

# **Selection Policy for the National Records of Scotland Web Continuity Service**

**Version 2.0  
July 2023**

**Document Control**

Title	<b>Selection Policy for the National Records of Scotland Web Continuity Service</b>
Prepared By	<b>Lynn Bruce, Web Archivist</b>
Approved By	<b>Laura Mitchell, Director of Information and Records Services and Deputy Keeper of the Records of Scotland</b>
Date of Approval	<b>13/07/2023</b>
Version Number	<b>2.0</b>
Review Frequency	<b>Every 3 years</b>
Next Review Date	<b>July 2026</b>

**Document Owner**

This document is owned by

Name	Role	Team / Branch	Directorate
Lynn Bruce	Web Archivist	Digital Records Unit	IRS

**Status Control**

Version	Issue Date	Status	Prepared By	Role	Reason for Amendment
1.1		Draft	Lynn Bruce	Web Archivist	Review and update on 2019 policy overdue
1.2	05/01/2023	Draft	Lynn Bruce	Web Archivist	Amendments by G Stewart and I Gray
1.3	09/01/2023	Draft	Lynn Bruce	Web Archivist	Amendments by G Stewart and I Gray
1.4	12/01/2023	Draft	Lynn Bruce	Web Archivist	Amendments by S Corrigall
1.5	08/01/2023	Draft	Lynn Bruce	Web Archivist	Amendments by L Mitchell

**Document Reviewers**

The document is required to be reviewed by:

Role	Sign-off Required(Y/N)
Garth Stewart, Head of Digital Records Unit	N
Iain Gray, Head of Information Risk, Security and Governance	N
Susan Corrigall, Head of Preservation	N
Laura Mitchell, Director of Information and Records Services	Y

**Distribution List**

This document has been distributed to:

Role
Various. Document published on the NRS Corporate Website.

**Amendment Suggestion**If you have suggested amendments please make them to [digital\\_records@nrscotland.gov.uk](mailto:digital_records@nrscotland.gov.uk).

## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy has been approved by the Director of Information and Record Services/Deputy Keeper of the Records of Scotland. It supports that part of the National Records of Scotland's mission statement which says that: 'We collect, preserve and produce information about Scotland's people and history and make it available to inform present and future generations.'

## 2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy provides background to the NRS Web Continuity Service (the Service); what it is and does; how websites are selected for archiving; and the wider professional environment in which this Service resides. The policy is primarily intended as an articulation of the Service's collecting scope.
- 2.2 This policy corresponds with the NRS [Collection Development Policy](#). The Collection Development Policy articulates the general principles that underpin the selection of records to add to the national archival collection, and the detailed statement of our collecting and selection policies across various formats and subjects.
- 2.3 The NRS Collections Development Policy defines 'record' as 'anything in which information is recorded in any form'. Websites are the primary mechanism for disseminating information and delivering public services. They function as the dynamic interface between state and citizen. The NRS Web Continuity Service enables NRS to add these records to the national archival collection.

## 3 Selection of Web Records

- 3.1 NRS archives websites created and owned by organisations which fall within NRS's statutory and strategic collecting remit as outlined in the NRS [Collection Development Policy](#), including:
- the Scottish Government;
  - the Scottish Parliament;
  - Scottish public authorities who transfer records to NRS;
  - the Scottish Courts;
  - Scottish Public Inquiries;
  - private organisations who deposit archival records with NRS.
- 3.2 NRS will prioritise the capture of the following types of websites:
- Main corporate websites which document core business, functions and activities, particularly those of the Scottish Government and its associated bodies;

- Websites which are considered 'at risk' from closing or disappearing e.g. websites which have not been updated for a number of years, websites of defunct organisations; websites relating to resources, initiatives or events which are subject to change/closure;
- Websites which contain a large amount of unique information that is not available in any other form e.g. interface for delivery of a digital public service, website dedicated to resources on a specific subject etc.

Views and recommendations from website owners on which of their websites should be archived permanently will be considered.

- 3.3 Our intention is to create a representative archival record of the website, not to attempt to preserve every change to it. NRS will therefore archive most selected websites between 1 and 2 times yearly, however some websites may be archived up to 4 times yearly. NRS may also archive websites as they undergo significant changes. The rate and timing of archiving will be determined by NRS. Website owners may request short notice captures, however the enactment of these will be determined by NRS.
- 3.4 NRS will also seek to make captures at short notice where websites change in response to extraordinary events, e.g. changes in the machinery of government, national events, changes to legislation etc. For example, NRS undertook additional collecting to document the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II. For practical reasons, such as staffing capacity, these captures may not be quality assured to the same standard as regular captures.
- 3.5 Other guiding principles which NRS will consider in determining websites for capture, and frequency, are:
- Extent to which information on the website is updated;
  - The technical challenge that may arise with archiving the website;
  - Whether the website(s) has been archived by another body e.g. National Library of Scotland.
- 3.6 NRS will not archive the websites of organisations that have a presence in Scotland but whose website covers the entire UK and is archived by [The National Archives](#).
- 3.7 An up-to-date list of websites which have been archived by NRS will be published on <https://webarchive.nrscotland.gov.uk/a-to-z>
- 3.8 Prior to the launch of the Web Continuity Service in 2017, NRS accessioned a series of 'flat file' copies of several websites. These files represent a copy of these websites' content (e.g. HTML pages, images,

