Guidelines for depositing born-digital records

This guidance is for all depositors wishing to deposit or donate born-digital records with us. It should be read alongside our depositor guidelines for specific categories of records, which can be found on our website [here](). Please note this guidance does not cover digitised records, only those originally created in a digital format. If you have any digitised records you wish to discuss, please contact us separately at [oxhist@oxfordshire.gov.uk]().

Oxfordshire History Centre (OHC) uses a cloud-based Digital Preservation solution that allows us to securely store, manage, and make available to the public, born-digital records. By depositing born-digital material you are agreeing that your material will be managed by this system.

OHC welcomes both hybrid collections of a mixture of analogue and digital material, or collections that solely contain digital material.

Before Deposit
If you have any born-digital records you would like to deposit, please contact us first. As with any proposed deposit of material we will ask you to compile a file or folder list (the equivalent to a box list) to allow us to gain understanding of the type of material and its size, and to help us identify if there is any material we wouldn't accept for historic preservation. If you have a hybrid collection we will ask you to create separate lists for the analogue and digital material.

Compiling the list may also help you organise these records. Bringing similar records together in one place can help identify any duplicates or draft copies that can be removed before deposit.

Receipt for Archive Born-Digital Material
If your deposit contains born-digital material, we will also ask you to fill in an [Archive Digital Material Form](). This form helps us to identify any specific issues with the digital nature of the collection and to collect more information, where known, about how the records have been stored or compiled. We ask these questions because different challenges present themselves in the long-term preservation of and access to digital material compared to physical material, so all known information is helpful.

We understand that in many cases the person depositing the records may not have been the original creator of the records or know who this may be. It therefore may be difficult to provide full information, but we ask that you provide as much as you know.

The main information the [Archive Digital Material Form]() aims to collect includes:

How the records were originally created and any subsequent changes
Were they created in one central place on a computer or removable device, or across many locations and people (e.g. a call for records from all members received via email). Have these records been passed between different people, as the responsibilities for looking after them has changed?

How have the records been stored?
Have the records been brought together and stored in one place, such as a c:drive or portable media? Or do different people hold different records, which have been combined for deposit?

What operating systems were used?
e.g. Microsoft, Apple, Android or other systems
Do you know if material has been copied across from previous computers with older operating systems or converted into a newer format to retain access to the material?

What file formats have been used?
e.g. Word, Excel, jpeg, tiff
You do not need to list all formats, but if you are aware of any files that cannot be opened, are encrypted or require specific software, please do mention it on the form. Please also note if you are depositing anything that may be considered an official copy. This may be the final version of minutes that are no longer physically signed, but what you deem to be the official and correct copy.

How will the material be transferred?
Please let us know how you would like to deposit the material. Would this be via memory stick, or on storage devices you are already using, such as CD's, or historic media such a s floppy disks? OHC would prefer material to be deposited in person, but will accept material by electronic transfer, either by email or other secure means such as WeTransfer, by prior agreement. However, we may refuse to accept unsolicited material and material where we do not have a completed deposit form.

Are there any issues regarding ownership of material?
As digital material can be easily copied, you may have records that you did not create and therefore may not belong to you. This may be copies of reports or publications issued by another body, or material created jointly with another organisation or person, where you are unsure who the owner or creator is. Please note on the form any material you are aware of.

Are there any copyright or rights issues and issues around licencing?
Following the issues of ownership, if you do not own the records, or some of the records, then you will also may not own the copyright. If you are unsure of the copyright position of the material, please say so on the form.

Has any sensitive material been identified and what access restrictions might apply?
Please let us know of any sensitive material that you may have identified. For records less than 100 years old you will also be asked to complete a Data Protection Questionnaire on deposit, which will also identify any personal information and potential risks. Please note OHC is able to restrict access or close any born-digital material identified as being sensitive, whilst allowing access to other items in the collection.

Do you give us permission to destroy digital material?
Please let us know if you are happy for us to delete any digital material that we would not accept for historic digital preservation, or just weed any duplicate material. If you are depositing a hybrid collection, we ask you to complete this question for both types of material, as the nature of the records may require a different answer.

Are you granting Oxfordshire History Centre license to provide access to your (organisation's) born-digital records?
To ensure digital preservation and the continued accessibility of the records, OHC may need to copy, transfer or migrate records. This is allowed under copyright law but will not infringe your other copyright in the material if you wish to retain them. OHC accepts all material on the understanding it will be made available to the public. OHC provides access to digital material on dedicated computers in the Searchroom, but material is not widely available online. If you have any concerns or reasons why you would not accept these terms, please do discuss this with us.

Transfer
Once we have received the file/folder list and the [Archive Digital Material Form](#) , we can discuss the best method to transfer the records. We would still prefer depositors to visit us in person where possible, but we may be able to accept records by other means.

We would prefer to receive all the material stored together on one device, rather than a collection of different media, but realise it may not be possible to transfer everything. If you intend to bring material in on a portable storage device that you would like returned, please let us know in advance.

August 2023

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