



Emory Libraries' Digital Collections and Preservation Policy Suite

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Introduction

The collection and preservation efforts of the Libraries at Emory are designed to ensure long-term access to an increasing volume of digital materials that have intellectual significance and long-term value, and to deliver digital collections in an environment that allows for ease of searching, browsing, retrieval, and reuse. This suite establishes shared policies and principles that govern different elements of digital collections stewardship at Emory Libraries. While individual libraries or divisions may independently manage digital content locally, these policies are intended to provide clarity and guidance for the management of digital content in centrally funded and managed locations.

Each policy in this suite has an assigned steward. Any major changes to these policies will involve consultation with other libraries whose content is preserved and hosted in centrally managed Emory systems along with technical staff charged with maintaining centrally managed preservation and dissemination services. As these policies focus on principles and standards for digital collections at Emory, they do not address operational processes and/or procedures associated with implementation, which are addressed [under separate cover](#).

The following is an explanation of the scope and purview of each of this suite's constituent policies:

- **Digital Preservation Policy**

The Digital Preservation Policy defines content designated for long-term preservation and governs the stewardship of such content in centrally managed preservation systems, which currently include Emory Digital Collections, The Keep, LIBSAFE Go, OpenEmory, and ETDs. The policy outlines the purpose and scope of Emory Libraries' digital preservation program as well as general principles to which Emory Libraries will adhere to ensure long-term access to its digital collections.

- **Digital Object Retention Policy**

The Digital Object Retention Policy pertains to content designated for long-term preservation and housed in the centrally managed preservation systems governed by the Digital Preservation Policy. It outlines situations in which Emory Libraries must remove or update digital objects in these systems.

- **Third-Party Dissemination and Preservation Policy**

The Third-Party Dissemination and Preservation Policy governs the distribution of Emory Libraries-stewarded digital collections. This policy outlines scenarios in which it may be deemed appropriate to share Emory's digital content with third-party preservation or access services and

enumerates criteria that those services must demonstrate to be considered suitable partners for content sharing.

- **Collection Development Policy for Emory Digital Collections**

The Collection Development Policy pertains to the Emory Digital Collections system, comprising the Cor, Curate, and Lux applications. The policy outlines criteria and considerations for the selection and prioritization of content for inclusion in Emory Digital Collections. The policy parallels and aligns with Emory Libraries' other collection development policies and practices, which support teaching, learning, and research needs of faculty, students, and staff and guide the acquisition of materials from which Emory Digital Collections draws.

Roles and Responsibilities for the Management of Emory Libraries' Digital Collections

Emory Libraries staff at all levels play essential roles in the creation and maintenance of the Libraries' digital collections. Cooperation within and across library divisions is vital to the success of digital collections management. The following are some key staff categories and a description of their roles in supporting digital collections:

- **Administrators and decision-makers:** leaders and policy groups at the library and division levels responsible for providing material support, approval, and advocacy for digital collections. (e.g., EUL leadership team, library directors, Collections Steering Committee, Special Collections Steering Committee).
- **Functional experts:** individuals tasked with making recommendations about the creation, management, and preservation of digital collections content and implementing decisions in consultation with content stewards and administrators. These individuals include experts in digitization, metadata creation, preservation, copyright analysis, digital preservation, digital platform use and management, workflow development, standard setting, and other aspects of digital collections care.
- **Content stewards:** archivists, curators, and others who manage the collecting areas to which digital collections belong and are responsible for selecting and acquiring digital content in line with their libraries' collection development policies. Content stewards also propose collections for digitization and collaborate with functional experts to make decisions about preservation, access, use, and description for the collections that they manage.
- **Technology support providers:** Libraries and university staff who develop and support the software applications and hardware used for preserving and providing access to the Libraries' digital content, and who monitor technical best practices in the field

Digital Preservation Policy

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Prepared by: Chris Palazzolo, Carrie Hintz, Kathryn Michaelis, Katherine Fisher

Reviewed by: TDS Leadership, Collections Steering Committee, Library Leadership Team, Preservation and Digitization Services

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Primary Policy Steward(s): Digital Preservation Program Manager

Purpose

The Digital Preservation Policy specifies the types of content that are considered appropriate for long-term preservation in centrally managed locations, as well as providing details on what information should be retained about that digital content. This policy is an integral part of the Libraries' comprehensive digital preservation program. This work is done in support of Emory University's mission "to create, preserve, teach, and apply knowledge in the service of humanity."

