

# A DIY GUIDE TO CARING FOR YOUR DIGITAL CONTENT

## Why it matters!

- It is all too easy to inadvertently lose your digital files due to human error, equipment failure, or natural disaster.
  - Hardware, software, and data are also at risk of obsolescence and/or deterioration.
- Therefore, it is important to plan for the storage and backup of your content. An archive cannot preserve what it does not receive.
- Clear communication between you and your chosen repository enables the secure transfer of your digital content—keeping it safe and complete.

## Storage and Cloud Services:

Take advantage of free (or inexpensive) services for automated backup and data storage.

Some examples . . .



But be wary of cloud services that do not ensure long-term storage.

Such as . . .



## Build Connections...

- **Identify...** Create an inventory of all computing devices you use that may contain your digital content. Identify all email accounts that will be included in transfer.
- **Communicate...** Maintain good communication with your chosen repository before and during transfer. Work with archivists to screen all digital content for sensitive or confidential material. Share inventories of computing devices, content, and other relevant information as well as account details with your chosen repository.

## Build Habits...

- **Sort...** Organize email into meaningfully labeled folders and subfolders with logical relationships. Keep track of any sensitive or confidential material amongst your digital content.
- **Download...** Periodically download email and content from social media sites. Make multiple copies of your downloaded content, including email attachments.
- **Store...** Establish a comprehensive back-up plan for your digital content by:
  - Making multiple copies of your digital content.
  - Store copies in multiple digital locations (for example, on your computer, in the Cloud, on an external hard drive)
  - Store copies in multiple physical locations (for example, at your house and your workplace).

## Build Content...

- **Create your own space...** Create distinct user accounts on personal computers. Do not share user accounts for social media or email services.
- **Create your content with care...** Use file formats in common use. Use meaningful and concise file names. Do not use special characters in file names (especially commas).
- **Organize your content...** Be consistent with naming files, especially similar types of files. Organize files and folders in a meaningful, logical way.

## Commonly used file formats include...

- Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx)
- PDF (.pdf)
- Microsoft Excel (.xlsx)
- Text file (.txt)
- JPEG or TIFF (.jpg or .tif)

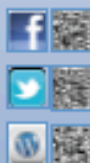
## What about sensitive and confidential content?

- Many digital collections contain sensitive and confidential content, such as medical records, legal documents, and financial records. Donors should also be aware of content on their computers that belongs to someone else, such as family members or an employer. To address these complications, please:
- Periodically survey digital content for private, sensitive, and legally problematic content.
  - Either create an inventory of potentially sensitive content or store it in labeled directories.
  - Share inventory or location of sensitive content with your chosen repository during consultations.
  - Do not necessarily delete sensitive information because archives can protect private and sensitive content.

## Build a Solid Foundation...

- **Know what digital content you have:**
  - Keep track of existing email and social media accounts, even if you no longer use them.
  - Know what sensitive information you have and where it is saved.
- **Choose email, social media, and cloud services that provide a way to download a copy of your content.**
- **Develop a plan for organizing and storing your digital content that can easily become part of your routine.**
- **Keep all of your old computers and other computing devices, like smartphones and tablets.**

How do I download my social media content?



Scan these QR codes with a smartphone for more information

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