



Theatre Collection

Advice for Digital Deposits

Considering giving us your digital collection?

We collect digital material that falls within our [Collections Development Policy](#). If you have digital material to give us we advise that you [contact us](#) in the first instance to discuss it.

Looking after your digital files and preparing them for transfer

Selecting suitable file formats

We prefer to receive files in the format they were created in, so we advise against migrating them to a new format for the purposes of transfer. If choosing a file format at the point of creation we advise using formats which are either 'open standard' or well-established proprietary formats. 'Open standard' means that the specification for the format is publicly accessible (such formats include PDF, Open Document, TIFF). Well-established file formats may be proprietary in nature (i.e. reliant on the purchase of licenses) but are so heavily used that it is unlikely they will become obsolete in the short to medium term (such as Word, Excel and JPEG).

Backing up files

It is recommended that you keep backup copies of your files to protect against loss from accidental deletion, viruses, theft and loss from power surges and hardware or software failure. There are several backup methods available:

- **Portable external hard drive:** You can purchase portable external hard disc drives or HDD, which connect to your laptop or desktop computer via a USB connection. Documents can simply be copied to this device via your file manager. External HDDs have different capacities so be sure to purchase one of appropriate capacity. If you produce a lot of images or video files you would be best to purchase one with a large amount of memory (minimum 1TB). For added protection you could purchase a drive that offers password protection and data encryption.
- **Cloud:** There are options to copy your files into virtual storage. These are typically off-site servers located on the premises of the company providing the service. Apple's iCloud or Dropbox are examples of this type of service. If considering using the cloud be sure to read the terms and conditions of service as this will outline your rights, costs involved, storage limits, how to get your data back if the provider ceases to offer the service you're using, the level of security and what support is available to you.
- **Physical media:** flash drives/memory sticks and other types of physical storage media (CD-R, DVD-R for example) can degrade over time and are susceptible to damage if not properly cared for. They can also easily be lost. It's not recommended that you rely on these types of media to back your files up for long term storage, however they may be suitable as a method of short term storage or a method of transfer to more permanent storage.

Once you have decided on a method be sure to set up a regular schedule for backing up your files. In some cases there may be a way of automating this process.

Naming your Files

Naming your files appropriately can help a great deal when searching for them. It will also help archivists working with your files to understand them:

- Make your file names short but meaningful
- never use spaces or special characters like !*% (except for dashes – and underscores _)
- never change the file extension through re-naming
- Avoid abbreviations or acronyms that are likely to be forgotten with the passing of time
- If creating similar types of documents (i.e. reports, articles, stories, letters etc) try to develop a consistent naming convention that clearly identifies them, such as 20161212LetterJSmithV2.doc or October2016TimesArticle.pdf
- use the ISO 8601:2004 standard format for dates: YYYYMMDD
- If creating different versions of the same file use a suffix to identify the version, such as *****V2.doc or *****version2.pdf

Organising files

Saving your files in a folder appropriate to their purpose or use will help retain their context and discoverability:

- Make your folder names short but meaningful
- Avoid abbreviations, acronyms or personal names, such as ‘Margaret’s stuff’
- Consider nesting folders beneath a parent if this suits, such as
 - Articles
 - 2014
 - 2015
 - 2016
- Consider naming folders so you can group files according to activity or subject
- Consider adding additional description to your files through the file properties option if this is permitted. You can supplement your files with additional information such as Title, Subject, Tags and Comments.
- Consider deleting any files that are no longer of importance or are ephemeral.

Intellectual Property and Privacy

Whilst the majority of the items within your digital collection will have been created by yourself some material (published or not) will have been created by others and passed to you either via email (and subsequently saved) or via download from the internet or other digital means. Such material will be the copyright of the creator and will have limitations as to what you, and the archivist curating your collection, can do with it.

Your digital collection may contain personal information about individuals other than yourself. Such material may be subject to data protection regulations and when passed to an archive will need to be treated accordingly.

Our tips below will help you ensure the archivist handling your collection is aware of legislative issues relating to your collection:

- Be aware if you are downloading and storing material created by others.
- Be prepared to make the archivist aware of the presence of any third-party copyrighted material, and if known, who owns the copyright.
- Avoid using Digital Rights Management tools or functionality to your own copyright material if you intend to donate it to an archive. Such tools or functions (such as those present in Adobe

file formats) cannot be removed easily by archivists. This can limit the usability of the files and inhibit future research.

- Any files you have created will be covered by copyright. If you don't wish to transfer copyright to the University, you may consider applying [Creative Commons licenses](#) to your files to relax the restrictions and enable greater usage of your collection, whilst under the custody of the University. You should let the archivist know if you have used such licenses for your digital files.
- If you think you may have personal or sensitive information about other individuals, particularly if they may still be living, alert the archivist prior to transferring your digital collection to the archive.

Transferring material

We can accept digital material to be added to our archives via various methods. If you would like to discuss your requirements, or comment on any of the aspects of the advice above, please get in touch with the [Theatre Collection](#).

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