

Digital Preservation at Oxford and Cambridge

A collaborative research project to evaluate and provide sustainable recommendations for our digital preservation programmes

Training begins: personal digital archiving

Posted on [16 March, 2017](#) by [Sarah](#)

Outreach & Training Fellow, Sarah, has officially begun training and capacity building with session on personal digital archiving at the Bodleian Libraries. Below Sarah shares how the first session went and shares some personal digital archiving tips.

Early Tuesday morning and the Weston Library had just opened to readers. I got to town earlier than usual, stopping to get a Melbourne-style flat white at one of my favourite local cafes – to get in me in the mood for public speaking. By 9am I was in the empty lecture theatre, fussing over cords, adjusting lighting and panicking of the fact I struggled to log in to the laptop.

At 10am, twenty-one interested faces were seated with pens at the ready; there was nothing else to do but take a deep breath and begin.



James Mooney
@JamesMooneyUK

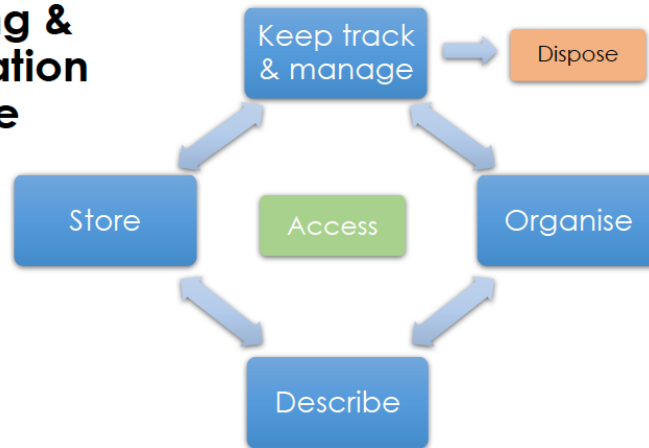
The core training begins! [@Spunkybrite](#) covers personal digital archiving & preservation [#DPOC](#)

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In the 1.5 hour session, I covered the DPOC project, digital preservation and personal digital archiving. The main section of the training was learning about personal digital archiving, preservation lifecycle and the best practice steps to follow to save your digital stuff!

Personal Digital Archiving & Preservation Lifecycle



The steps of the Personal Digital Archiving & Preservation Lifecycle are intended to help with keeping your digital files organised, findable and accessible over time. It's not prescriptive advice, but it is a good starting point for better habits in your personal and work lives. Below are tips for every stage of the lifecycle that will help build better habits and preserve your valuable digital files.

Keep Track and Manage:

- Know where your digital files are and what digital files you have: make a list of all of the places you keep your digital files
- find out what is on your storage media – check the label, read the file and folder names, open the file to see the content
- Most importantly: **delete** or **dispose** of things you no longer need.
 - This includes: things with no value, duplicates, blurry images, previous document versions (if not important) and so on.

Organise:

- Use best practice for file naming:
 - No spaces, use underscores _ and hyphens – instead
 - Put 'Created Date' in the file name using **yyyymmdd** format
 - Don't use special characters <>,./:;'"|[]()!@£\$%^&*€#`~
 - Keep the name concise and descriptive
 - Use a version control system for drafts (e.g. yyyymmdd_documentname_v1.txt)
- Use best practice for folder naming;
 - Concise and descriptive names

- Use dates where possible (**yyyy** or **yyyymmdd**)
- keep file paths short and avoid a deep hierarchy
- Choose structures that are logical to you and to others
- To rename large groups of image files, consider using batch rename software

Describe:

- Add important metadata directly into the body of a text document
 - creation date & version dates
 - author(s)
 - title
 - access rights & version
 - a description about the purpose or context of the document
- Create a README.txt file of metadata for document collections
 - Be sure to list the folder names and file names to preserve the link between the metadata and the text file
 - include information about the context of the collection, dates, subjects and relevant information
 - this is a quick method for creating metadata around digital image collections
- Embed the metadata directly in the file
- for image and video: be sure to add subjects, location and a description of the trip or event
- Add tags to documents and images to aid discoverability
- *Consider saving the 'Creation Date' in the file name, a free text field in the metadata, in the document header or in a README text file if it is important to you. In some cases transferring the file (copying to new media, uploading to cloud storage) will change the creation date and the original date will be lost. The same goes for saving as a different file type. **Always test before transfer or 'Save As' actions or record the 'Creation Date' elsewhere.***

Store:

- Keep two extra backups in two geographically different locations
- Diversify your backup storage media to protect against potential hardware faults
- Try to save files in formats better suited to long-term access (for advice on how to choose file formats, visit [Stanford](#))

[University Libraries\)](#)

- refresh your storage media every three to five years to protect against loss of hardware failure
- do annual spot checks, including checking all backups. This will help check for any loss, corruption or damaged backups. Also consider checking all of the different file types in your collection, to ensure they are still accessible, especially if not saved in a recommended long-term file format.

Even I can admit I need better personal archiving habits. How many photographs are still on my SD cards, waiting for transfer, selection/deletion and renaming before saving in a few choice safe backup locations? The answer is: *too many*.

Perhaps now that my first training session is over, I should start planning my personal side projects. I suspect clearing my backlog of SD cards is one of them.



James Mooney
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Sarah [@Spunkybrite](#) starts her training session at the Weston lecture theatre on Digital Preservation [#DPOC](#)

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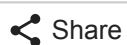
Useful resources on personal digital archiving:

DPC Technology Watch Report, "[Personal digital archiving](#)" by Gabriela Redwine

DPC Case Note, "[Personal digital preservation: Photographs and video](#)", by Richard Wright

Library of Congress [“Personal Archiving” website](#), which includes guidance on preserving specific digital formats, videos and more

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About Sarah

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