Mandate

Emory Libraries recognizes that its digital collections are an integral part of its overall holdings, and acknowledges the necessity of preserving those digital collections in a way that is scalable, programmatic, in alignment with established digital preservation best practices, and mindful of the financial resources and labor that have been invested in the creation and acquisition of these digital collections. Responsible long-term stewardship of digital collections is an extension of the sound curatorial practices that make Emory Libraries a trusted repository for collecting and preserving physical collections. Specifically, Emory Libraries commits to preserving its digital collections to support the following objectives:

- Scholarship and teaching: Emory Libraries commits to preserving and providing access to its digitized and born-digital assets to support instruction, research, and scholarship.
- Legal obligations: Emory Libraries honors commitments made to preserve and provide ongoing access to digital assets as part of agreements such as deeds of gift and sale, donor agreements, contracts with external partners, and other legally binding agreements.
- Institutional records: Emory Libraries enables the preservation of electronic Emory University records designated as permanent in [retention schedules](#) and identified by the University Archives as having continued and enduring value (see [Policy 5.21, Records Management](#)).
- Institutional integrity: Emory Libraries recognizes the role of responsible stewardship of digital assets in supporting donor relations, minimizing reputational risk, and facilitating future collecting activities.

Scope

Emory's digital preservation program is responsible for securing, providing the means to preserve, and ensuring long-term access to Emory's **permanent digital collections**. Digital collections suitable for long-term preservation include those in (or approved for ingest into) the centrally managed and funded systems that make up the Emory Libraries' **preservation ecosystem**. Permanent digital collections are those that have been designated by the Emory Libraries as appropriate for long-term preservation, and include content from the following categories:

- Digitized versions of physical assets held by the Emory Libraries
- Born-digital material acquired as part of (or entire) archival or special collections
- Digitized or born-digital **non-custodial collections** that the Emory Libraries have committed to stewarding through memorandums of understanding or similar agreements
- Electronic theses and dissertations
- Emory faculty research materials submitted to Emory Libraries' open-access research repository

Emory's centrally managed digital preservation systems will not be used as temporary storage facilities for digital files nor as temporary access platforms for digital objects not meant for preservation within them.

This policy does not cover licensed or temporary resources produced or disseminated by the libraries (e.g., reserve readings, licensed e-resources such as e-books or databases).

Minimum Requirements for Preservation Systems and Services

Emory Libraries' Digital Preservation Program may include software that is built and/or maintained in-house as well as vendor-managed services. In either case, a software platform or third-party service must meet certain minimum requirements to be eligible for inclusion in the Libraries' long-term preservation ecosystem. Minimum requirements for a digital preservation platform or service include:

- **Transparency:** The platform/service should offer transparency and disclosure of the policies and strategies it uses for preservation.
- **Business model:** The platform/service should exhibit economic sustainability and viability, transparency in business operations and costs, and provide a clearly defined service level agreement and/or terms of service.
- **Content Retrieval:** The platform/service should allow Emory Libraries staff to direct simplified access to stored content and metadata, either at all times or upon request, to facilitate migration out of the service. The service should structure stored content in such a way that it can be readily identified and understood when removed from the service.
- **Best Practices:** The platform/service provider should align with best practices for digital preservation from organizations such as the National Digital Stewardship Alliance (NDSA), Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative (FADGI), and the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC).

- **Ownership/Stewardship of Content:** The platform/service should allow Emory Libraries to retain and retrieve preservation copies of submitted digital content, and enable Emory to version, delete, or decommission submitted digital content per the *Digital Object Retention Policy*.