stylesheets, PDFs, JavaScript objects etc). These flat files were accessioned by NRS between 2000 and 2016, and will continue to be preserved. However, the challenges of preservation and access presented by these types of files means that we will not accept any further deposits of flat file websites.

- 3.9 NRS is aware of the archival value of social media accounts, such as Twitter and YouTube. NRS is planning to develop our collecting capabilities in this area and will formalise this in a future Social Media Collection Policy.
- 3.10 The NRS Web Continuity Working Group will convene at least every 6 months to review these criteria, the selection of websites we archive, and the performance of the Service. The participants who form this group are described in Appendix 1.

#### **4 Permissions and Intellectual Property**

- 4.1 NRS will not archive any website without prior permission from the website owner. A representative from the organisation will be asked to complete a short questionnaire on the structure and management of the website and confirm permission for capture. This process may take place independently of and, in certain cases, prior to any wider transfer agreement discussions with NRS. However, the Web Continuity Service will liaise with Archive Depositor Liaison (ADL) colleagues throughout this process. Web archiving will also form part of an organisation's transfer agreement with NRS. This model enables NRS to manage the unique risks that time and change impose on websites by ensuring that arrangements for web archiving can be swiftly established.
- 4.2 Ownership of all archived content will rest with website owners. Where the website is subject to publicity rights, privacy rights, or other legal or intellectual interests, website owners will also bear responsibility.
- 4.3 NRS will only archive content which is in the public domain. As a rule, we will not attempt to capture anything which resides behind a firewall/password/user registration process.
- 4.4 Websites archived by NRS may contain personal data and special categories of personal data as defined by the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). Types of data include but are not limited to:
- basic personal identifiers;
  - personal characteristics;
  - education and employment data;
  - criminal offence data and information about court proceedings;

- personal experiences, interests, activities or beliefs of data subjects in news items, video and audio recordings and blogs which they have chosen to make public on the collected websites.

4.5 Through the permissions process, we ask website owners to inform us if all or any parts of a website should not be archived because this would contravene data protection principles. If the content in question is deemed worthy of permanent preservation, NRS may make arrangements to have it transferred to our archive in another way, for public access at a time when the content's sensitivity has fallen away.

4.6 NRS will not capture content for which the website owner does not have copyright permission. Some of our clients' websites may contain a high proportion of content that is subject to private copyright and which therefore may make web archiving impractical. In due course, we will document in our archive catalogue any special arrangement or situation where all or certain parts websites have not been archived due to permissions and/or intellectual property factors.

4.7 NRS operates a takedown function should material need to be removed from the NRS Web Archive upon receipt of a complaint or request to do so. The circumstances and analysis procedure for this are set out in our [Records Reclosure and Takedown Policy](#).

## 5 Using or citing NRS Web Archive content

5.1 If a user wishes to use or cite any piece of content from the NRS Web Archive for reproduction, distribution, or other use, they should adhere to the terms and conditions as detailed within the archived website. In addition, they should include reference to the NRS Web Archive in their citations as follows: 'Archived in the NRS Web Archive at <https://webarchive.nrscotland.gov.uk/>'.

5.2 NRS does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of archived websites' content.

## 6 Wider Collaboration

6.1 NRS is conscious of the innovative global web archiving professional sector and actively participates in this sector. We work closely with our local partners, including the National Library of Scotland, to advise website owners on the archiving process and website design, and take steps to ensure that our goals and ambition are aligned as efficiently and effectively as possible. We also work with other national and international institutions – through forums such as the Digital

Preservation Coalition – to ensure that web archiving and continuity continues to develop, remains visible, and has impact.

- 6.2 NRS is also aware of the research community that is increasingly using web archive collections as sources for data-driven analysis. In time, NRS hopes to make our own collections available to this growing community and contribute to the exciting opportunities it is creating.

**July 2023**

## **7 Appendix 1: Composition of NRS Web Continuity Working Group**

- 7.1 Every 6 months, NRS will convene the working group to review progress of the Web Continuity Service; monitor the realisation of benefits to our stakeholders; and advise on selection of websites for archiving.
- 7.2 This group will consist of the following NRS staff members:
- Head of Digital Records Unit
  - Web Archivist
  - Web Continuity Assistant
  - Representatives from each part of NRS Archive Depositor Liaison Branch (Court & Legal records, Government records, Private records)
  - No less than two representatives from our depositors