

## Digital Preservation Policy

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### Introduction

Since 1938 Gwent Archives has ensured the protection of Gwent's archival heritage, to safeguard these irreplaceable assets for current and future use by means of correct management of the archives to professional standards. We protect, preserve, and make accessible the archival legacy of the area covered by the old Administrative County of Gwent.

### Authorities

Gwent Archives has a statutory duty to preserve for future generations the unique records in its care under the following legislation:

- Public Records Acts 1958, 1967
- Local Government Act 1972
- Local Government (Wales) Act 1994
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Environmental Information Regulations 2005
- Local Government (Records) Act 1962
- Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978
- Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010

Gwent Archives is an Accredited Archive Service.

## **Aims**

This document states the principles that guide the digital preservation activities required to fulfil Gwent Archives' statutory duties. It clearly presents the aim to promote the use of digital records whilst ensuring their safe and appropriate storage and preservation.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the Policy are to ensure that digital resources remain reliable, authentic, and useable for as long as required. This will be ensured via the following means:

- Providing a robust, reliable, scalable and secure technical infrastructure for storing digital material, in-house or in partnership with other bodies
- Ensuring the long-term sustainability of those digital assets which have been selected for preservation
- Liaising with the ICT providers to help ensure the management of digital assets is carried out in an appropriate manner, facilitating the eventual permanent preservation of these deemed significant from an archival perspective
- Providing public access to digital objects held in the digital asset management system, where rights allow
- Implementing efficient workflows for the management of the life cycle of digital material
- Encouraging staff to innovate, develop expertise and transfer skills and provide the environment to enable this to happen
- Embedding digital preservation into Gwent Archives activities
- Collaborating with other bodies to preserve Welsh digital assets

## **Records Collected**

The digital records collected by Gwent Archives include, or potentially include, the following:

- Digital surrogates of analogue material resulting from Gwent Archives' digitisation programmes
- Collections which include a born-digital element, including software and hardware, either in whole or part
- Other digital objects such as digital mapping products or digital photographs

For preservation purposes this policy does not include digital copies of collections held at Gwent Archives but made available by other parties (e.g. Ancestry.com and Findmypast.co.uk). Access to these materials is usually covered by subscription and licensing agreements, on the termination of which access to the resource is ended.

## **Standards and Systems**

Gwent Archives will conform with the recognised standards for digital preservation and will work in partnership with the National Library of Wales and the all-Wales Digital Preservation group on the development of OAI-compliant systems infrastructures.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Responsibility for implementing the Policy will reside with the Records Information and Data Manager at Gwent Archives. The Gwent Archives Digital Preservation Action Group will develop and implement effective workflows and procedures for the processing and storage of and access to digital collections, collaborating with the National Library of Wales and the all-Wales Digital Preservation Group.

Gwent Archives staff will assist as appropriate to their roles and responsibilities. All staff will be provided with training relevant to their role.

Gwent Archives will continue to work and liaise with National Library of Wales and the all-Wales Digital Preservation Group, and will collaborate on improvements to Digital Preservation best practice, workflow and procedures.

## **Resources, Sustainability and Risks**

Gwent Archives will continue to seek sufficient resources to implement the Policy and sustain the digital resources, in partnership with other Welsh archive bodies.

If Gwent Archives does not implement and develop this Policy to ensure the long-term sustainability of the digital records in its care, it may:

- lose integrity as an approved Place of Deposit and as an Accredited Archive
- risk non-compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018
- fail to meet the expectations of its users
- face increased costs in restoring digital assets and services
- not be able to contribute to, or take advantage of, collaborative initiatives

## **Related Policies and Plans**

This Policy aligns with [Digital Preservation Policy for Wales](#) and its' technical appendix as well as the following [Gwent Archives policies](#):

- Access Policy
- Appraisal Policy
- Collections Information Policy
- Collections Care and Conservation Policy
- Collections Management Policy
- Emergency Preparedness Plan
- Library Collections Policy

## **Review**

This policy was approved by Gwent Archives Joint Committee in March 2022. It will be reviewed in April 2024 or sooner if circumstances dictate.