Principles

Emory Libraries commits to adhering to the following principles that guide our long-term preservation of digital collections:

- We will strive to follow guidelines and implement standards that are agreed upon by the digital preservation community (e.g. the NDSA's [Levels of Preservation](#), FADGI digitization standards, OAIS, preservation metadata capture).
- We will maintain a secure environment for the long-term preservation of digital content.
- We will capture and preserve certain essential characteristics of digital content necessary for long-term usability, including:
 - All of the content-bearing files that make up a **digital object**, including supplemental materials
 - Information about the relationships between the content files that make up a digital object
 - **Representation information** that makes the object interpretable to humans and machines
 - At a minimum, the descriptive metadata specified in the adopted and Library Cabinet-approved [Core Metadata Guidelines](#)
 - The copyright, license and access status of digital objects and/or collections
 - Information about the **chain of custody** of digital objects and/or collections
 - **Fixity** information about digital objects, which is captured regularly and monitored over time
 - A record of workflow events (such as ingest, migration, fixity checks, etc.) performed upon the content

Compliance with these principles is necessary for the Emory Libraries' digital preservation program to ensure long term preservation and access. Failure to uphold the principles outlined here may result in an inability to ingest a digital object into a preservation system or guarantee the digital object's functionality is preserved.

Digital Object Retention Policy

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Primary Policy Steward(s): Digital Preservation Program Manager and Digital Repository Program Manager

Purpose

Retention refers to a long-term commitment to maintaining digital objects throughout their lifecycles. Fully ingested digital objects in Emory's centrally managed preservation services are intended to be retained permanently, with limited exceptions as described below.

Emory's Digital Object Retention Policy outlines circumstances under which Emory Libraries removes or updates **fully ingested** digital objects in permanent digital collections within the Libraries' centrally managed preservation services. Such **versioning**, **deletion**, or **decommissioning** might occur as part of normal business operations or as Emory Libraries' missions and collecting areas change with time. Items disseminated to third-party services for preservation should also comply with the requirements outlined in this policy.

Additional policy and procedure regarding takedowns of digital objects in Emory preservation repositories is outlined in the Emory Libraries' [Digital Collections Copyright and Content Policy](#).

Deletion Prior to Full Ingest

Digital objects are not always considered fully ingested at the time of initial submission to a preservation service. A digital object is considered ingested only after any required post-deposit processing has been completed.

Digital objects that are *not* fully ingested may be deleted from preservation services at the discretion of the content steward or digital content manager. In some cases, human or system errors or routine processing workflows may result in the creation of digital objects that are accidental duplicates or are not fully complete. In addition, some digital objects submitted directly to preservation services by external depositors may be deemed out of scope after appraisal by a content steward or digital content manager. These in-process objects are excluded from the policies below governing versioning, decommissioning, and deletion.

Versioning

Where feasible, previous versions of an updated or edited digital object should be retained for administrative and preservation purposes, but only the most recent version of the digital object will be accessible to users. When this capability is not available, administrative metadata should be recorded to indicate that modifications to an object have occurred. Current [decommissioning procedures](#) are documented elsewhere.

A new version should be created when a digital object's essential preservation characteristics are modified. These characteristics are defined in the *Digital Preservation Policy* and are listed below for convenience:

- The intellectual content of the object.
- The descriptive metadata associated with the object.
- The copyright and/or license status of the object.
- The chain of custody of the object.
- The object's representation.
- Fixity for the object.

Versioning of a digital object should be performed only by a designated digital content steward, an **authorized depositor**, or a **repository administrator**. Fully ingested objects, because they are considered final, should be only formally versioned in response to significant preservation or access events. When feasible, the reasons for versioning the object should be recorded within the metadata of the digital object itself. In the case of significant changes to the object's intellectual content, it may be more appropriate to decommission the original version and ingest a new one.

Decommissioning

Decommissioning assumes the digital object's essential preservation characteristics will remain within the designated repository, but the content and metadata will no longer be accessible to end users (e.g., the public or the Emory community).

A repository manager and content steward may decide jointly to decommission a digital object that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- The content in the digital object no longer aligns with its overarching collection strategy; or
- The digital object is unnecessarily duplicated; or
- The digital object no longer retains its integrity, identity, or authenticity; or
- The right to distribute the digital object becomes unclear or unknown.

