

Digital Preservation Policy

Benedictine Sisters of Chicago Archives
September 2023

Purpose:

This digital preservation policy provides guidelines to the Benedictine community and its employees. It is a path for collaboration between the monastery administration, archives, and information technology support, as well as the many creators of records in the community. Along with the accompanying workflows (currently in development), it provides guidance in digital preservation for all stakeholders.

The Benedictine Sisters of Chicago Archives preserves its digital collections with the same level of commitment as it has preserved its physical collections for over a century. The Archives collects electronic records and also creates digital surrogates from physical records through digitization. The Archives aspires to preserve them in perpetuity, just as it does for physical records such as manuscripts and photographs. Unlike most traditional archiving, digital curation follows a life cycle model, attending to the distinct phases of a record's existence, from creation to final disposition, and its ongoing preservation in the Archives. Digital files require more intervention than analog records because of the risk of loss due to human error causing alteration or deletion, corruption from viruses, hardware or software failure, file format and media obsolescence, natural disaster, and decay (bit rot).

Mandate

Relation to Mission:

The mission of the Benedictine Sisters is reverence. Through common prayer, stewardship, hospitality, and mutual respect, we seek to find and honor God present in each person and in all created things.

A viable digital preservation policy guides us as we strive to practice good stewardship of the community history and the materials that authentically contain, preserve, and transmit that history. It also helps us fulfill the mission and vision of our community archives.

Benedictine Sisters of Chicago Archives Mission (2022-2025)

Our official records and personal papers are collected, maintained, and preserved by the Benedictine Sisters of Chicago Archives to provide our community and the wider public with research and educational resources. It preserves the historical record of our monastic life of community, prayer, and service. We believe that using the Archives will strengthen peoples' faith and understanding of God's presence in the world.

Benedictine Sisters of Chicago Archives Vision (2022-2025)

- The Archives curates a collection that will become part of a collaborative archive of North American Benedictine women's communities.
- The Archives welcomes Sisters, Oblates, Alumni, Staff, and other researchers to be active users.
- The Archives provides materials for a written history of Saint Scholastica Monastery Chicago.

Rationale:

For the last 30 years or more, the community has used computers and digital cameras to create written and photographic documents related to the daily life of the community. To preserve and transmit that history, we commit to a policy with its corresponding procedures that will allow us to discern what material is most significant, how to preserve it, and how to continue to make it adaptable to new technologies moving forward.

Audience

The intended audience of this policy includes (but is not limited to)

- Benedictine Sisters of Chicago and related stakeholders
- OSB Chicago Archives staff and volunteers
- Our IT support provider
- Users of digital information in the OSB Chicago Archives
- Prospective digital preservation partners
- Digital preservation practitioners and policy developers

Guiding Principles:

<i>Standards</i>	Create a standards-based program to become a trusted digital repository. We seek guidance from the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) reference model standard and to conform as far as possible to certification requirements for ISO Standard 16363 (Trusted Digital Repositories).
<i>Assessment</i>	Refer to NDSA Levels of Digital Preservation and/or DPC Rapid Assessment Model as the Archives develops this policy together with the monastery community and stakeholders.
<i>Metadata management</i>	Create useful, high-quality metadata for all preserved digital content, especially to ensure interoperability for the planned transfer of records to the Congregation of St. Scholastica, for the long-term preservation of the digital archives collection, and to support the authenticity of digital resources.
<i>Open Source</i>	Commit to a reliable and scalable digital archive focusing on open source technologies. Contribute back to those communities when possible. Participate in consortia and collaborative digital preservation solutions when they are a

good use of the Archives' resources.

Transfer and Ingest

Where the Archives can influence the creation of digital content, it aims to acquire this content in sustainable formats.

Content Preservation

Develop, teach, and maintain local procedures to meet archival requirements regarding authenticity and integrity of content (provenance; chain of custody; etc.) The Archives may undertake preservation activities, such as conversions from one file format to another, to ensure that digital content can be rendered in current computing environments. Any preservation activities performed on digital content should be tested, evidenced-based, and recorded.

Bitstream Preservation

Create checksums at the point of transfer (if not received as part of the transfer) and verify them periodically. The Archives works with the IT provider to improve storage and backup facilities for born-digital collections.

IT Capability

Procure, develop, maintain, and review the technical infrastructure required to carry out the preservation of its digital content, including appropriate storage, to ensure future accessibility, usability, and integrity of archived records and other digital content.

Disaster Planning

Establish adequate and secure 3-2-1-based backup and disaster recovery safeguards and seek to monitor threats to the accessibility of digital content.

Legal

Comply to the best of our knowledge with intellectual property, copyright, and ownership rights for the preservation of and access to all content. Create a take-down policy to mitigate any error or misjudgment in this area.

Discovery and Access

The purpose of digital stewardship is to facilitate access, and that access should only be restricted in line with the legal and ethical considerations outlined in the Archives Access Policy.

