

What is digital continuity?



Digital continuity is the ability to use your information in the way that you need, for as long as you need. Usable means that information is complete and available.

Usable: your information meets your requirements for how your business needs to use it.

Complete: you have everything you need to use, understand and trust the information, including the content, context and all the necessary metadata.

Available: you can find what you need and you have the technology to open it and work with it in the way you need.

Usable = complete + available

Digital continuity in practice

Your information is usable if you can:

- **find** it when you need it
- **open** it as you need it
- **work with** it in the way you need to
- **understand** what it is and what it is about
- **trust** that it is what it says it is.

Digital continuity depends on understanding how you use your information to meet business needs, and then making sure that your technical environment and your information asset management support that business use. When these elements are aligned, you have digital continuity. The diagram overleaf illustrates this.

Why digital continuity is important

Managing digital continuity protects the information you need to do business. This enables you to operate accountably, legally, effectively and efficiently. It helps you to protect your reputation, make informed decisions, reduce costs, and deliver better public services. If you lose information because you haven't managed your digital continuity properly, the consequences can be as serious as those of any other information loss.

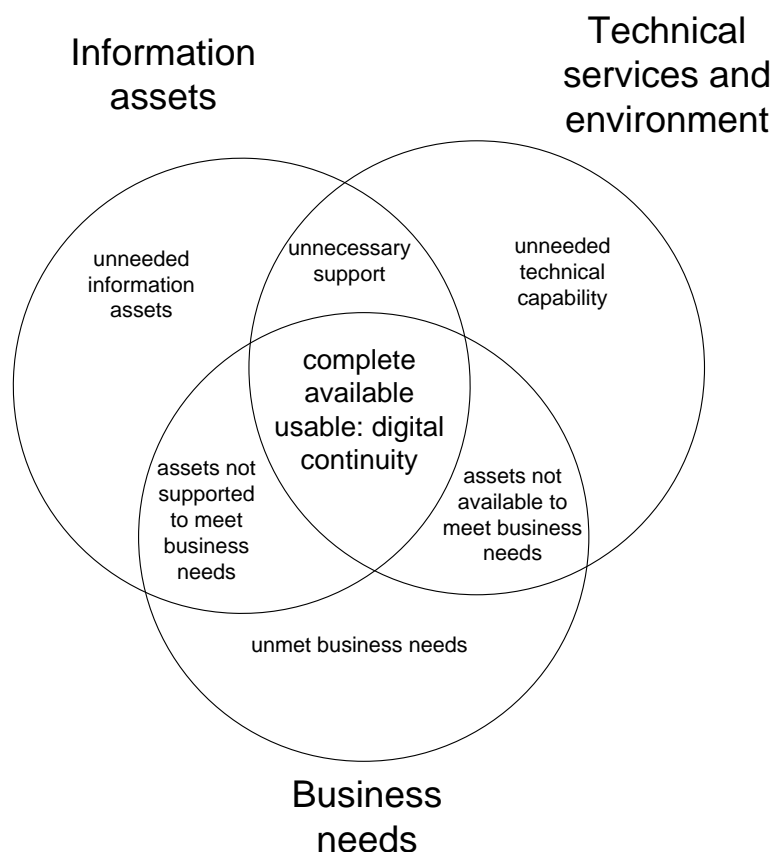
The digital continuity of your information is maintained when:

- you know what information you have, what it is about and where it is
- you understand how you want to use it, now and in the future
- your technology and information management processes enable you to use your information, and are agile enough to cope with your changing requirements.

This is illustrated in the diagram below.

Once you understand the usability requirements for your information and the technology and processes you are dependent upon to provide this use, you can effectively identify when change is likely to impact on your information and manage it to ensure that your digital continuity is maintained.

This process can indicate where you are providing unnecessary technical support for information assets with no business value and highlight information assets and IT systems you can dispose of.



Find out more about digital continuity at the National Archives Website:
nationalarchives.gov.uk/digitalcontinuity