

Wellcome Library Preservation Policy for Materials Held in Collections

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Wellcome Library

The Wellcome Library is one of the most extraordinary libraries in the world. Its print, manuscript, pictorial, archival and digital **collections**¹ are a national treasure and an unrivalled intellectual resource. The Library is designated as the national collection in its field.

Since it opened to the public in 1949, the Library has provided the raw materials to enable hundreds of thousands users to produce scholarly publications, essays, novels articles, documentaries, films, and artworks.

The Library is free and open to the public 6 days a week.

1.2 Overview

The purpose of the Wellcome Library's *Preservation Policy* is to provide a comprehensive statement on the **preservation** and **conservation** of the Library's collections. It is intended to cover all material in all formats. It provides high level guidance on the preservation and **life cycle management** of all materials in the Library's **collections** to help ensure the **authenticity**, **reliability** and long-term accessibility of that material. The policy does not currently include material acquired by Public Programmes for potential display within Wellcome Collection.

It sets out broad framework for processes and means within which consistent and replicable activities can be applied with the aim of providing an audited record that supports the validity and **authenticity** of the material.

This policy also sets out the Library's commitment to the **life cycle management** of the materials in its **collections**. Specific guidelines and procedures for each stage will be developed and reviewed as technology changes or other needs arise. The possession of a formal preservation policy is a checklist criteria for being awarded 'Designated Status' by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)²

The policy contains three parts that cover general statements, the management of physical and the management of digital materials.

2. General policy statements

2.1 Retention

Material added to the Library's **collections** are normally acquired with the intention that they will be retained in perpetuity. The preservation policy is part of the framework which makes this possible.

2.2 Access

The Library recognises that the use of and **access** to its **collections** is the prime purpose of its existence. The purpose of preservation and conservation is to ensure that material is fit for use when required by a user. All material will be catalogued onto the relevant Library

¹ Words in **bold** are defined in the glossary, see Appendix 1

² See http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//B/benchmarks_pdf_6849.pdf

system using appropriate standards, eg MARC or ISAD(G) and following agreed Wellcome Library practice. All material within its collections will be maintained for research, reprography and exhibition, whilst ensuring that risk to the material is minimised. This policy supports these aims.

2.3 Benefits of the preservation policy

The policy provides a public statement to readers and Library staff on how we will preserve material in our collections. This policy,

- Supports decision making and prioritisation when allocating resources for the maintenance of materials in our collections.
- Assists and supports the development of preservation approaches and methodologies for both physical and digital material.
- Supports collection decision making
- Allows the development of coherent preservation programmes and workflows.
- Reinforces accountability.
- Acts as a basis, and provide a framework, for collaborative activities.

2.4 Exhibitions and loans for exhibitions

The purpose of **preservation** is to facilitate access. The Library includes **preservation** considerations in helping to determine the selection of material and the frequency and duration of their use for exhibition purpose. This applies to objects displayed within the Wellcome Collections and when loaned for exhibition to other institutions. Material will be prepared for exhibition and displayed in accordance with accepted national and international standards.

A Conditions of loan and Loan Contract. for the exhibition and/or loan of digital material will be developed as part of the Library exhibition rules.

Borrowing institutions are required to comply with the Library's guidelines for exhibitions through the signing of a condition of loan agreement with the Library.

2.5 Disaster preparedness

The Library Business Continuity Team is responsible for ensuring that contingency plans and procedures are in place to prevent, react to and recover from emergency situations that may have an adverse effect on the Library collections. Details of Disaster Preparedness, Asset Recovery and prevention procedures can be found in the Wellcome Trust's Business Continuity Plan.

The Wellcome Trust Information Systems Department (ISD) are involved in Disaster Preparedness for IT systems and infrastructure that support digital collection materials.

2.6 Financial policy

The Library allocates a proportion of its annual budget to support activities to ensure that the preservation policy can be implemented.

