University of Manitoba Libraries

Title: Digital Preservation Strategy
Unit: Research Services and Digital Strategies
Approved by: Management Group
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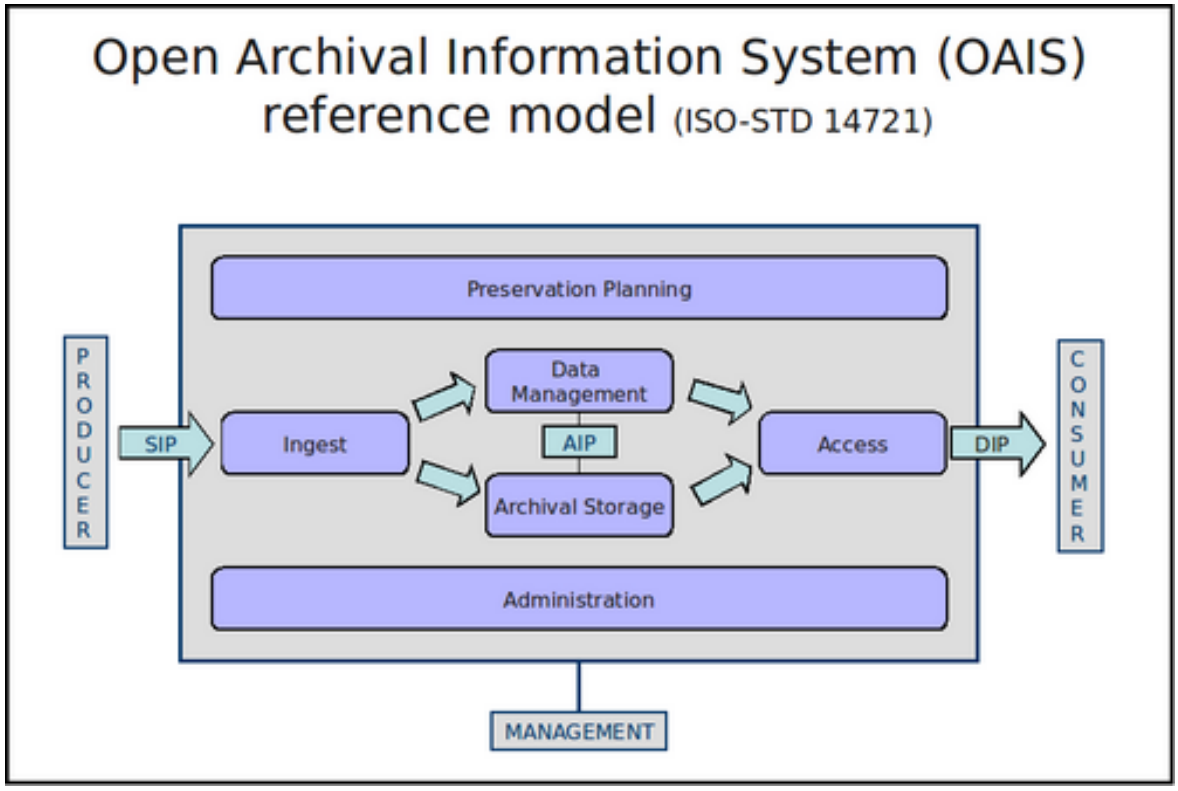
1. REASON FOR THE STRATEGY

To establish the mandate, purpose, objectives, scope and limitations, administrative responsibilities, and outcomes of University of Manitoba Libraries' (UML) digital preservation program. UML supports the preservation of vital digital content documenting the culture and history of Manitoba. This strategy aims to ensure that this important history remains accessible for future generations.

2. DIGITAL PRESERVATION STRATEGY

2.1 OAIS COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

A successful digital preservation program must be founded on and informed by up-to-date, established best practices. To ensure its ongoing success, the UML Digital Preservation Program complies with the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) Reference Model approved as ISO 14721 in 2003, to support digital preservation of records throughout six key functions: Ingest, Archival Storage, Data Management, Administration, Preservation Planning, and Access.



OAIS Reference Model (Source: wiki.archivematica.org/Overview)

2.2 UML DIGITAL PRESERVATION MANDATE

The digital preservation mandate is informed by UML's Strategic infrastructure, and the University of Manitoba Strategic Plan, 2024-2029.

In alignment with UML's Strategic infrastructure, the digital preservation program **empowers** students and faculty to achieve their goals and supports **innovation** by ensuring key resources remain accessible to the University of Manitoba (UM) community over time. The program is **responsive** to technological changes that impact the accessibility of digital formats, software, and hardware. The program strives to provide **respectful** access to curated digital collections, and **collaborates** with the UM community and digital preservation practitioners locally, nationally, and internationally to ensure digital records with enduing value are preserved.

