Archives Matter

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ARCHIVES UNLOCKED
DELIVERING THE VISION
Archives Revealed is a new funding programme from The National Archives and The Pilgrim Trust to support the cataloguing of archive collections. The programme will transform access to archives for a wide range of users, enabling more people to engage with the UK’s rich documentary heritage.
DIGITAL
IS
DIFFERENT
Archives are the homes for our collective memory.

They enable us to understand the past and make sense of the present, while offering guidance for the future. Our ability to preserve and make available digital records will decide what archives people in the future will have at their disposal.

By default, records are always visible. Today's digital records consist of both information that is visible and information that is not visible. The visibility and visibility of digital records has continuously changed over time, and the forms of information are created, captured, shared, and made available.

Archives need to develop extraordinary capabilities to ensure that digital records can be kept and used. Our digital strategy sets out our ambitious plans for the next three years to meet this critical challenge.

We plan to:

- create the transparent digital archive;
- extend our reach and engage new audiences using the web;
- transform how our physical archives are accessed and used;
- develop our digital capabilities, skills, and culture.

The digital archive has the opportunity to provide different types of benefit at different times. Our work to preserve digital records needs to start before a record is even created. We should advise on digital preservation issues as new systems are being specified and developed. We can also advise on the recording of digital archives. Most government digital records are not published. We can start to give them access to what is published. We can also advise on actively archiving government on the web as we capture what is published. We can also keep track of the achievements and gaps in the legislation.gov.uk database and use this for record use of open records at the right time under the Public Records Act.

5.2 Preserve

We will widen the types of digital record we can preserve. We currently concentrate on images, document formats (for example, Word or Excel), email, videos, and audio. We need to develop the capability to preserve structured data and computer code. This involves developing new capabilities for example to preserve geospatial information.

We will manage preservation risks to digital records much earlier. Through developing expert knowledge, both internally and externally, and taking practical steps like enabling earlier transfers for digital records, or advising government departments when they are developing new systems, we can counter some of the known difficulties of digital preservation. We need to develop tools such as DROID so that the digital preservation risks can be managed effectively for records we do not hold.
From l-r: TNA catalogue refs – ZMAP 4/18, Hollar's Survey of the City of London 1667, and E 170/252, part of a tax hearth return taken just before the Great Fire of London, 1666
Public task and public value
Thank you for listening

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