2.7 Relationships – national and international

The Library establishes working relationships with other institutions and organisations in order to address its **preservation** needs. Co-operative preservation projects, and the recording of preservation information are two means of achieving this, eg The Library is a partner in the UK Web Archiving Consortium (UKWAC) and archives web sites from the UK domain that have a history of medicine focus.

The Library preservation and curation staff work with curators, librarians and archivists as well as related institutions and organisations including the British Library, the National Preservation Office, The Public Record Office, the Victoria and Albert Museum, Institute of Paper Conservation, United Kingdom Institute for Conservation and International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). See Appendix 6 for a list of relevant conservation/preservation bodies.

The Library is an Associate Member of the Digital Preservation Coalition and the Digital Curation Centre. See Appendix 6 for a list of relevant conservation/preservation bodies.

2.8 Standards

The Library will comply with relevant standards as far as possible and maintain a watching brief on relevant and appropriate standards as they develop and emerge and adopt any that are appropriate and considered useful. This policy meets the needs of all our activities, and includes material loaned to the Library for exhibition or display.

Because of the evolving nature of working with digital materials not all the frameworks we use have become formal standards. We will use 'best practice' frameworks, such as the Data Dictionary for Metadata Preservation (PREMIS), where the community is showing support for these emerging standards. See Appendix 6 for examples of standards referred to in this document.

2.9 Monitoring and review of policy

This document is available to all readers and Library staff. It will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it:

- Addresses current internal strategic developments.
- Meets the needs of the collections it serves.
- Reflects appropriate national and international standards and changes in practice.
- Supports Research and Special Collection staff in their collection development roles

All staff have a responsibility to implement **preservation** policies and directives approved by the Head of the Wellcome Library. **Preservation** and **Conservation** staff and the Digital Curator will take an active role in assisting and encouraging the implementation of the **preservation** policy.

3 Preservation Policy for Physical Resources

3.1 Principles for physical materials

The Library recognises that the use of and access to its collections is the prime purpose of its existence. The general policy is to preserve and maintain the physical and intellectual integrity of the material contained in the Wellcome Library to the highest professional standards. This includes the historical, textual, pictorial and physical content of the items and takes into account the rarity of the material, access requirements, and physical condition.

The Library adheres to the principles for the preservation and conservation of Library materials of the National Preservation Office (NPO) and International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). Material in original format will be preserved for as long as possible and access will be provided to original and surrogate formats as appropriate. Material with intrinsic value will be preserved in original format in perpetuity.

3.2 Handling & transportation

The Library encourages proper handling of collections by staff and users.

The Preservation and Conservation Section will provide training and advice on handling collection materials to all relevant staff and provides handling guidelines for users.

Since photocopying is a major source of damage to printed materials, restrictions apply to the copying of at risk materials and guidelines have been developed for the safe copying of other materials.

Procedures have been developed to ensure that collection material in transit within or between its buildings, or on loan for exhibitions is well protected and carefully handled.

3.3 Storage

The preservation of collections will be ensured through the use of appropriate storage facilities. This includes correct environmental conditions following the recommendations of BS5454, where appropriate, and ensuring the correct housing and protection of individual items whilst in storage using materials of the highest conservation quality.

3.4 Collections preservation

The Library believes that ongoing and routine collections maintenance will reduce the likelihood of serious damage to its collections. Collections maintenance includes:

- Monitoring and maintaining the correct environmental conditions in which to store material.
- Mitigating/minimising risk to collections
- Monitoring the condition of its collections on an ongoing basis and taking action to replace or treat, or reformat, as appropriate, individual items identified as being damaged.
- Using appropriate containers – boxes, sleeves, wrappers and similar materials to protect collections.
- Maintaining cleanliness in the storage areas and endeavouring to clean collections on a systematic basis using appropriate methods.

- Upholding the reputation of the Library by maintaining excellence is conservation practice

3.5 Preservation treatments

Preservation treatments are undertaken to prolong the life of material by **conservation** treatment or the creation of **surrogates** when collection material is at risk, damaged or deteriorated. All treatments are undertaken to recommended professional standards and all materials used in the preservation and conservation process will be of the highest conservation quality and will comply with British Standard recommendations.

