



Interim Digital Preservation Policy

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British Deaf History Society
2nd Floor, Empire Court
30-40 Museum Street
Warrington
WA1 1HU

Tel: 01925 632463

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview and history

1.1.1 History of the Service

The British Deaf History Society established its archives in 1998. When the Deaf Museum was established in 2006, the archives (at that time known as the National Deaf Archives) became an integral part of the Deaf Museum together with the Research Library.

The first cataloguing process took place during 2001-2004 with the help of a small grant from the Pilgrim Trust.

1.1.2 Re-organisation of the Archives and the Records Management Service

Following the setting up of the Deaf Museum and the BDHS office in late 2006, the opportunity was taken to reorganize the Deaf Archives in 2007-2009 by transferring existing archives into acid-free boxes and re-cataloguing with new accession numbers.

Unfortunately parts of the re-catalogued records were lost in 2010 through a serious computer malfunction and could not be recovered. This included the entire digitalized photograph collection as existed at 2009.

Although more than half of the re-catalogued records were saved on another computer, a sizeable part of the old catalogued files still remain to be converted into the "new" catalogue, along with all catalogue records completed since 2010. None of the digitalized photograph collection has been recovered and needs to be done all over again.

Cataloguing of all "new" deposits is running behind schedule and a lot of work remains to bring these up to date.

1.2 Mission Statements

- a. The Deaf Museum & Art Gallery (DM&A) is dedicated to managing the long term preservation of, and access to, the unique deaf historical resources in its care. It will endeavour to provide a service that meets the needs of its researchers and customers to the best standards of quality and value possible.
- b. As well as documenting and preserving the past, DM&A sees a key part of its role being the accurate reflection of past and present society. DM&A will aim to collect material relating to the many diverse Deaf communities and organisations, with a view to widening community engagement with these collections.
- c. The acquisition of any artefact, object d'art or archival material will be based on the need to widen and deepen the understanding of the importance of the selected item to be held by the DM&A and/or the Deaf Archives.

1.3 Service Objectives for the Deaf Archives

- To fulfil a custodial role in the preservation, acquisition and cataloguing of the BDHS archives, known as the Deaf Archives, which is part of the Deaf Museum & Art Gallery (DM&A)

- To promote and provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to use the Deaf archives and DM&A history collections to better understand, and appreciate their heritage
- To develop and to promote best practice in the preservation, enhancement and use of the Deaf archives and DM&A history collections
- To develop and to support sustainable partnerships where appropriate and to enable deaf communities and Deaf people to engage, explore, conserve and enjoy their own heritage
- To work towards a system of digitalization of paper and manuscript archives as much as possible and to digitalize all photographic and other image records as soon as possible.

2 Policy Aims

The aim of this policy is to outline what we hope to achieve in respect of preserving digital archives. It will also clarify what depositors, donors and other stakeholders can expect from the archive service in terms of digital preservation, and explains what the service can and cannot do with the resources, infrastructure and skills available at present.

It supports the services' mission statement above and should be seen in conjunction with the Collection Development policy and other relevant policy documents.

3. Statutory Position.

3.1 The DM&A endeavours to abide by all current legislation impacting on the administration of archives. It will endeavour to adhere to the best of its ability to the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts *Standard for Record Repositories*. As far as is currently possible it aims to store its holdings in accordance with British Standard BS5454 *Standard for the Storage and Exhibition of Archival Material*.

3.2 The DM&A recognises and is bound by the following legislation:

- Public Records Acts, 1958 and 1967 (as far as they apply to DM&A).
- Data Protection Acts 1984 and 1998
- DM&A will endeavour to operate within the legislative framework of the Data Protection Acts. All material in the care of the Archive that contains personal data relating to living individuals will be treated in strict accordance with the Act.
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2005
- DM&A will operate within the legislative framework of the Freedom of Information Act. Where appropriate, all material will be made accessible to the public under the terms and of FOIA, unless an exemption applies.

4. Scope

This policy and related guidance covers born digital records deposited or donated to The Deaf Museum & Art Gallery, including the Deaf Archives under its Acquisitions Policy dated July 2014. The BDHS has yet to develop procedures for the permanent preservation of all digital records

5. Appraisal, selection and acquisition

At present, the BDHS is unable to undertake the permanent preservation of any digital formats within the Deaf Archives and seeks to make potential donors or depositors fully aware of its position in this regard so that they are clear about the terms under which such records are accepted.

The specific conditions under which the Deaf Archives accepts the donation or deposit of certain digital formats are as follows:

Digital audio files

The Deaf Archives currently possess no digital audio files to its knowledge. As a deaf-related historical society, it sees no requirement for any digital audio files.

However, this is not to say that future deposits might indeed include digital audio files and the future preservation of these files would be considered in line with existing British Library or National Archives guidelines.

Digital image files

Where digital image files are offered for deposit, these may be in the form of electronic data format such as jpeg or GIF. These files will be contained in the Deaf Museum's electronic Picture Library until such a time as the DM&A comes up with a formula for digital preservation.

The Deaf Archives is aware of the potential additional value of the digital format (for instance, the image may be in colour) and so also undertakes to retain the digital image as an additional copy whilst it seeks to develop a more secure solution to its long-term preservation.

Other digital records

The Deaf Archives have received an increasing number of digitalized imagery or historical information through the medium of CD- or DVD-ROMs. These are currently not catalogued and will be subject to whatever long-term preservation initiatives the Deaf Archives implements at a future stage. They will be catalogued when this happens.

6. Preservation and storage

The BDHS is still to make a decision regarding identifying a solution for the long term accession, storage and preservation of digital records possessed by the Deaf Archives within the next 5 years.

7. Access

There is currently no access to anything in digital format held by the Deaf Archives. However, if it is known that a digital format is held and is easily accessible, Museum staff will make access via a PC available.

8. Standards

Standards and guidance which may inform future digital preservation strategies and processes developed by the Deaf Archives will include the following:

- The Dublin Core Metadata Element Set (ISO Standard 15836)
- BS 4783 Storage, Transportation and Maintenance of Media for Use in Data Processing and Information Storage
- The OAIS (Open Archival Information System)
- Code of Practice for Legal Admissibility and Evidential Weight of Information stored electronically

The following organisations are relevant to digital preservation and will be consulted in the process of developing digital preservation strategies:

- The Digital Preservation Coalition
- The Digital Curation Centre
- The National Archives
- The National Preservation Office

This policy was written in November 2017 and will be reviewed in November 2020 or sooner if circumstances dictate.