Sustainability

Partner with parties within the monastery, the Congregation of St. Scholastica, and groups external to the monastery to support the goals of the Digital Preservation Policy, to further develop our digital preservation system, and to serve the collective desire to preserve digital content.

Scope

This policy addresses all aspects of the preservation of digital resources for which OSB Chicago Archives is the primary custodian and applies to digital materials held by OSB Chicago Archives. Not all the digital content that OSB Chicago Archives creates or acquires will be preserved in perpetuity. We will assess the candidates for digital preservation within budget limitations as well as criteria specified by this Digital Preservation Policy and the OSB Chicago Archives Collections Policy. Details of digital preservation implementation will be outlined in workflows as they are developed for specific types of digital content.

Collection Development Priorities:

OSB Chicago Archives provides digital preservation services to ensure the preservation of digital content for which it is responsible according to standards that a future repository can readily adopt. When appropriate and efficient, OSB Chicago Archives will work with third parties, such as digital preservation service providers, to preserve digital content. At the point of ingest the OSB Chicago Archives and the depositor(s) will agree on the content to be preserved and the preservation services to be provided for preserving the agreed content.

Content Sources:

- Born-digital materials – i.e., digital photographs or videos, slide presentations, spreadsheets, documents, floppy discs, CDs.
- Digitized materials – i.e., deteriorating paper or AV material that the Archives digitizes to preserve it (no longer available in analog) – scrapbooks, VHS tapes, fading (but essential) photographs, 3-dimensional objects that are photographed and deaccessioned.
- Digitized materials – (available in analog) OSB Chicago Archives does not commit to preserving this type of digitized material. i.e., digital versions created to fulfill a staff or researcher request will generally not be preserved. An example of an exception would be images of the prioresses or other material that is frequently requested.

Content Types:

- Images that include the names of the people in them
- Documents from monastery leadership and departments
- Sound recordings and some video from monastery leadership and departments
- Some archives-owned, managed, or produced digital resources
- Electronic publications by community members
- We generally do not preserve digital resources for which we do not hold the rights unless they are open license.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- The Benedictine Sisters of Chicago Archives is a one-sister shop with occasional volunteers and student workers, all of whom may participate in various aspects of preparing materials for digital preservation.
- The Archives Advisory Group currently is made up of a sister archaeologist, a sister

scholar of Benedictine monasticism, an oblate reference librarian, the archivist, and the prioress. They will assist in writing and revising this policy. They will also consult on policy with the archivist of the Congregation of St. Scholastica Archives in Atchison, Kansas.

- The archivist, with the support of the IT provider, has the responsibility for putting this policy into practice and carrying out most of its provisions regarding the ingest, preservation, and storage of digital resources.
- The various creators and holders of records (monastery leadership and departments) have the responsibility to create, describe, maintain, and transfer records to the archives according to this policy. The leadership team will have the additional role of promoting and encouraging the monastic community's cooperation with the digital preservation policy.

Collaborators:

Archives Advisory Group

Archivist of the Congregation of St. Scholastica Archives, Atchison, Kansas

Monastery Leadership Team: Prioress, Sub-prioress, Secretary, Treasurer

Monastery Departments

Archives

Buildings and Grounds

Business Office

Development-Alumnae, Communications, Fundraising

Formation-Vocations, Initial, On-going

Infirmary

Liturgy

Oblate Direction/BOAT

Social Justice

Resources and Services

Information Technology Support Provider

Access

Preservation Files versus Access Files

Digital Preservation work is carried out with the master files which are **stored on external hard drives**. The Archives creates derivative files to be used for access (reading, listening, viewing) by approved archives staff, leadership, and researchers. Content creators and donors use sustainable, preservation-quality formats for archival materials. *They Move (do not Copy) the files to folders to be sent to the Archives. (under revision)*

Accepted File Formats

Microsoft Office: .doc, .docx, .ppt, .pptx, xls, .xlsx

LibreOffice: .odt, .odp, .ods, .odg

Plain Text: .txt

Rich Text Format: .rtf

Portable Document Format: .pdf, .pdf/a

Graphics: .tiff, .raw, .jpg, .png
Audio: .mp3, .wav
Video: .mp4

Folder and File Organization and Naming Protocols:

Content creators and donors establish electronic filing systems using appropriate folder structures and file naming protocols. They use a unified file naming system that mirrors the classification established in the approved monastery records retention schedules for their office or department.

The file naming protocols represent both the purpose and the content of the record, e.g. Monastic_Council_Meeting_Minutes_2017-03-29 avoiding using spaces and special characters in file and/or folder names..

Review

This policy will be subject to a scheduled review every 3 years, but can be revised sooner if needed.