Decommissioning of an entire collection must meet one or more of the criteria listed above. In addition, collection-level decommissioning requires approval by the holding repository's administrators and any governance bodies with responsibility for the relevant collection and preservation service.

Before any digital object is recommended for decommissioning, reasonable efforts shall be made to ascertain that Emory Libraries have the right and responsibility to decommission the object.

Decommissioning decisions shall be recorded permanently in accordance with the documentation procedures for the relevant system and holding repository.

Deletion

Deleting a digital object means that the digital object will no longer be maintained, preserved, or stored in a centrally managed preservation service. Deletion typically entails removal of the intellectual content files and retention of descriptive and administrative metadata, including a record of the circumstances for deletion; however, when necessary, deletion might involve removal of the digital object in its entirety.

Deletion can only occur for fully ingested digital objects that meet one or more of the following criteria, as determined jointly by Emory Libraries' administrators and the relevant digital content manager:

- The digital object's [rightful copyright owner](#) has issued a demand or Emory received an order from a court of competent jurisdiction to remove the object from Emory systems; or
- Another entity is the rightful owner of the digital object; or
- Retention of the content poses significant legal, financial, or reputational risks.

If a recommendation or decision to delete a digital object comes from a party other than a content steward, the content steward must be notified and consulted as part of the deletion process. Before any digital object is recommended for deletion, reasonable efforts shall be made to ascertain that Emory Libraries have the right and responsibility to delete the object.

Decisions to delete shall be recorded permanently in accordance with the documentation procedures for the relevant system and holding repository. In a situation where all components of a deleted digital object must be removed, with no metadata retained within the preservation service that held the object, repository administrators should retain a record of the circumstances elsewhere.

Third-Party Dissemination Policy

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Primary Policy Steward(s): Director of Collections and Open Strategies

Purpose

To expand access, discoverability, and preservation, Emory Libraries may share its digital content with third-party preservation and access services. This policy outlines considerations for sharing digital content with third-party services while retaining institutional ownership and stewardship responsibilities.

This policy does not address the preservation of licensed resources, which is addressed in Emory Libraries' general collection policy; only digital content locally owned or stewarded by Emory Libraries is governed by this policy. Also out of scope are other preservation tools, such as those used for web archiving, which are not centrally managed as part of the Emory Libraries preservation ecosystem. Finally, this policy does not address which components of a digital object are disseminated to third-party services. The service under consideration may determine which components will be shared

[The proposal to join or contribute to third-party services](#) should be made in consultation with the TDS leadership and should be reviewed by the Collections Steering Committee (CSC). A Decision Document, and if necessary, a Business Case, should be submitted to the University Librarian and Libraries Cabinet for approval. Failure to seek approval may result in the Emory Libraries being unable to comply with the requirements of the third-party service, or a granting agency, if applicable.

Dissemination for Access

Recognizing that users may desire multiple channels for accessing Emory University's digital collections, digital collections should be as widely shared and discoverable as possible. Digital content in the public domain, or to which Emory University holds copyright, may be shared with appropriate third-party services. Digital content still protected by copyright, or with an unknown copyright status, will be reviewed for risk assessment as part of the approval process for sharing appropriate third-party services. Preservation copies of all disseminated digital collections will be maintained in Emory Digital Collections or an Emory Libraries centrally managed preservation service.

Emory Libraries will share metadata and/or digital content with third-party repositories and portals to further expose relevant Emory University digital content. Any requirements from grant or collaborative efforts for distribution of Emory University's collections should be vetted by the required decision makers using the criteria below.

Criteria for Choosing Dissemination Services

The following general criteria are used to determine whether Emory Libraries' digital content should be provided to a third-party dissemination service.

