



Institute Building, North Tce (corner Kintore Ave), Adelaide
PO Box 263, Rundle Mall SA 5000, Australia

Tel : + 61 (8) 8207 7287 Fax: + 61 (8) 8207 7207

info@collectionscouncil.com.au
www.collectionscouncil.com.au

Digital Heritage Collections

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The terms here defined are listed in alphabetical order. Unless otherwise stated, the definitions have been composed by the Collections Council of Australia following its national Summit on Digital Collections, convened in Adelaide on 16 and 17 August 2006.

Born digital	Information expressed in a digital format from the point of its creation can be categorised as ‘born digital’ (as distinct from ‘made digital’). For example, visual or literary expressions created using digital technology / digital media are ‘born digital’ materials.
Collections sector	The combined body of individuals and organisations that are engaged with collections activities. The sector includes the four major domains of archives, galleries, libraries and museums.
Digital archiving	<p>This term covers the identification, appraisal, description and tagging, storage, preservation, management and retrieval of digital records, including all of the policies, guidelines and systems associated with those processes, so that the logical and physical integrity of the records is securely maintained over time.</p> <p>There is more to ensuring the longevity of a digital collection than just preserving the digital objects within it. Ensuring the long-term viability of digital collections is what the archives domain calls ‘digital archiving’.</p> <p>Digital archiving covers the spectrum of laws, policies, procedures and methodologies that need to be in place to address the ‘whole of life’ issues of a digital object or record. Digital archiving subsumes within it the critical function of digital preservation. Though this approach to digital archiving is particularly pertinent to the archives domain (because their digital collections are primarily made up of ‘born-digital’ records), the</p>

• LINKING THE NATION’S MEMORY

The Collections Council of Australia Ltd is supported by the Cultural Ministers Council.
The office is hosted by the Libraries Board of South Australia.

	digital archiving approach is one that has valuable application across the other domains. The tools and skills developed can be shared with, and used by, other domains as appropriate. (CAARA 2006)
Digital collection	‘Digital objects that are selected and organized to facilitate their access and use.’ (NISO 2004)
Digital heritage	‘The digital heritage consists of unique resources of human knowledge and expression. It embraces cultural, educational, scientific and administrative resources, as well as technical, legal, medical and other kinds of information created digitally, or converted into digital form from existing analogue resources.’ (UNESCO, 2003)
Digital heritage collections	Collections of digital materials that, individually or collectively, represent significant (often unique) resources of human knowledge and expression.
Digital materials	This term for items that exist in digital format (whether ‘born digital’ or digitised) is used in preference to <i>digital objects</i> , <i>digital records</i> , and <i>digital documents</i> , following the opinion advocated by Professor Ross Harvey, Charles Sturt University, at the Digital Futures Industry Briefing hosted by the National Archives of Australia, 8 November 2006.
Digital surrogate	A representation in digital format of something that originally exists in non-digital format. For example: a digital scan of a printed page is a surrogate of the page; a digital photograph of a three-dimensional artefact is a surrogate of the artefact. Digital surrogates are created by the process of digitisation.
Digital universe	The entirety of all digitally-recorded information.
Digitisation	The process of converting information into a digital format. For example, taking a digital photograph of a painting, and scanning a literary manuscript, are both digitisation activities. Digital material produced by digitisation can be referred to as ‘made digital’, as distinct from ‘born digital’.
Domains	For the Collections Council of Australia, the four major domains of the collections sector are archives, galleries, libraries and museums. (Note that some international authorities refer to three domains in the collections sector because they view galleries (i.e. art museums) as part of the museums domain.)

Made digital	See 'digitisation'.
Physical	This term is used to refer to cultural material in non-digital format. Some physical materials may only ever have physical form, while others may be digitised to create digital surrogates of the original cultural material.
Users	This term is used to represent people who engage with the collections and programs of a collecting organisation, including audiences, visitors, readers and researchers. In some contexts, these people may also be referred to as clients and customers.

References

Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities 2006, 'Digital Archiving in the 21st Century: Archives Domain Discussion Paper'.

Accessible online at:

<http://www.caara.org.au/Publications/DigitalArchiving21C.pdf>

National Information Standards Organization 2004, *A Framework of Guidance for Building Good Digital Collections* (2nd edition), NISO Press, Bethesda.

Accessible online at:

<http://www.niso.org/framework/framework2.html>

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation 2003, 'UNESCO Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage'.

Accessible online via:

<http://portal.unesco.org>