Digital transfer overview

1. Managing the digital transfer process

We manage transfers of digital information and records (digital records) on a case-by-case basis and in stages, some of which are broken down into steps. These stages are:

- Transfer initiation
- Transfer planning
- Transfer preparation
- Transfer
- Post-transfer

Existing and new guidance material will be linked to each step below to assist with navigating the process. We take a modular and iterative approach to guidance development as our tools and methods continue to evolve. When your public sector organisation is involved in a digital transfer, we encourage you to provide feedback to assist with shaping the guidance and to share your experiences with others in the sector.

2. Working with us

The executive sponsor from your organisation should ensure adequate resources are made available for a digital transfer. A member of your staff should be appointed to lead the work required and it is likely that a small team with the relevant skills will be needed. These skills include information and records management knowledge, as well as technical knowledge and possibly coding ability. The team should be prepared for regular discussions, correspondence and meetings with us, particularly at the beginning of the process to discuss any issues and questions. These meetings are crucial for a successful transfer.

The whole transfer process is a partnership, from which both parties can benefit. The partnership approach also helps us and your organisation to manage transfers successfully within our respective resource constraints.

3. Understanding digital transfers

Many steps are similar for physical and digital transfers, for example, the use of disposal authorities and access authorities. However, the order of the steps for digital transfers does not always match that of physical transfers. One key difference is that much of the work which happens in the 'Transfer Preparation' stage for physical transfers instead takes place in the 'Transfer Initiation' stage for digital transfers. Detailed analysis work <u>must</u> be done beforehand in order to assess the feasibility of the digital transfer and then to plan it.

A distinctive characteristic of digital transfers is the repetitive nature of some of the steps. There are likely to be many recurrences of analysis being done and issues with digital records, metadata or tools needing to be addressed throughout the process. Initial test extracts or trial transfers are also necessary, similar to the sample checks that are done with physical information and records. This means that flexibility is essential when planning timeframes for a digital transfer.

The digital transfer process stages and steps are combined and described in more detail on our website in *Digital transfer process: A step-by-step guide (23/G24)*. The steps are also available as separate factsheets.

4. Digital transfer process steps

Step 1: Identify eligible digital records

You are responsible for identifying eligible digital records that meet the transfer characteristics.

Step 2: Assess your transfer readiness

We can provide advice and guidance on tools and methods which you can use to assess whether your records are ready for transfer.

Step 3: Agree roles and responsibilities

Transfers of digital records can be complex and take time; therefore, there must have an agreed understanding between your organisation and us about managing key aspects of the whole digital transfer.

Step 4: Create an extract

In order for us to determine whether a digital transfer is feasible, you must first create an extract or copy of a test or sample set of eligible records and their metadata for us to analyse. This process can also be used to prepare a full extract of all eligible records and their metadata when we have reached agreement to proceed with a full transfer.

Step 5: Pre-ingest analysis

We will run several internal analytical processes over your test extract to identify any issues that may affect ingest into the Government Digital Archive. Depending on our analysis report findings, you may need to repeat Steps 1, 2 and 4 or postpone the proposed transfer.

This analysis will be repeated for all your eligible digital records when we have reached agreement to proceed with a full transfer.

Steps 6-10: Transfer and post-transfer

We will collaborate with you during the transfer planning and preparation, including signing of a formal Transfer Agreement form and an Access Authority form if required.

Ingest of the full extract of digital records and their accompanying metadata into Rosetta (which stores and preserves the Government Digital Archive) is our responsibility with assistance from your organisation if required, for example, to facilitate descriptive metadata mapping to our Collections search tool (which provides access to the digital records in the Government Digital Archive).

Once the digital records have been formally accepted as public archives into the custody of the Chief Archivist, it is your responsibility to destroy all remaining in-house copies and versions.