- **Open Access:** The third-party service should not put digital content behind a pay wall or be commercialized.
- **Rights:** The third-party service should allow for the preservation of rights metadata attached to the disseminated digital objects.
- **Facility of Ingest:** The third-party service's method of ingest for digital content should be documented and content should be easily transferred from Emory Libraries.
- **Recognition of Emory:** The third-party service should allow for identification of Emory University as the contributor of the digital content to highlight its contribution to the greater corpus, potentially leading researchers to more deeply explore Emory University's unique digital collections; digital content should be able to be grouped as Emory collections.
- **Accessibility:** The third-party service should demonstrate a commitment to -and compliance with- current accessibility standards, such as WCAG.
- **Ownership and Maintenance of Content:** The third-party service should allow Emory Libraries to retain preservation copies of submitted digital content and enable Emory to version, delete, or decommission submitted digital content per the *Digital Object Retention Policy*.
- **Protection of Patron Privacy:** The third-party service should not require personally identifiable information to use the digital content and should only report user activity at an aggregate level.
- **Protection of Intellectual Property:** The third-party service should have reasonable safeguards for maintaining the integrity of the intellectual content.
- **Search Capability and Functionality:** The third-party service should provide search and discovery tools that allow users to locate and manage their searches and the digital content.
- **Variety of file formats:** The third-party services should support the ability to export a variety of file formats for users to access and download digital content.
- **Availability of content:** The third-party service should make digital content available to a wider audience rather than restricted to institutional members.

Dissemination for Preservation

In some cases, digital content in permanent digital collections owned or stewarded by Emory Libraries may be determined to be preserved by a third-party service to supplement our local capacity and preservation services.

Criteria for choosing preservation services

Emory Libraries will evaluate a third party's capacity to provide preservation for digital objects. General considerations for choosing a third-party service or vendor include:

- **Transparency:** The third-party service provider should offer transparency and disclosure of the policies and strategies it uses for preservation.
- **Business model:** The third-party service provider should exhibit economic sustainability and viability, transparency in business operations and costs, and provide a clearly defined service level agreement and/or terms of service.
- **Content Retrieval:** The third-party service should allow Emory Libraries staff to direct simplified access to stored content and metadata, either always or upon request, to facilitate migration out of the service. The service should structure stored content in such a way that it can be readily identified and understood when removed from the service.
- **Best Practices:** The third-party service provider should align with best practices for digital preservation from organizations such as the National Digital Stewardship Alliance (NDSA), Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative (FADGI), and the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC).
- **Ownership/Stewardship of Content:** The third-party service should allow Emory Libraries to retain and retrieve preservation copies of submitted digital content, and enable Emory to version, delete, or decommission submitted digital content per the *Digital Object Retention Policy*.

Collection Development Policy for Emory Digital Collections

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Primary Policy Steward(s): Director of Collections and Open Strategies

Purpose

The Collection Development Policy for Emory Digital Collections outlines the criteria and considerations that make a collection appropriate for selection for inclusion and appropriate for ingest into Emory Digital Collections. Collections prioritized for inclusion into Emory Digital Collections should align with the collection development policies and priorities of the stewarding library; support the teaching, learning, and research needs of students, faculty, staff, and external researchers; and significantly meet the outlined readiness criteria for ingest and/or display in Emory Digital Collections. Although other Emory Libraries–managed public access systems are outside the scope of this policy, functional experts and content stewards across the Libraries follow the same basic collection development criteria and principles.

Selection of Materials for Ingest into Emory Digital Collections

Emory Digital Collections is EUL’s primary publicly accessible repository and collections considered for inclusion in the repository will support the curriculum, research, and teaching missions of the university and widen access and use of Emory’s rare and unique collections.

Content Stewards from each participating library or collecting area select material for inclusion in Emory Digital Collections that advance the curatorial priorities of their unit in alignment with established collection development policies and in support of the teaching, learning, and research needs of faculty, students, staff, and external researchers. Stewards should consider:

- intrinsic research value;
- rarity or uniqueness of assets/content;
- suitability for online presentation;
- curricular support and impact on student success;

Emory Libraries assesses these selections and prioritizes them for ingest into the repository based on both the value of the content and collection readiness. For Emory Libraries to consider ingesting digital collections into Emory Digital Collections for long-term access, digital collections should:

- Be unique or have significant research value or mitigate inherent risks for materials in analog formats. This might encompass intellectual content, carrier/format, or digital enhancements. This potentially includes preservation copies of rare, fragile, or unique collections for long-term access or data analysis, and materials that are at risk of being lost due to an obsolete media or file format;
- Meet the guidelines for descriptive metadata outlined in the Core Metadata Standards.
- Meet our ethical obligations and align with existing collection policies and standards, including Emory's Open Access Policy and donor agreements;
- Have a plan for user access that includes the potential for either making the material widely accessible, either now or in the future, or providing restricted access to rare, at-risk materials not otherwise available;
- Abide by relevant legal statutes governing preservation and distribution of these materials, including U.S. Copyright Law.

