Woodson Research Center

Digital Preservation Policy

Revised: February 2026

Primary Policy Aims

The Digital Preservation Policy of the Woodson Research Center (WRC) provides guidance and authorization for preservation of its digital materials, whether born digital or digitized from analog formats. WRC recognizes digital archival records as requiring thoughtful preservation actions in order to ensure long-term access, similar to analog records' needs, but more time sensitive. Steps must be taken to ensure the authenticity, reliability and long-term accessibility of these materials.

This digital preservation serves the needs of Rice University as our incoming University Archives are increasingly in born-digital format (e-mail, meeting minutes, still images, video files, data sets and more), and many manuscript collections contain electronic formats as well.

Risk Assessment

Our institution and its collections are currently at high risk as we are in the early years of our digital preservation program. We have digital collections with a wide range of formats, some of which have are becoming obsolete (e.g. 5" floppy disks, proprietary e-mail), and for these we lack important metadata, particularly technical and preservation metadata.

Needs Statement

Our digital resources are part of our collections, and as such, they require a digital preservation policy that establishes terms of selection and retention, as well as a formal preservation program to assure their long term accessibility.

Project/Purpose Statement

The purpose of our Digital Preservation Policy is to establish a long-term digital preservation solution for our institution that will assure accessibility to special collections and unique resources.

Goals and Objectives

In accordance with our primary mission to **support the institutional, research and public service programs of the University,** WRC plans to assure the long term access of our collections by continuing the digital preservation program which was developed in 2014.

Organizational Commitments

Our library supports our primary digital preservation environment, Archivematica software on a local server with geographically diverse backups. We will also continue to support relevant workstations such as the BitCurator station and software, Droid, BagIt, QuickHash as well as consulting on relationships with cloud storage vendors such as Amazon Glacier (for off-site back-up storage of nearline materials) and Archive-It (for website archiving).

Financial Commitments

Fondren Library financially supports Archivematica software and technical support.

Personnel

Sara Lowman, University Librarian – institutional support

Megan Scott, Digital Archivist - curatorial support (WRC)

Amanda Focke, Head of Spec. Coll. - curatorial support (WRC)

Rebecca Russell, Archivist / Librarian - curatorial support(WRC)

Norie Guthrie, Archivist / Librarian - curatorial support (WRC)

Traci Patterson, Archivist / Librarian - curatorial support (WRC)

Lisa Spiro, Ex. Dir. of DSS - advisory support(DSS)

Fondren Library IT - technical support

Rice Research Computing - technical support

These roles are more fully defined below in the section **Roles & Responsibilities**

Preservation & Quality Control

We use and update "donor guidelines for electronic formats" document to address not only preferred file formats, but information on our migration or normalization plans.

Preservation Metadata

Our project will follow appropriate national standards and best practices on the role, use, and creation of preservation metadata that fit our collections as established by organizations including LC, NARA, DLF, and others. We create standard preservation metadata as required by the OAIS model of information packages, including reference (unique ID), provenance (description in finding aid and/or structural metadata), context (item's relation to the whole)

and fixity (checksums). This is created using Archivematica's microservices for file format normalization and technical metadata creation, as well as including contextual description written by the archives staff.

Roles & Responsibilities

Our parent organization, Rice University, and the Fondren Library provide financial support for preservation of the digital collection by providing archival, digital curation, and IT staff, and by budgeting funds to acquire hardware, software, and cloud storage space to manage digital collections. The Woodson Research Center provides curatorial support (including the creation of proper metadata) for collections; prepares collections for ingest; and monitors collections within the preservation system. Digital Scholarship Services provide advisory services, guidance and review of the curatorial activities of the Woodson Research Center (including review of metadata, review of the ingest of collections, and monitoring collections within the preservation system.) Fondren IT provides technical support by consulting with the WRC and DSS in acquiring hardware, software, and cloud storage space to manage digital collections.

Training/Education

Our institution will invest in training opportunities that will meet the specific needs of preservationists, metadata specialists, systems specialists, archivists, and legal specialists. These individuals will be expected to train the rest of our personnel about various aspects of digital preservation. Our staff have attended significant SAA DAS training workshops and have passed the DAS exam.

Evaluation and Updating

This Digital Preservation Policy will be reviewed and updated annually by the Woodson Research Center and Digital Scholarship Services in conjunction with Fondren IT. A copy of this plan is available on the Fondren Library website.

This document is based on the NEDCC Digital Preservation Policy

Template:http://www.nedcc.org/assets/media/documents/SoDAExerciseToolkit.pdf