



The National Archives

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## The National Collections Strategy

### Vision

To support the development of collections within and beyond The National Archives by leading an initiative to identify public and private records, archives and information sources across England and Wales whose potential value has yet to be recognised and to encourage their preservation, safekeeping, use and reuse.

### Strategic Aims

The National Collections Strategy provides a framework for:

- mapping the current archive landscape to identify 'gaps' in existing collections
- discovering where important information is not being collected, maintained or preserved to facilitate access and reuse
- defining when, how and why collections might be deemed 'at risk'
- identifying weaknesses in collecting policies and collection management practices
- providing a focus for debate around determining the 'value' of collections and potential collections
- estimating growth in 'new' collections and assessing possible impact on local archive services and other 'memory' institutions
- sharing contemporary collecting models from across the cultural heritage sector
- nurturing collaboration between creators, owners, custodians and users of information
- exploiting existing networks and supporting local initiatives
- promoting active collections' development across all sectors of society
- building new partnerships and making new connections
- sharing best practice, expertise, skills and knowledge in a non-exclusive way across professional, institutional and cultural boundaries
- supporting investigation into the acquisition, management, preservation and long-term availability of digital information including costs and other resource implications for repositories of all kinds
- identifying and stimulating potential opportunities for increased funding and resources to ensure collection sustainability
- encouraging and assisting in the development of individual strategies targeted at specific sectors, themes, platforms or formats
- applying 'lessons learned' to the development and implementation of individual strategies
- recognising, celebrating and publishing success to as wide an audience as possible

## Principles

The National Collections Strategy is built on the following principles and recommends their adoption in the development of individual strategies:

- **Scope:** To document across all media and on all formats, key events, activities, decisions and policies that have had an effect on people's lives.
- **Diversity:** To encourage the recording of the lives of all individuals and communities to ensure a balanced representation of society.
- **Consultation:** To establish a process of open consultation and debate with all identified stakeholders and to agree and prioritise objectives.
- **Comprehensiveness:** To consider all potential partners and information sources, media and formats across the public and private sectors.
- **Access:** To facilitate public access to digital and other information, or to provide clear explanation as to why, when and how access might be limited.
- **Availability:** To implement mechanisms for making collections available to and understood by users, for example online or on-site guides offering advice, context and appropriate supporting information.
- **Information rights:** To acknowledge and communicate the legitimate information rights of creators, owners, custodians and users.
- **Inclusion:** To encourage the contribution of a broad range of interests, views and issues from all sectors of society, including marginalised and minority groups.
- **Community participation:** To support and encourage voluntary community participation in managing and promoting collections to a wider audience and in demonstrating their value for enhancing citizenship, identity and social cohesion.
- **Collaboration:** To overcome conflicting approaches to collection acquisition, management, preservation and access between collaborating partners and to avoid competition, overlap and duplication where possible.
- **Flexibility:** To be consistent but flexible in approach, recognising the varying impact of factors such as available resource, technical constraints and information ownership on the success of individual strategies.
- **Preservation:** To observe best practice, seek guidance and implement standards in preservation where appropriate and practicable.

## Measuring Success

The National Collections Strategy will be evaluated against a framework measuring the impact of the implementation and delivery of individual collections strategies.

## Context

The National Collections Strategy reflects and supports The National Archives' Vision by:

- *Leading and transforming information management* through the development and dissemination of guidance to ensure that the proper management of digital and other information contributes to business and research needs now and in the future.
- *Guaranteeing the survival of today's information for tomorrow* through new thinking in collections' development across government and the wider public and private sectors, and identifying preservation needs for securing the long-term management and accessibility of information.
- *Bringing history to life for everyone* through meeting user expectation in the range of resources available and the provision of tools to support access, reuse and sharing of information.