

College Archives & Special Collections

Digital Preservation Policy

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Introduction

The Columbia College Chicago Archives & Special Collections Digital Preservation Policy establishes a framework to support sustainable, long-term access to its digital collection holdings.

As the designated repository for the records of the College, select professional work of its faculty, and collections in support of curricula, the College Archives & Special Collections, through a mandate from the President of the College and the Board of Trustees, as well as the Records Management Policy, assume primary responsibility for long-term preventive preservation of the digital objects held within its holdings.

Critical to the College Archives & Special Collections mission is compliance with best practices and technical standards to ensure ongoing preservation of collection material in all formats.

Select digital collection material is available through the public interface housing unique content focused on the history and activities of Columbia College Chicago, student scholarship, special collections, and Center for Black Music Research collections.

Mandate

College Archives & Special Collections is mandated by the College President and Board of Trustees to collect, preserve, and maintain archival records and special collections in support of College curriculum.

Principles

College Archives & Special Collections collects the official and non-official records produced by its community, as mandated by the college Record Retention Policy, and obtains collections from others whose work or purpose reflects the history of the College, or whose material falls within its [collecting policy](#).

College Archives & Special Collections is responsible for building and preserving print and digital collections in support of teaching and research that follows international, federal, state, local, and College policies and laws. To ensure long-term and continued use of collection material, the College Archives & Special Collections prescribes to a policy of active preservation to safeguard its digital resources.

This policy supports:

The College Mission: to ensure that the collected material supports the College curricula and mission “to provide a comprehensive educational opportunity in the

arts, communications, and public information within a context of enlightened liberal education".

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Columbia College Chicago actively promotes these principles, as they inform the educational experience of students, staff, and faculty. Oppression and discrimination permeate society and studying structures of power and privilege allow work to dismantle such systems within Columbia College Chicago, thus ensuring that diversity, equity, and inclusion thrive and are at the center of all work.

Sustainability: digital holdings are created or collected with long-term and sustainable management of these materials in mind.

Access: digital preservation activities have long-term access and discoverability as primary goals.

Intellectual Property: respecting and upholding intellectual property rights of donors and securing consent to manage such material is of paramount concern.

Authenticity: management of digital objects ensures the proper creator of material is cited along with other accompanying metadata, and as much as possible, unaltered files of such material will be retained.

Collaboration: College Archives & Special Collections participates in collaborative efforts of Columbia College Chicago and the Library whenever possible, including but not limited to creating and designing record deposit schedules and access policies with individual departments and donors, working with state and local repositories to provide information and wide access to digital collections, and marketing and presenting the work of the department at professional conferences, meetings and workshops

Standards & Best Practices: College Archives & Special Collections follows current standards and best practices in creating, collecting, maintaining, storing, and delivering digital objects, observes institutional, local, consortia, national, and international practices, and keeps informed of emerging technologies.

Scope

College Archives & Special Collections maintains digital content through digitization of selected physical material and through acquisition of born-digital objects. The preservation of digital content is subject to the same criteria as that of its physical material holdings, both of which are guided by the College Archives & Special Collections [Collecting Policy](#).

College Archives & Special Collections maintains digital material to support College curriculum, preserve physical material, create access to fragile material, preserve born-digital material, publicize the history and activities of the College, create awareness of collection holdings.

Content Types

Digital content held in the College Archives & Special Collections derive from two main sources: College records and manuscript collections, including those held in the Center for Black Music Research. Formats include:

- Text - digitized or born digital books, theses, articles, etc.; PDF, Word, TIF
- Images – born digital or digitized art, negatives, slides, prints, posters, etc. will often be digitized into TIF for permanent retention and JPEG for access copies
- Audio / Video – videos produced on campus, recorded sound oral histories, etc. will often be digitized into the MP4 and/or WAV formats.
- Three-dimensional objects – plaques, sculptures, physical artwork, etc. will often be digitized into the JPEG and TIFF formats.
- Born Digital – born digital files will remain in their native format with a preservation version created in a lossless file format such as TIF, WAV, etc.
- In all cases preservation formats include: MPEG, AVI, MOV, MP4, AAC, WAV, FLAC, MP3, TIF, JPEG2000, and others.

Digital Preservation Strategy

The preservation of digital objects requires planning and monitoring which includes the following activities:

Select – selection for digital preservation is informed through material use, existing College Archives & Special Collections collection development policies, and collaborative agreements, while addressing specific format needs and budgetary limitations. Selection of born-digital objects for digital preservation is based on College Archives & Special Collections collection development policies. All preservation is completed with the assumption that materials selected for the digital collections are for long-term retention.

Create – when digital content is created, by College Archives & Special Collections staff or by an external vendor, preservation actions include: retaining digital objects in lossless formats; creating and/or capturing administrative, descriptive, and technical metadata; and utilizing a well-defined storage system designed for long-term access and sustainability, all of which follows current standards and best practices for capture, format, and storage.

Ingest–digital materials ingest follows established guidelines and procedures. These guidelines include file type verification; content validation; file stabilization; metadata creation according to preservation standards such as administrative, technical,

provenance, and rights information; content delivery; and transfer of data and metadata to long-term storage systems.

Store – digital content must be stored in a manner consistent with accepted digital preservation best practices. This includes technical infrastructure, such as hardware, network access, data backup, and maintenance, as well as ongoing preservation management activities. Digital preservation best practice requires duplicating digital objects in both local and geographically removed systems.

Migrate – as technology develops, the conversion of digital content to new file formats or transfer to new storage media will occur so the digital material is sustainable and interoperable for continued access.

Preserve– digital items require a series of preventative actions to ensure the integrity of digital content, most especially while this content resides in long- term storage, including metadata validation, system reports, file format reviews, and preservation audits. Long-term backup systems for digital content must take into account these requirements as well as the current professional standards and best practices.

Current System – since 2014, College Archives & Special Collections digital content is managed through [DuraSpace](#), a system that creates five redundant copies of each ingested file, and saves these files in servers on both east and west coasts of the United States.

Policy Review

This policy is reviewed on a continual basis to meet the needs of digital collection material housed at the College Archives & Special Collections at Columbia College Chicago. Changes in policy may occur based on issues such as: the collection materials, changing standards and best practices, and improving workflows and processes.