In alignment with the UM Strategic Plan, the digital preservation program advances learning by **sharing** and **preserving knowledge**. The digital preservation program further ensures careful consideration is applied to preservation actions and operations to integrate **sustainable practices** into all aspects of digital preservation work. In supporting the UM's records management activities, the digital preservation program ensures **ethical stewardship**, **transparency**, and **accountability**.

The digital preservation mandate applies to born-digital records or select digitized records that fall within the following categories:

- Digitized collections (documents, images, and audio-visual records) under the Libraries copyright or without restrictions for preservation)
- Institutional records defined as *archival* in the UM Common Records Authority Schedule
- Private donations which support UML's Archives and Special Collections mandate
- Research data produced by UM students, faculty, staff, researchers or research groups and hosted in the following repositories:
    - eScholarship (Manifold)
    - MSpace (Scholaris)
    - OJS
    - UM Dataverse (Borealis)
    - UM Digital Collections
- Web collections hosted in Archive-It and under UM's copyright

2.3 PURPOSE

The purpose of the UML Digital Preservation Program is to safeguard collective knowledge, which furthers the UM's aim to support the creation, pursuit, and dissemination of knowledge. Preserving records of enduring value ensures accountability, transparency, and the continued documentation of and access to historical, cultural and social phenomena that shape a collective knowledge increasingly inscribed in the digital sphere. To remain accessible to future generations, digital records require active preservation efforts due to continuous and complex technological changes which leave them susceptible to file degradation, corruption, obsolescence, failures, and other risks at the file, software, and hardware levels which may render materials inaccessible over time. Without intervention, born-digital records have a relatively short lifespan, ranging between 5-15 years. The purpose of the digital preservation program is

to extend the lifespan of records with enduring value and respond to technological issues to ensure longterm access to and re-use of stable and sustainable formats.

2.4 OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of the program are to:

- Ensure long-term access to records with enduring value to the UM community.
- Preserve records stewarded or hosted by, transferred or donated to, and deposited with UML.
- Carry out preservation actions in accordance with best practice and preservation standards.
- Generate metadata for preserved assets to support long-term discoverability, access and re-use.
- Ensure practices support the documentation of provenance, chain of custody, integrity, fixity and authenticity of digital objects.
- Facilitate transparency by making digital preservation practices and policies widely available where relevant.

2.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Digital preservation in the context of the program will be applied to records that support the program's mandate and objectives when preservation is not constrained by supporting hardware and software that may hinder the overall feasibility or viability of long-term access. Digital preservation processes are limited by preservation capabilities and practices, as outlined in the following supporting documents:

- UML Digital Preservation Policy
- UML Supported Formats and Systems

What can and cannot be preserved will be determined by a technical appraisal, which will consider:

- the openness and transparency of the records (i.e., the ease with which knowledge of the file format and its technical specifications can be acquired)
- compliance with current preservation standards (i.e., the formal adoption of the format as a preservation standard by national and international libraries and archives)
- the overall stability and compatibility of the format, including:
    - the degree to which the format is backward and forward compatible
    - the degree to which the format is protected against file corruption
    - the relative frequency of release of newer or replacement versions of the format over time.
- dependencies/interoperability (i.e., the degree to which the format relies on a particular hardware or software etc.)
- standardization (i.e., the degree to which the format has gone through a rigorous formal standardization process)
- alterations/damage to the records prior to their transfer to UML (i.e., the degree to which past actions have affected the records prior to ingest and compromised their authenticity)

Consequently, the selection and appraisal of digital media put forward for preservation will be informed by balancing the informational, evidential, research and historical value of the record (as these relate to the University's mandate), against the long-term viability of supporting software or hardware required to preserve the digital assets.

2.6 ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

The success of this program relies on the continued administrative support of UM and UML. To guarantee long-term access to UM records with enduring value, this program relies upon the UM and UML to offer steady, perpetual commitment to digital preservation efforts. This commitment involves continued investment in the program, particularly in the technology and staff that support it. As records are increasingly born-digital, investment and commitment into the program should be directly proportional to the acquisition and accumulation of digital records to ensure that staff, technological, and financial resources mature to meet growing demands for digital preservation support at UM.

While the program requires long-term investment, it also decreases administrative costs by supporting better record keeping practices as well as accountability, transparency and efficiency in work and research at UM and beyond.

2.6.1 REVIEW OF DIGITAL PRESERVATION STRATEGY

Regular scheduled revisions of the Digital Preservation Strategy and supporting documents are required to ensure that the program continues to be relevant going forward and evolves with changing standards and practices over time. The Digital Preservation Strategy should be revised every 10 years or when the University or its Libraries revise their Strategic Plan.

2.7 OUTCOMES

The program aims to enhance access to digital content by improving searchability, retrievability and access to UML records with enduring value in a standardized way. The program will require long-term investment, the outcomes will result in better, more timely and cost-efficient records management.