Digital Records

Guidance for Depositors

This guidance has been produced for anyone considering depositing or donating digital records to Gwent Archives. It will help to ensure that your digital records are well managed and are suitable for long-term preservation in an archive. Please contact us with any queries that have not been covered below and we will be happy to advise.

1. What we accept

Gwent Archives accepts born digital items within the terms of the Archives and Library Collections Policies. It is expected that most files will be open and available for research, but if they contain sensitive data about individuals they will be closed in line with General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

File Formats

We can preserve the following file types to ensure that any digital records transferred to Gwent Archives are accessible now and in the future:

- Microsoft packages
- Open Document Text
- Rich Text format
- Plain Text
- PDF
- JPEG (Images)
- Waveform Audio format (WAV).
- MP4 (Video)

Gwent Archives is not currently able to preserve email inboxes, websites, podcasts/live streamed content, complex spreadsheets, and databases at present.

If you have any additional queries regarding formats, please contact Gwent Archives.

2.   Prior to Transfer

Following the points below will help us to understand your records easily and better manage their long-term preservation.

2.1.   Making Sense of your Records

Tell us about your records - such as who created them, why they were created and what folder structure is in place - and this will help us to make informed decisions about them. It will also help us to better describe the records so that other people can access them in the future. If you hold any documentation about your records and how they were created, please provide us with copies.

2.2.   Naming your records

Files and folders should be consistently named in a way that reflects the contents concisely, for example 2021-11-09Minutes. Long file titles and abbreviations should be avoided. These simple rules that will enable the records to be fully searchable, and accessible in the future.

2.3.   Version Control

Where several versions need to be kept use version control. This means including a version or draft number in the file name so that it is clear from looking at the files which are the earliest and latest versions.

2.4.   File Structure

Retain your files within an organized file structure for ease of access. The structure should reflect the nature of the content; re-occurring events being organised in date order (year, month, day). This ensures that the files are easily found and checked for duplicates.

2.5.   Final versions

In most cases, only the final version of the document needs to be retained, with drafts and duplicates deleted prior to transfer. Where previous versions do need to be retained, the naming conventions outlined in 2.3 should be followed to help identify versions.

2.6.   Save digital records in their original format

We prefer to receive digital records in the file formats they were created and used in, even if that format is now obsolete. This is to ensure that the context is not lost, and data corrupted during processing. Changing formats could lead to loss of structure

and information vital to understanding the information presented. Once the records are in our care we may create access copies, but we will also retain the original version for archival purposes.

3. Transferring your records

Currently we accept USB, Hard drive, CD/DVD and Email (though there are size limitations). Files can be compressed (zipped) to assist transfer and to allow important information such as file creation data to be maintained. Passwords can be used for sensitive data, and the password should provided separately on the accompanying paperwork.

4. Deleting your copies

We recommend that you retain copies of the files, until we confirm that the files have been received and processed successfully. Please note that we cannot return digital items that we decide not to keep. We assess digital material in line with our Collections Policies so that the same criteria is applied to records regardless of the format in which they exist.