Digital Preservation Policy

Hull History Centre is a partnership between Hull City Council and the University of Hull. The City Council's obligations to the partnership are administered and delivered on its behalf by Hull Culture & Leisure Ltd a wholly owned Hull City Council company. The partners aim to provide a seamless service to stakeholders and the following should therefore be read as applying to both partners unless otherwise stated.

1.   Introduction

1.1   The purpose of this policy is to provide a statement relating to the active preservation of born-digital archives held by Hull City Archives and Hull University Archives. No distinction is made between material created by the Council or the University and those created and deposited by third parties. This policy seeks to complement existing policies relating to collection development, acquisitions, access, and handling of sensitive information covered by the Freedom of Information Act and the Data Protection Act.

1.2   Although many of the principles and processes may be the same for digitised content, that is digital versions of paper-based content, this policy relates specifically to born-digital archives – that is material created digitally that has been identified for permanent preservation amongst the archival resources managed by the Hull History Centre.

1.3   In establishing a framework for processes it does not guarantee compliance with legal requirements of admissibility of evidence. Workflows and guidelines relating to specific processes, tools and software to achieve the long-term preservation of born-digital archives will be documented in the *Digital Archives Management Manual.*

2.   General Principles

2.1   As with paper material the Hull History Centre needs to help ensure the authenticity, reliability and long-term accessibility of born-digital material. The ability to collect, manage and provide access to born-digital archives will make a huge contribution to the reputation of the Hull History Centre and is necessary to strengthen its role in developing its collections for use by a range of audiences for a range of purposes.

2.2   The Hull History Centre's default position (see section 4.3) will be to migrate and normalise file formats but it does recognise that in some circumstances there is a richer "experience" of the material through the emulation of the computer

environment. Hull History Centre staff will keep a watching brief on projects and initiatives relating to both file format migration and the successful use of emulation to provide access to born-digital archives.

2.3 It may be technically possible to preserve the physical bits of digital content, however we cannot guarantee that all content can be made accessible in a meaningful way due to software obsolescence. This distinction will be made clear by Hull History Centre staff when dealing with depositors.

3. Standards

3.1 The Hull History Centre will adhere to standards and emerging good practice for all stages in the digital curation lifecycle including the collection, storage, management, preservation and dissemination of digital content. Through active engagement with colleagues working in both the archives and digital repository sectors Hull History Centre staff will maintain a watching brief on key areas and remain on the forefront of good practice in the UK.

3.2 In particular, we will manage collections in a manner that conforms to the requirements of the Open Archival Information System Reference Model (OAIS) (ISO 14721:2003) and the PREMIS Data Dictionary for Preservation Metadata maintained by the Library of Congress.

4. Content and file formats

4.1 The Hull History Centre expects to preserve a range of born-digital content that is likely to include, but is not limited to:
- Text documents (plain and marked-up)
- Still and moving image collections
- Datasets (data designed for use in spreadsheets, databases and statistical packages)
- Digital audio recordings
- Websites
- Social media content including blogs, Facebook and Twitter
- E-mails

4.2 The Hull History Centre does not expect to preserve:
- Software - except for specific and exceptional uses
- Hardware outside of its forensic workstation capabilities

4.3   Although it is not expected that Hull History Centre will explicitly require material to be in a particular file format as a condition of deposit, it is accepted that certain file formats are easier to handle and manage than others, with better outcomes in terms of preservation and user accessibility. In producing and disseminating a list of preferred file formats we will stress that we do not exclude other formats, nor do we require material to be converted prior to deposit as this may serve to undermine the technical metadata contained within the original file.

4.4   With regard to live and dynamic websites for ongoing organisations the Hull History Centre's position is to encourage institutions to self-refer their sites to the British Library web-archive.

5.   Access

5.1   At present the user requirements for access to born-digital archives are still being shaped and defined; changes in this area will invoke a review of both this policy and our procedures to ensure they remain relevant.

5.2   The Hull History Centre is not currently in a position to provide access to the born-digital material it has received. This position has actually made liaison with potential depositors much easier with discussions focussing purely on matters of content, file formats and the potential of the archive containing sensitive information. As the service develops the technical infrastructure to receive, manage and provide access to born-digital media Hull History Centre will review this position and consider evolving practice across the sector.

5.3   The long term ambition is to provide access to material via the University's digital repository interface and utilising its access and permissions functionality.

6.   Withdrawal of content

6.1   The University's digital repository has a take-down policy where it receives proof that material is in violation of copyright or other intellectual property rights. It also has established processes and protocols for instances of complaints being made at the request of the author/copyright holder. This will be extended to cover born-digital material placed online through the Hull History Centre.

6.2   The circumstances within which born-digital archives can be withdrawn by the depositor (or their successors) will be discussed at the time of deposit and set out

within the deposit agreement. Withdrawal of material is not applicable in the case of material donated to the Hull History Centre. As a matter of policy, we are unable to guarantee that metadata will not persist, and it is our preference that metadata should be retained to provide an audit trail of the accession and de-accession history of the material.

7.   Storage including storage media

7.1   Born-digital content will be managed through the University's digital repository and stored on appropriate storage media designed for long-term storage of digital content. Storage will be monitored for resilience and content integrity as part of ongoing collection management. Content will be prepared for preservation storage through generation of relevant fixity checks, associated derivatives and metadata to support future use. The University will seek accreditation as a Trusted Digital Repository to underpin the ongoing management of the born-digital collections being curated.

7.2   It is expected that content will be received on a wide range of current and historic storage media formats and the priority will be to safely transfer content from these media to secure network storage. A process for creating a photographic record of portable media has been established, two forensic workstations are currently in-place to help capture content from a range of media, and there is a need to review the range of media supported on a regular basis. In addition write blockers have been purchased to avoid the accidental writing of data on the media during the capture process.

7.3   Once the data has been successfully captured from the original media and ingested into the digital repository the original media effectively become artefacts. These may be of interest to users but there is not always a compelling need to retain all such media permanently. Original deposited media will be retained initially but the usefulness of this will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Review
With policy and practice still evolving this policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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