

Digital Preservation

Presentation to SeniorNet by
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Archives New Zealand

2500 public agencies with obligations under the Public Records Act 2005



NZD \$25m pa budget

125 staff

4 regional repositories/offices

96 kilometres of paper archives

2.4 million photographic negatives and prints

552,000 maps, blueprints and plans

21,500 reels of film

1,545 works of art

1,000 video tapes

40 Tbs of digitised records

1 digital repository



Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga

ARCHIVES

NEW ZEALAND

Department of Internal Affairs

Purpose

- efficient and sensible ongoing management of government business
- selection, transfer, description and storage of archived records
- accessibility to records relevant to the history and cultural heritage of NZ and our sense of their national identity
- to encourage spirit of partnership and goodwill envisaged by the Treaty of Waitangi



The tried and tested paper world...

- paper lasts for decades with little attention; writing on it stays legible
- can be stored for many years; appraised and transferred long after events
- only one original – either the agency has it or Archives has it
- have to go to a place to physically view it
- viewing restrictions managed by manually checking each time access is requested





An (un)timely reminder...





- Digital information lasts forever, or five years, whichever comes first.
- Jeff Rothenberg, *Scientific American*, January 1995



Digital behaves differently...

- enormous volumes of documents, data sets, images, video etc
- content often not static (eg website pages)
- storage media degrades relatively quickly
- file formats change relatively often (cf paper)
- can automate creation of much metadata/descriptive information
- searching produces much larger result sets and can identify connections between items far more readily
- potentially available 24x7 online
- can give the digital item to someone and still retain it yourself
- expectations in modern digital world are different



Transfer after 25 years

- Section 21 – *Every public office must transfer from its possession and control public records that have been in existence for 25 years [to the possession of Archives New Zealand ...].*
- Public Records Act 2005



Digital preservation - recovery



- Extracting records from legacy media held by Archives New Zealand
 - Floppy disks, CD-ROMs, Tapes
- Testing accuracy and effectiveness of emulation and migration
- Digital Preservation Laboratory
- Imaging disks and environments
- Partnership with universities



What is the point of digital preservation?

The ability to access content for as long as required.

Access means being able to:

- find the content
- extract information from the content
- understand the context of the content
- be confident of the history of the content



The purposes of metadata

- protecting records as evidence
- ensuring their accessibility and usability through time
- facilitating the ability to understand records
- helping to ensure the authenticity, reliability and integrity of records
- supporting and managing access, privacy and rights
- supporting the migration of records from one (preservation) system to another



Necessary ingredients

- Content
- Software
- Hardware
- Know-how



Storage

- CDs / DVDs / Blu Rays
- (why aren't you asking about floppies and tapes and punch cards?)
- Storage conditions – cold and dry and dust-free
- No guarantees



Storage

- LOCKSS – Stanford University
- Lots of Copies – Keep Stuff Safe

“..let us save what remains: not by vaults and locks which fence them from the public eye and use in consigning them to the waste of time, but by such a multiplication of copies, as shall place them beyond the reach of accident.” — Thomas Jefferson, February 18, 1791.



Storage

- The CLOUD

MEGA



Dropbox



Digital vs. *Digitised*

- Born digital eg created by a digital camera
- Scanning a book creates a digital copy – but can be re-scanned if need be



Naming conventions

- Consistent
- Clear
- No special characters
- If you can't understand it, how can someone else?



Golden Rules of Digital Continuity

- 1. Always hold two copies



Golden Rules of Digital Continuity

- 2. Only work on one copy



Golden Rules of Digital Continuity

- 3. Always document your actions

Records Description	Action	Date	Authorisation	Notes
Personnel files A-Z 1996-2009	Migration from Word 2003 docs Shared Drive to HR system by data entry	17/02/2010	Corporate Services Manager	Data spot checked by third party for accuracy.
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes 1990-1997	Migrated out of Word 97 files on CDs to Word 2007 on shared drive	27/08/2007	Administration Manager	Some format loss, with tables etc. Decision made to accept the change because it was still readable. 2 copies still held on DVD in south store room

Golden Rules of Digital Continuity

- 4. Make friends with your IT people



Stuff to transfer?



Contact the Alexander Turnbull Library
<http://natlib.govt.nz/collections/donations>



- Thank you.
- Questions?

