

**Knowsley Council
Customer Services
Knowsley Archives Service:
The ARK (Archive Resource for Knowsley)**

Digital Policy

July 2024

Revision date: May 2025

1. Purpose of the Policy

- 1.1 This policy is one of a set of policies which provide a strategic framework for Knowsley Archives Service and its Repository, known as The ARK (Archive Resource for Knowsley). It expands upon the statements made in the overarching Knowsley Archives Service: The ARK (Archive Resource for Knowsley) Archives Policy (2014, revised and expanded 2017, revised 2020, 2023, 2024) and feeds into the Collections Management, Conservation and Access policies.
- 1.2 The Digital Policy sets out Knowsley Archives' evolving approach to the acquisition, cataloguing, organisation and dissemination of digital collections and the creation of digital surrogates of original archive materials for the purposes of preservation, education, promotion and where appropriate, income generation – values reflected in the 'Plugged In, Powered Up' digital capacity strategy document produced by The National Archives, 2020 and its successor, Our Digital Century, 2023.
- 1.3 The Policy seeks to provide a framework for the standardisation of the digitisation of documents, photographs and audio-visual materials.
- 1.4 The archive collections are managed in line with the Council's approved policies and procedures and within the current standards and best practice guidance framework developed by The National Archives, including its 'Our Digital Century' strategy for developing a digital offer. Services are developed and delivered with reference to the Archive and Records Association's Code of Ethics, which distils the International Council on Archives Code of Ethics and Knowsley Archives Service recognises the Universal Declaration on Archives, adopted by UNESCO and voiced by the International Council on Archives.

2. Digital Workstreams

- 2.1 The Archives Service recognises that in order to deliver on our core digital offer, concerning preservation, conservation, promotion, education and access, we must develop our infrastructure to enable us to engage in the necessary digital workstreams: select and transfer; ingest; preserve and access.
- 2.2 The Archives Service also recognises the challenges to digital preservation, in the form of the obsolescence of hardware and software and the longevity of storage media which can lead to the degradation of digital records. In

collaboration with Knowsley Council's IT Department and in-house E-Services Team, steps will be taken to keep up to date with the evolving technology.

- 2.3 In collaboration with the Corporate IT Department and in-house E-Services Team, the Archive Service has identified and implemented a secure, standalone PC as a designated ingest machine, with appropriate automated file identification software (DROID) and digital file registry PRONOM installed, to enable the safe acquisition and management of digital resources.
- 2.4 The Archive Service will liaise with the Corporate IT Department to ensure that appropriate storage for the preservation of digital records is available.

3 Preservation

- 3.1 Born digital files will be assessed and acquired in accordance with Knowsley Archives Service's Collections Management Policy.
- 3.2 Knowsley Archives will work with depositors to ensure the safe transfer and preservation of digital records.
- 3.3 Files will be stored in the most common, appropriate file format: images in TIFF format, audio in WAV format, documents as PDFs and moving images in MP4 format.
- 3.4 Files will be stored in multiple locations to ensure security.
- 3.5 The integrity of ingested files will be ascertained and monitored on a regular basis using checksums.
- 3.6 Files will be labelled accordingly and metadata recorded in the accession and cataloguing records.
- 3.7 The Digital Asset Register (DAR), which is a register of digital acquisitions, will be updated regularly.
- 3.6 Copies in other file formats will be made to facilitate access for research, promotions or income generation reasons, depending on copyright and GDPR regulations.

4 Conservation

- 4.1 Where possible, digital copies of fragile or at-risk materials will be made to protect such materials from incidental damage.
- 4.2 Wherever possible, researchers will be given access to the digitised copy in order to protect the original material.
- 4.3 Suitable candidates for digitisation will be identified at acquisition, stock take, condition survey or individual item check stage.

4.4. Items identified for digitisation due to poor condition will be given a priority for conservation work by a professional conservator.

5. Promotion

5.1 Digitised images and documents that satisfy all copyright conditions will be used to help promote the service.

5.2 Use of digitised images and documents will include publication on the Archive website, social media platforms and printed leaflets, posters, handouts, educational materials and other publications as deemed fit.

6. Education

6.1 Items from original archive collections will be digitised, scanned or photographed as appropriate to create learning resources.

6.2. Born digital items will also be used appropriately in the creation of educational resources and delivery of educational activities

6.3 Educational activities are described more fully in the Access Policy.

7. Access

7.1 Secure means of access to born digital resources will be provided for research purposes. Original files will not be accessed directly: surrogate copies in appropriate formats will be made available.

7.2 Copy files of born digital and surrogate files will be transmitted in appropriate formats to satisfy requests for information, subject to copyright, GDPR and the Archives Service's Charging Policy.

7.3 Digitisation of records will be utilised to provide access to materials for people with disabilities who cannot otherwise access materials in their original format.

8 Digitisation

8.1 With reference to the Collections Conservation policy, the Archives Service team will digitise materials to create surrogates of original records in order to preserve the original items.

8.2 Born digital files will be ingested, checked for consistency and stored securely in the most appropriate format.

8.3 Metadata pertaining to the files will be recorded.

8.4 Ingested born digital files will be copied and made available in appropriate formats as required to allow access to the information.

8.5 Digital copies will also be created to promote the collections and provide remote access to the collections for dissemination on the ARK social media platforms, online catalogue and public web pages.

- 8.6 The Archives Service will liaise with the Library Service's in-house E-services team and the Corporate IT Team to ensure that there is sufficient server space and digital files are stored securely.

Policy Review

- 9.1 This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or as appropriate to make sure that it remains relevant and supports the Archive Service, and sooner if developments require that the policy be revised.

This policy was adopted by the Customer Services Department, KMBC in October 2020.
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