



Community Archives
and Heritage Group

Digitisation & digital preservation

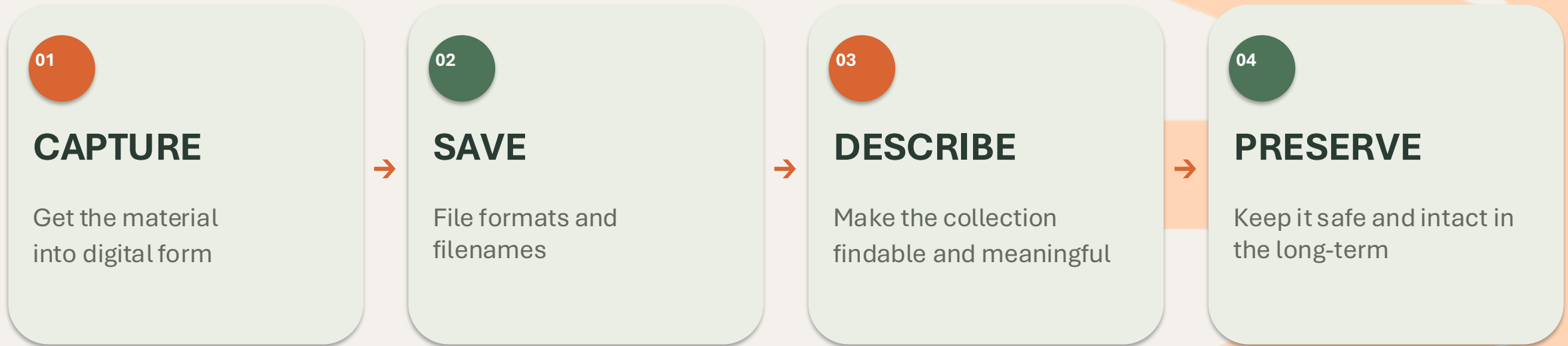
A practical introduction for community archives

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Communitysites • communitysites.co.uk

Four stages of the process

From creating a digital file to keeping it useful in the long term



Best practice + practical reality for community heritage projects

CAPTURE | equipment, settings, workflow

What to think about when choosing equipment and settings and designing a workflow



EQUIPMENT

Consider speed as well as quality

A mounted camera can speed up handling compared with a flatbed



SETTINGS

Scan once for multiple future uses

Digitise at as high a resolution as is practical and useful



WORKFLOW

Who can you get involved?

Scanning sessions could involve volunteers, researchers and contributors.

Rules of thumb: Photos: 600dpi. Documents: 300 dpi. Slides and negatives: much higher dpi. Audio: 48 kHz sampling/24-bit depth.

SAVE | make a master, use a copy

Think about format, file size and naming before you scan

PRESERVATION MASTER

ABC_00427.tif

High quality • retained unchanged
Prefer a widely supported, lossless format



REFERENCE / ACCESS COPY

ABC_00427.jpg

Smaller and easier to share
For websites, emails and ordinary use

File names: short, unique identifiers such as ABC_00427.tif. Not long descriptive sentences.

NOT: Old High Street Lewes c1920 - Mrs Smith's shop_USE_THIS_ONE!.jpg

DESCRIBE | from files to findable heritage

Consistent cataloguing makes the collection intelligible to others

	A	B	C	D	E
	Reference	Title	Description	Creator	Date
1	ABC_0001	Village fête parade	Procession on High Street during annual fête	J. Smith	1954
2	ABC_0002	War memorial service	Remembrance gathering outside the church	Unknown	c.1950s
3	ABC_0003	Station platform	Passengers waiting for the morning train	R. Brown	1938
4	ABC_0004	School sports day	Children taking part in the sack race	M. Wells	1962
5	ABC_0005	Village pond	View of the pond in winter snow	A. Turner	1971

Use shared guidelines for consistency • Community Archive Cataloguing Guidelines simplify the standards • AI can help draft catalogue records from existing file lists or analyse the images and produce draft descriptions

PRESERVE | the 3-2-1 rule and planning for disaster

3

COPIES

Keep three copies: a working copy and two backups

2

STORAGE TYPES

Put backups on different storage media: e.g. the cloud and an external drive

1

OFF-SITE

Keep one back-up in a different physical location

WHAT GOES WRONG IN PRACTICE?

Hardware failure • human error • lost logins
Software without an export facility

THE BEST BACK-UP FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS

Arrange an independent copy with a museum, record office, library or university

Practical goal: plan for the next generation of people and software.
What if our webmaster gets sick / external hard drive fails / current website goes down?