POLICY

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Digital Preservation Management

Last updated: May 5, 2017 (Approved, v1.0)

1. Purpose and scope

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish how the SFU Archives and Records Management Department will address the preservation of its digital archival holdings.

1.2 Simon Fraser University supports the Archives’ mandate to preserve and provide access to both university and private records in any medium or format, be it digital or analogue.

1.3 This policy applies to all records in all digital media that are in SFU Archives’ custody and control, including: university records transferred to the Archives under a Records Retention Schedule and Disposition Authority (RRSDA) or deposited directly without an RRSDA; and private or non-university records acquired by donation.

2. Definitions

2.1 Archives and Records Management Department is used interchangeably throughout this document with SFU Archives.

2.2 Authenticity means the quality of a record being genuine, not a counterfeit, and free from tampering; it is typically inferred from internal and external evidence, including the record's physical characteristics, structure, content, and context.

2.3 Designated community means an identified group of potential users of the information contained in an archives' holdings; for SFU Archives the designated community comprises university staff, faculty, students, visiting researchers, and members of the general public.

2.4 Digital means data expressed in binary from (0s and 1s).

2.5 Migration means the process of moving data from one information system or storage medium to another to ensure continued access to the information as the system or medium becomes obsolete or degrades over time.

2.6 Normalization means converting digital objects of a particular type into a single chosen file format that is thought to embody the best overall compromise among characteristics such as functionality, longevity, and preservability.
3. Principles

3.1 Within the limits of its financial and staff resources, SFU Archives is committed to preserving and providing access to the digital records in its holdings through the ongoing development and evolution of a robust and comprehensive digital preservation system. This includes compliance with the prevailing standard, the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) reference model (ISO 14721:2012).

3.2 SFU Archives will foster a culture of adaptability as digital preservation technologies evolve.

3.3 SFU Archives will contribute to developing community standards and best practices in digital preservation.

3.4 SFU Archives will seek to form collaborative partnerships with other SFU departments as well as external organizations to leverage resources and avoid duplication of effort.

3.5 SFU Archives will demonstrate leadership in the digital preservation field within its financial and staff resources by using open-source software, contributing to standards creation, participating in scholarly and practical discussion, and developing tools and technologies.

4. Policy

4.1 Selection / Acquisition. SFU Archives receives its acquisition mandate from university policy I10.01. SFU Archives will ingest materials to the digital repository that fall within that mandate.

4.2 Access / Use. SFU Archives preserves its digital holdings in order that the materials remain accessible for the use of the Archives' designated community: university officers, staff, faculty and students, as well as members of the general public.

4.3 Risk. Digital preservation is a field in its infancy. As digital technology evolves, digital preservation practice must adapt. Failure to do so exposes SFU Archives to the risk that it will not be able to render accessible the digital materials entrusted to its care for permanent preservation.

4.4 Sustainability. SFU Archives will endeavour to ensure that the university supports its digital preservation activities and to secure the resources required for those activities.

4.5 Preservation approach. Preservation is a constant process. Through its preservation software, SFU Archives will perform normalization as much as is logical or achievable on the records it ingests. Periodic migration to new hardware/software platforms will also be undertaken as required and as a result of regular technology watch reports.

4.6 Trustworthiness. SFU Archives will create and maintain a digital preservation system designed to ensure the authenticity and integrity of digital records from their transfer to their permanent preservation in the digital repository through secure storage, fixity checking, and assignment and extraction of metadata.
5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 SFU Archives recognizes that digital preservation is a shared responsibility between records creators, the university’s IT staff, the Archives, and donors. The University Archivist will delegate digital preservation responsibilities to Archives staff, and collaborate with other stakeholders to advance its digital preservation activities.

6. Authority

6.1 This policy is administered under the authority of the Archives and Records Management Department. Questions about interpretation of the policy may be directed to the University Archivist. See SFU Archives' website (http://www.sfu.ca/archives) for contact details.