



South Carolina

University Libraries
Digital Preservation Framework
Version 2.3
2023 - 2026

“Digital Preservation Is People” – Trevor Owens, *The Theory and Craft of Digital Preservation*, 2018

Digital Preservation Team
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Table of Contents

• Purpose	Page 2
• Mandate	Page 2
• Objectives	Page 3
• Guiding Principles	Page 3
• Roles of Responsibility	Page 4
• Credit and Review Cycle	Page 4
• References	Page 5
• Appendices	Page 6
○ A. Current Location of the University Libraries' Digital Assets	
○ B. Supported File Formats	
○ C. Relevant University and State Cyber Security Policies Standards	
○ D. National and International Standards and Practices for Digital Preservation	
○ E: Policies and Procedures	
1. Roles, Responsibilities, and Access Rights	
2. Selection & Intent to Preserve	
3. Digital Preservation Procedures	
4. Recovery	

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Purpose

The Digital Preservation Policy Framework establishes the University of South Carolina (USC) Libraries as a trusted steward of its digital assets for future researchers and patrons. It guides strategic planning and supports collection development within the University Libraries, making explicit the Libraries' commitment to preserving digital assets in its collections. The audience for the Framework includes USC faculty, staff, students, and patrons. The policies and procedures derived from this Framework are attainable, consistent, and actionable.

Given the Libraries' role with the University of South Carolina, maintaining effective digital preservation practices is an essential Library capability. This Framework accepts that the Libraries must continue to grow its human and technical resources to create an infrastructure capable of supporting a reliable and sustainable digital archive compliant with professional standards and practices. Allocating these resources is the responsibility of USC and the Libraries Administration. In the absence of sufficient resources, the Mandates outlined below may not be fully addressed.

Mandates

The Framework reflects its manifold responsibilities and obligations to secure digital assets under its stewardship. These responsibilities and obligations include:

- ***Support of scholarship:*** USC Libraries supports scholarship, teaching, and learning through the expertise of its faculty and staff, its information services, and its collections. Increasingly, the Libraries acquires, creates, and manages digital collections and information services in support of the university's mission. The Libraries must ensure the integrity and availability of these materials and services and as stated in the Libraries' Mission and the University's Strategic Priorities.
- ***Stewardship of institutional records:*** USC has charged the Libraries with maintaining the University Archives by collecting and preserving university records, including electronic and born digital formats.
- ***Compliance with legal agreements:*** USC has mandated responsibilities to preserve and maintain access to certain digital objects, such as federal depository materials. Some legal obligations derived from Federal and State laws require the Libraries to maintain records according to archival standards.
- ***Adherence to consortial obligations:*** USC Libraries has consortial obligations and contractual agreements with other educational institutions to assume or share in the responsibility for preserving designated digital content.

Objectives

Given its diverse mandates, the Libraries maintains a program of digital preservation policies and practices targeted to meet its responsibilities. The objectives underlying these policies and practices are to:

- identify, through systematic selection or by legal mandate, analog assets to be digitized and thus subject to digital preservation
- identify, through systematic selection or by legal mandate, born-digital or digital-only assets subject to digital preservation
- maintain these assets in a digital preservation environment that meets or exceeds national and international standards. (See Appendix D)

Guiding principles

An effective program of digital preservation is guided by selection and applied in accordance with relevant data and cyber-security policies of the State of South Carolina and USC (See Appendix C) and national and international standards when not in legal conflict with state policy. When possible, decisions about the need for long-term retention are made at the time of creation, acquisition, or licensing of digital assets. The selection process is collaborative and guided by the following priorities:

- ***High Priority: Born digital or digital-only collections.*** Includes the Libraries' collection and information resources that are born digital or are now only extant or viable in digital form. Loss of digital material results in an irrevocable loss of a Libraries' resource.
- ***High Priority: Digital-only administrative records and scholarly research created at the University.*** Includes electronic records produced by the USC broadly for which the University Archives performs a records management function. Also includes electronic dissertations and theses, institutional repository data, curated digital exhibits, and other digital content determined to have lasting value for the USC and for which the Libraries has accepted responsibility. Loss of digital material results in an irrevocable loss of a University resource.
- ***Medium Priority: Digitized collections for which analog copies remain viable.*** Includes materials digitized by the Libraries or vendors for which the physical copy remains a viable and accessible resource. Loss of digital material does not result in the irrevocable loss of a resource; however, loss of those labor costs cannot be recaptured.
- ***Medium Priority: Commercially and third-party available resources.*** Includes voluntary consortial agreements through which the Libraries accepts responsibility for maintaining digital

assets that are not the property of USC, such as Portico. Loss of digital material does not result in the irrevocable loss of a resource.

The Libraries will not select digital ephemera generated by routine activity (e.g., electronic document delivery files or electronic reserve files) for digital preservation.

Roles and responsibilities

The Libraries has a leadership role within USC to guide the preservation of digital information. In this capacity, it advises other units as to best practices and accepts when appropriate stewardship of digital materials for preservation within its digital preservation program.

Within the Libraries, decisions about the preservation of digital materials flow from this Framework and are implemented based on available human, financial and technical resources. The decisions are made by library faculty and staff in consultation with USC information policies put forward by the University's Chief Data Officer and others in the Division of Information Technology (DoIT). Specific roles and responsibilities for Libraries administration, faculty, and staff are outlined in the policy document, Roles and Responsibilities, Appendix E.

By actively implementing this Framework, faculty and staff of the Libraries position themselves to participate in the development of digital preservation standards within our professional communities at a national and international level, ensuring that the Libraries remains abreast of evolving practices.

Review Cycle

This Framework will be reviewed every third year in July by members of the Digital Preservation Team. The policies and procedures will be reviewed on an annual basis, each July. The next Framework review will occur in July 2026.

Credit: Thank you to Ohio State University, Cornell University Libraries, Columbia University Libraries' Policy for Preservation of Digital Assets, Yale University Library Digital Preservation Policy, and Colorado State University Libraries' Digital Repository Policies and Guidelines for guidance on this policy for USC Libraries.

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