All conservation treatment will be of minimum intervention and will be sympathetic, leaving the integrity and originality of the item unchanged. Each item will be individually assessed and conservation limited to what is necessary for its long-term stability and expected use. A conservation record of all treatment undertaken is maintained and is made available on request. The Preservation and Conservation Section work to the European Confederation of Conservators Organisations (ECCO) Guidelines and abide by the ECCO code of ethics.

3.6 Preservation research

The Library applies preservation standards for materials and procedures where they already exist and actively supports research and development of new national and international standards. The Library supports scientific and technical research to address problems encountered in the preservation of Library and archive material.

4. Preservation Policy for Digital Resources

4.1 Principles for digital materials

The Library is required to preserve two types of digital resources:

- Digital resources *created* by the Library e.g. images from the Medical Photo Library (MPL), organisational documents.
- Digital resources *collected by and acquired* by the Library³.

Decisions about the **retention**, **access** and **preservation** of digital materials at the **acquisition** or creation stage, will be made jointly by relevant Library staff and the Digital Curator.

4.2 Handling & transportation

Digital material acquired by the Library will be handled in a way that maintains the integrity of the original material. The Library will work with ISD to ensure that incoming material will be handled and managed in such a way that potential threats to the network or IT infrastructure of the Wellcome Trust are minimised, e.g. virus or malware threats.

The Digital Curator will provide documented procedures and training and advice on handling digital materials, especially at the acquisition phase, to all relevant staff and provide access and usage guidelines for users. This documentation is currently being written.

4.3 Storage

Digital material, and its associated **metadata**, will be stored in a secure networked digital object repository, where the hardware and environment is managed by ISD and where Library staff manage the material that forms the collections and the system in which it resides. See Appendix 2 for details of the long term storage of digital material.

The development of a disaster recovery programme is the responsibility of Wellcome Trust ISD staff who may consult with the Digital Curator and with other relevant Library and Wellcome Trust staff. Ensuring the security of access to digital materials is the responsibility of the Digital Curator in conjunction with relevant Library, Wellcome Trust and ISD staff.

4.4 Collections preservation

The Library believes that no single approach is likely to guarantee the long term survival of the Library's digital material and consequently, a mixed strategy – focusing on, **format migration** and **normalisation** – is preferred. Acceptable **preservation formats** may include text, XML or an 'open' format such as the Open Document Format. Other formats, such as films or commercial digital products, will be dealt with in a way appropriate to the needs of the material.

The Library will respect intellectual property and other rights in materials when seeking to preserve commercial and private digital materials in its collections.

The Library has two approaches to this issue,

³ Note: It is recognised that there may be some digital resources that the Library creates or collects that we may not wish to preserve in perpetuity. For example, no attempt will be made to preserve obsolete catalogue records, or digital files deemed unworthy of retention by archivists. Equally, digital resources that are created by Library staff in the course of their work, may or may not be preserved as part of the Wellcome Trust records management strategy.

1. Rights secured – for digital archival materials donated or loaned to the Library we will seek permission from the donor/lender at the time of donation to carry out any preservation activity, immediately or in the future, that may be required to preserve the material for future use, eg migration and/or normalisation.
2. Commercial rights – Where possible and practicable for digital commercial products acquired by the Library we may seek permission to undertake necessary preservation actions to ensure the future use of the material, eg migration and/or normalisation.

4.5 Preservation treatments

The Library considers **metadata** (Technical as well as descriptive) to be essential for life cycle management as well as resource discovery. **Metadata** will be subject to similar life cycle as the objects it describes. **Metadata** that supports these activities will be created, extracted or collected and permanently associated with the material it describes. **Metadata** will be created to published standards where they exist, to recognised 'best practice' where no standards exist or to 'best effort' as a last resort.

The Library will hold a minimum number of **manifestations** of each object so as to minimise the workload relating to validation and authentication of the material.

