

What is digitisation?

To digitise is to convert an object, data or an image to an electronic format. The term *digitisation* is often used when objects, text, photographs, audio or audio-visual files are converted into an electronic digital code that can be read by computers and other electronic devices. Turning analogue (original representation) to digital ensures the format can be viewed using computer software and shared more widely.

After capturing or scanning the original, the end product is referred to as *turned digital*. *Born digital* is material that originates in digital form and requires a digital device to be viewed. Both turned and born digital should be captured using international best practice to ensure long-term access and preservation.

State Library encourages digitisation as a way to represent, share, inform and connect people to local content. The steps involved include identifying collection priorities and planning for digitisation.

Additional information

[Digitisation: a simple guide for museums](#) – UK Collection Trust

[Scanning and handling tips](#) – State Records New South Wales

Source: Digital Access to Collections: initiative of GLAM Peak - the peak representative body for the gallery, library, archive and museum sector in Australia.

<http://www.digitalcollections.org.au/>

What to consider

Considering adequate storage of digitised files based on format is important. Small organisations may consider storing their digital files on computer drives and backing them up to external drives held in more than one place. Cloud storage is a recognised option for digital backup and safe storage.

Larger organisations may consider an external host or a Collection Management System on a subscription basis. These providers ensure adequate space and solutions for online access.

Read more about external providers through [GLAM Peak – Technology Partners](#)

Planning

A digitisation plan is integral to developing a successful program, particularly where funding is allocated to achieve an agreed outcome. Whether it is project-based or an ongoing program, a plan outlines:-

- the project mission and scope; references significance or uniqueness of the material; identifies the purpose for digitising; potential contribution to exhibitions; links to community initiatives; potential for wider engagement, education and inclusion, expected outcomes, risks and concerns.



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- how it will be done, citing specified standards and useful guides; the people involved; projected timeframe, equipment and apparatus required, storage decisions and managing expectations and methodology of review and evaluation.

Listing the relevant details

Once it has been determined your material is not digitised elsewhere (search Google, Trove, State Library of Queensland, Queensland State Archives, Text Queensland, Queensland Historical Atlas), the next step involves the provision of a suitable directory to store digital files and describing the material in detail. Best practice recommends this be applied to single items and larger collections with many parts.

Create an inventory of the materials selected for digitisation. An Excel spreadsheet is best suited to this process. Sample information may include:-

Collection Accession Number

Collection Title

Description

Number of items, type of format, number of pages

Where the physical collection is located

Accession record information, including a deed of gift received by donor

Copyright queries – who owns the copyright / do you have permission – refer to

www.copyright.org.au

Is the document digitised already and by who?

Notes and additional information such as donor name and contact details.

Digital collections

Maintaining born digital collections is equally important. Capturing contemporary events, activities and programs rely on maintenance to ensure longevity for the future - [Preserving your digital treasures](#)

Understanding Copyright

State Library refers clients to the [Australian Copyright Council](#) for more information

[Learn more](#) about copyright and using the collections of the State Library.

[Copyright and digitisation](#) – Margaret Warren explains digitisation and copyright, 2013.



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