite at Kew. This work helps inform today's decisions and ensures that they become tomorrow's permanent record.

About Archives Sector Development (ASD) at The National Archives

Through Archives Sector Development, The National Archives leads the archives sector by providing services and guidance on all matters relating to the management, care, and use of archives and all strategic issues arising from this. We aim to support all custodians of records, including private owners and those with responsibility for caring for archive collections, with a range of services and written guidance to enable these activities to flourish.

About The National Archives' Web Continuity service

The National Archives' Web Continuity service comprehensively archives central government websites, to create a historical archive of central government's presence on the web and to prevent 'broken links'. It regularly archives central government websites, including all departments, agencies and non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs). People using government departments' websites are automatically redirected to the pages captured in the [web archive](#) if they click on a link that is no longer active on the live site and the website has installed the Web Continuity redirection component.