4.6 Preservation research

The Library applies **preservation** standards for materials and procedures where they already exist and actively supports research and development of new national and international standards. The Library supports scientific and technical research to address problems encountered in the **preservation** of Library and archive digital material.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Glossary

Throughout this document the following terms are defined as:

Access	use of collection material either by Library staff in a management context, by uses of the Library or another institution
Acquisition:	obtaining ownership or access to materials which then become constituent part of the Library's collection
Authenticity	An assurance that after conservation or digital preservation an object retains its intellectual content in an unmodified form. If intellectual content has changed then authenticity provides an audit trail of changes and explains the necessity for those changes
Collection	a set of materials in any format. Taken with other sub-sets of materials, comprise the entire Library collection
Conservation:	hands-on interventive techniques applied to the physical forms of, archive library and museum materials and objects to achieve chemical and physical stabilisation, in order to extend their useful life and ensure their continued availability
Digital:	electronic media used to generate, store, display, manipulate and deliver textual, numerical and graphical data
Digital curation	the life cycle management of digital material – acquisition, storage, management, preservation , dissemination etc. Activities designed to ensure authenticity
Digital preservation	analogous to life cycle management . The series of managed activities necessary to ensure continued access to digital materials over time to avoid issues of obsolescence
Digital resources	broad term covering all digital or digitised material held in, or accessible via the Library, e.g. digitised image collections, on-line subscription journals, web archives, on-line finding aids
Digital technologies	any system for recording and reading information - images, sounds - in computer-based numerical codes rather than in ' physical ' systems where information is directly stored on film or tape, and copies are of lower quality than originals

Format migration	process of converting a data from an obsolete structure to a new structure to counter software obsolescence, e.g conversion from Microsoft Word for DOS to XML
Life cycle management	analogous to preservation . The series of managed activities necessary to ensure continued access to materials over time to avoid issues of obsolescence
Manifestation	a different version of an object but retaining the intellectual content and presented in a different format, eg a poster of the Mona Lisa is a manifestation of the original painting. See also surrogate
Metadata	structured information that describes, explains, locates, or otherwise makes it easier to retrieve, use, or manage an information resource ⁴
Normalisation	the process of creating a version (manifestation) of donated material more conducive to preservation but retaining the intellectual content, eg converting a proprietary format MS word file to XML
Preservation	all managerial, financial and technical considerations applied to retard deterioration, prevent damage and extend the useful life of materials and objects. These considerations include monitoring and controlling appropriate environmental conditions, providing adequate storage and physical protection, establishing exhibition and loan policies and proper handling procedures, providing for conservation treatment, emergency policies and the creation and use of surrogates
Preservation formats	manifestations or versions of material that are less affected by issues of obsolescence and so are more reliable
Preservation master	a manifestation of an object held in a non-proprietary or open format and subjected to preservation actions, eg format migration , to ensure usability into the future
Physical	items in the collections such as books, manuscripts, paintings etc, analogous to 'analogue'
Reliable/Reliability	a reliable object is one that has undergone a set of managed activities designed to ensure it is as unaffected by issues of obsolescence as possible
Retention	Holding material for a specified period as part of a formally defined collection
sub-Master	when referring to film or video, analogous to the concept of a preservation master
Surrogates	a manifestation of an object in another format, eg a digital image of a painting, this can be made more widely available for use than the object it represents but does not replace the original object

⁴ NISO, 2004,

Appendix 2 – Long term storage of digital materials

The provision of secure, managed and structured storage is more crucial to the long term survival of digital than for physical material. Without adequate storage the necessary actions required for access and life cycle management cannot be performed and the future of the material is placed in jeopardy.

The Library considers **metadata** (Technical as well as descriptive) to be essential for life cycle management as well as resource discovery. **Metadata** describing digital material has the same storage requirements and will be subject to similar life cycle management as the objects it describes.

The Library recognises that most portable media are impermanent and represent a poor choice for long term storage, for instance media such as CD-ROMs deteriorate or are made obsolete by changes in hardware. As a preservation approach, portable media also represents poor value to the Library for the capital investment and effort required. The Library is not in a position to frequently migrate material from once CD-ROM to another to ensure its survival. Therefore material will not generally be permanently stored on portable media.