Glossary of Terms Used in this Policy Suite

- **Authorized depositor:** an individual, who may be internal or external to the Libraries, permitted to submit digital objects to a centrally managed service. The policies, permissions settings, and operational service structure of each repository dictate who is eligible to be an authorized depositor, the process for obtaining authorization, and the level of system access granted.
- **Centrally managed service:** A digital content platform, along with the policies, staff, and support services that facilitate its use, operated by a unit of Emory Libraries for the benefit of all library branches and, directly or indirectly, of the Libraries' end users.
- **Chain of custody:** the sequence of individuals or organizations that have created, modified, or transferred materials throughout their lifecycle. Chain of custody can be recorded at the individual digital object level as well as at the collection level.
- **Dark object/dark archive:** an object or set of objects not intended to be accessed by end-users and only available to a select few staff. By contrast, the Emory Digital Collections repository is a "grey" archive in which some material may be restricted at the time of ingest, with the intent of making it accessible in the future.
- **Decommissioning:** the act of discontinuing end-user access to a fully ingested, discoverable digital object in a centrally managed preservation service.
- **Descriptive metadata:** describes content for search and discovery contexts -- helps connect users to resources and provides important context for a resource once it is discovered. This type of metadata drives the ability to search, browse, sort, and filter information.
- **Digital collection:** an aggregation of digital materials managed collectively and based on provenance, function, format, or subject. These include digital materials created by Emory University, unique born-digital materials collected and stewarded by Emory Libraries and published digital materials that require local hosting and rights management.
- **Digital object:** an individual intellectual entity, comprised of metadata, content files, and may also contain supplemental files.
- **Emory Digital Collections:** a centrally funded and managed repository that provides long-term preservation and access to some digitized and born-digital items from the Libraries' collections.
- **Emory Libraries:** the five Emory libraries (Woodruff, Pitts Theology Library, Woodruff Health Sciences Library, Oxford College Library, and the Macmillan Law Library).
- **Fixity:** the property of a digital file remaining unchanged over time. Fixity is commonly monitored through the periodic generation and verification of values called checksums.
- **Fully ingested:** objects that have completed their initial deposit into Emory Digital Collections or another Emory Libraries centrally managed preservation service, and any

required post-deposit processing or quality assurance has also been performed on the digital object.

- **Ingest:** the automated or human-mediated process in which the components of a digital object's archival information package (AIP) are gathered and stored for preservation in a dedicated repository
- **Non-custodial collections:** collections maintained and managed primarily by their original creators or communities with archivists or librarians contributing expertise or resources to aid in the management and care of the materials.
- **Permanent digital collections:** Those collections intended for indefinite retention and designated by the Emory Libraries as appropriate for long-term preservation.
- **Preservation ecosystem:** the set of centrally managed services that have been implemented through a formal approval process, contain permanent digital collections, and meet minimum requirements for long-term digital preservation.
- **Preservation metadata:** information detailing preservation activities applied to a digital object in the repository such as system events, human-initiated workflows, or an audit trail of modifications. Additional information regarding the composition and encoding of digital surrogates specifically is recorded through technical/characterization metadata.
- **Repository administrators:** a subset of functional experts authorized by the permissions and policies governing a given centrally managed system to ingest and manage collections within that repository.
- **Representation information:** information about the structure and meaning of the bits that make up a digital object. Representation information is necessary to convert bit sequences into meaningful information.
- **Versioning:** the act of updating or editing a digital object that has been fully ingested into a centrally managed preservation service.

Approvals. Please sign with date.

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