Resources

Archdiocese of Chicago. *Records Management: Guidelines for managing parish records.*
<https://archives.archchicago.org/documents/1004501/1006358/Parish+Records+Management+Manual.pdf/f343a7d9-804d-4cef-8aa1-85f967b8008a>

Benedictine Sisters of Chicago website <https://www.osbchicago.org/mission>

Benedictine Sisters of Chicago Archives strategic plan 2022-2025.
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nuDy_-0PBk7XhePSdg3pIAIUQyuKBOYS/view?usp=sharing

Benedictine Sisters of Chicago Archives users' guide
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dWqfli42hu7mLV9VUqnfL2INerFxXBG/view?usp=sharing>

Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Canada. *Archives Policy Manual.*
<https://csjarchive.org/about/archives-policy-manual/>

CCSDS (2012). *Reference model for an open archival information system (OAIS).*
<https://public.ccsds.org/pubs/650x0m2.pdf>

Digital Curation Centre (2008). *Curation lifecycle model.*
<https://www.dcc.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/DCCLifecycle.pdf>

Digital Preservation Coalition. DPC RAM
<https://www.dpconline.org/digipres/implement-digipres/dpc-ram>

International Council on Archives International Record Management Trust (2016). Understanding digital records preservation initiatives in *Digital preservation in lower resource environments: A core curriculum*. <https://zenodo.org/record/3466182#.Yqp0B-zMKUk>

National Digital Stewardship Alliance (2019). *NDSA Levels of digital preservation readiness tool*. <https://osf.io/3dx82>

Orbis Cascade Alliance. *Digital preservation policy template*. <https://orbiscascadeulc.github.io/digprezsteps/policy.html>

Society of American Archivists. *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*. <https://dictionary.archivists.org/index.html>

Glossary

access - continued, ongoing usability of a digital resource, retaining all qualities of authenticity, accuracy, and functionality deemed to be essential for the purposes the digital material was created and/or acquired for.

access copy - a digital object that has been scaled down from a high-quality original to a lower-quality, smaller version, to facilitate delivery over low-bandwidth networks.

backup copy - a copy of all or portions of software or data files on a system kept on storage media, such as tape or disk, or on a separate system so that the files can be restored if the original data is deleted or damaged

bit-level preservation - a very basic level of preservation of a digital resource as it was submitted(literally preservation of the **bits** forming a digital resource). It may include maintaining onsite and offsite backup copies, virus checking, fixity-checking, and periodic refreshment to new storage media. Bit preservation is not digital preservation but it provides one building block for the more complete set of digital preservation practices and processes that ensure the survival of digital content and also its usability, display, context, and interpretation over time.

born-digital - originating in a computer environment

checksum - a unique alphanumeric value that represents the bitstream of an individual computer file or set of files

digital object - information in binary form and its associated metadata. Digital objects may be simple or complex. Simple digital objects are made up of a single file, such as a PDF or an image, while complex digital objects are made up of multiple files, such as a website or a digitized book. Digital objects include informational content as well as metadata that supports administration, access, and preservation.

digital preservation - the management and protection of digital information to ensure authenticity, integrity, reliability, and long-term accessibility

digitization - The process of creating digital files by scanning or otherwise converting analogue materials. The resulting digital copy, or digital surrogate, would then be classed as digital material and then subject to the same broad challenges involved in preserving access to it, as "born digital" materials.

file format - A file format is a standard way that information is encoded for storage in a computer file. It tells the computer how to display, print, and process, and save the information. It is dictated by the application program which created the file, and the operating system under which it was created and stored. Some file formats are designed for very particular types of data, others can act as a container for different types. A particular file format is often indicated by a file name extension containing three or four letters that identify the format.

fixity check - a method for ensuring the integrity of a file and verifying it has not been altered or corrupted. During transfer, an archive may run a fixity check to ensure a transmitted file has not been altered en route. Within the archive, fixity checking is used to ensure that digital files have not been altered or corrupted. It is most often accomplished by computing checksums such as MD5 for a file and comparing them to a stored value.

interoperability - The ability of different systems to use and exchange information through a shared format.

life cycle - The distinct phases of a record's existence, from creation to final disposition. Different models identify different stages. All models include creation or receipt, use, and disposition. Some models distinguish between active and inactive use, and between destruction and archival preservation.

master or preservation file - the original digital object that receives digital preservation and is not used except to make a copy in case of disaster recovery. It is set aside to protect its informational content from harm, injury, decay, or destruction.

media deterioration or degradation - the gradual deterioration of media resulting from interaction with the environment, handling, and use, or the composition of the media itself

metadata - information about data that promotes discovery, structures data objects, and supports the administration and preservation of records. Metadata may be embedded or external. It may be applied at a variety of levels of granularity and during different periods in the life cycle of data. It is typically demarcated and standardized, and it often provides context.

migration - The process of moving data from one information system or storage medium to another to ensure continued access to the information as the system or medium becomes obsolete or degrades over time. Copying information onto the same format storage media

without any alteration is generally referred to as refreshing.

open-source - computer code that is developed and refined through public collaboration and distributed without charge but with the requirement that modifications must be distributed at no charge to promote further development

provenance - the origin or source of something. Information regarding the origins, custody, and ownership of an item or collection.

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