Inappropriate forms of portable media for long term storage include,

- Magnetic disks, e.g. floppy disk
- Zip disks
- Digital camera storage cards, eg SD, Multimedia, Compact Flash, memory stick etc
- Tape, especially older cartridge forms of the media
- Optical disk, e.g. DVD, CD-Rom, including so called 'Gold' CD-Roms
- USB thumb drives
- External hard drives, e.g. USB powered hard drives

Whilst the preferred transport method for getting material to the Library is via a secure external hard drive, portable media may be used for the transport of material from the donor/creator to the Library in some cases. Where such media is used in this way it may be destroyed or by agreement returned to the donor/creator once its purpose has been served for the Library.

Obsolete hardware will not be preserved. The Library considers this approach to be too technically challenging and economically unsustainable as an approach to its digital preservation. When, and if necessary, the Library may use an external data recovery service.

Appendix 3 - Sources

British Standards. *BS5454:2000 Recommendations for the storage and exhibition of archival documents*. BSI. Available from <http://www.bsi-global.com> Accessed 3 January 2007

Consultative Committee for Space Data System Standards, *Reference Model for an Open Archival Information System*, Blue Book, January 2002. Available from <http://public.ccsds.org/publications/archive/650x0b1.pdf> Accessed 29 November 2006

European Confederation of Conservators Organisations. *E.C.C.O. Professional Guidelines*. ECCO, 2002. Available from http://www.ecco-eu.info/ecco_contents.php?doc_id=170 Accessed 3 January 2007

erpaTool, *Digital Preservation Policy Tool*, Electronic Resource Preservation and Access Network, September 2003. Available from <http://www.erpanet.org/guidance/docs/ERPANETPolicyTool.pdf> accessed 28 November 2006

Paradigm Project, *Workbook on Digital Private Papers*, University of Oxford, Paradigm Project. 2006. Available from <http://www.paradigm.ac.uk/workbook/index.html> Accessed 3 January 2007

Research Libraries Group, *Trusted Digital Repositories: attributes and responsibilities*, RLG, May 2002 Available from <http://www.rlg.org/legacy/longterm/repositories.pdf> Accessed 29 November 2006

Appendix 4 – Standards referred to in this document

Relevant standards relating to conservation/preservation include,

General standards –

- Metadata Encoding Transmission Standard (METS)
- ISAD(G) General International Standard Archival Description
- MARC (MACHine-Readable Cataloguing), and its sub-sets eg UKMARC
- Open Archival Information System Reference Model (OAIS) ISO 14721

Standards for working with physical material –

- European Confederation of Conservators Organisations (ECCO)⁵ guidelines
- British Standards, BS5454:2000

Standards for working with digital material –

- Data Dictionary for Metadata Preservation (PREMIS) a best practice, not yet an ISO standard
- Dublin Core Metadata Element Set ISO 15836
- Data Dictionary for Metadata Preservation (PREMIS)
- Dublin Core Metadata Element Set (DC) ISO 15836

Appendix 5 – Related internal Library and Wellcome Trust documents

- Wellcome Library [Collection development policy and management policy](#)
- Wellcome Library Strategy 2006-2009.
- Wellcome [Library e-strategy 2005-2009](#)
- Conditions of loan and Loan Contract
- Archives & Manuscripts Donor Loan Agreement

⁵ See <http://www.ecco-eu.info/>

Appendix 6 – Relevant conservation/preservation bodies

British Library, National Preservation Office (NPO) - <http://www.bl.uk/services/npo/npo.html>

Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN) - <http://www.chin.gc.ca/>

Digital Curation Centre – <http://www.dcc.ac.uk>

Digital Preservation Coalition – <http://www.dcponline.org>

European Confederation of Conservators Organisations - <http://www.ecco-eu.info/>

Institute of Conservation - <http://www.icon.org.uk/>

International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) - <http://www.ifla.org/>

The National Archives/Public Record Office - <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>