

Digital Archiving: Yes, You Need to Archive Digital Materials!

These days, most chapter records are in digital form. Consider photos snapped on phones, social media created by chapters, and digital newsletters sent to members and alumnae. These items, like their paper predecessors, should be retained in the chapter archives.

Dos

The Library of Congress has developed some helpful tips on establishing a digital archive. The officer responsible for the chapter archives should follow these steps.

Identify the digital records. Do you have emails, documents, video, and images in digital formats? Where are they stored? Are they in the cloud, on computers, discs, and on phones? Bring everything together.

Decide what you want to keep. As with paper-based archives, you do not need to keep *everything*. Keep in mind what you are retaining in the paper-based archives and apply those criteria to the digital versions. Retain final versions of documents rather than drafts. Review photos. Are they in focus? Do you have five pictures of the same thing? Pick the best and delete the others.

Organize by establishing a file structure, again patterning it after the paper-based archives. Establish a logical file-naming system; for example, for photos: 2017 October 25 CASA fundraiser 01.jpg, 2017 October 25 CASA fundraiser 02.jpg, and so forth. If you use photo sharing software/apps, use the tagging features to describe the images, including names when possible. If you can, save documents as PDFs to preserve the look and content of the material. To save social media posts documenting your chapter's activities, ask the account owner to request a downloadable file of all content posted to the account.

Back Up by identifying a place to establish your digital archives. If you use a service such as Dropbox, make sure the account is not a personal one but one that other chapter officers and advisors can access. Be sure to share the login information with the next officer. Best practices recommend a "3-2-1" system for backing up digital materials: keep **three** copies of your digital records on **two** different formats (external drive and in the cloud for example), with **one** copy stored off-site (the cloud can be considered off-site.)

Don'ts

Assume someone else is saving your chapter's digital records. Just as it is the chapter's responsibility to preserve its history in paper-based materials, you also have the responsibility to preserve its digital materials.

Expect digital items to always be there. Hard drives go bad; SD cards get lost; phones and cameras break. Establish a process to save digital records on a regular basis.

Keep passwords and usernames for chapter cloud storage to yourself. Make sure that your advisor, advisory board, or facility corporation officers have the information on hand to access the digital archives. Remember these items belong to the chapter and those following you need to be able to access these materials.