

Selection Policy for the National Records of Scotland Web Continuity Service

Purpose

1. This policy has been approved by the 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." The policy also contributes to the vision outlined in our corporate strategy, "We will be a trusted and innovative organisation, with a focus on continuously improving our customer services, and especially our digital services."
2. 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.

Context

3. NRS receives and accessions archival records from stakeholder bodies under the provisions of the Public Records (Scotland) Act 1937 (PRSA 1937); the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 (PRSA 2011); the Inquiries (Scotland) Rules 2007; by administrative application of the Public Records Act, 1958 s.3(8) (PRA 1958); and, in the case of private records, under the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985 (s.18 (2)). Bodies that transfer records to NRS under these provisions include the Scottish Government, the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Courts, Public Inquiries, a selection of private owners, and public authorities who are named under the Schedule of the PRSA 2011 and whose main archive is NRS. In this context, 'record' means anything in which information is recorded in any form (Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011, s.13(1)), including websites.
4. In line with government policy, the Scottish Government and our other record creating stakeholders have embraced websites as the primary mechanism for disseminating information and delivering public services. Websites, particularly openly-accessible public authority websites, function as the dynamic interface between state and citizen, and are increasingly acknowledged as trusted sources of official information. As web technology and services evolve, and as public expectations on long-term access to online information increase, this position will only strengthen.
5. These types of website are unique pieces of the public record, and thus they fall within NRS's statutory and strategic collecting remit. The NRS Web Continuity Service enables NRS to collect these websites as public records, and also allows us to archive selected websites of private owners who deposit archival records with us, as part of the wider historical record of Scotland. It also provides an opportunity for an owner of a website to neatly connect their site with archived content, helping to maintain access to online information.

Scope of the NRS Web Archive

6. The NRS Web Archive is comprised of websites created and owned by organisations which fall within NRS's statutory and strategic collecting remit, 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.
7. NRS will not archive the websites of organisations who have a presence in Scotland but whose website covers the entire UK and is archived by [The National Archives](#).

8. NRS aims to archive copies of approximately 140 websites yearly, though this figure may vary. NRS will mostly archive target websites between 1 and 2 times yearly, however some websites may be archived up to 4 times yearly. This rate of archiving will be agreed with the website owner, but our intention is to create a representative archival record of the site, not to attempt to preserve every change to it.
9. NRS will deliver this Service within resource and financial limits. In order to realise maximum benefit and value, NRS will prioritise the capture of the following types of websites that are created and owned by our stakeholders as outlined in paragraph 6:
 - The main corporate sites of stakeholders which document their 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. historic sites 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 special subject etc.
10. Most captures will be set to an agreed schedule. NRS will also maintain a capacity to make captures at short notice in relation to extraordinary events, e.g. changes in the machinery of government, national elections, changes to legislation etc. Website owners may request such captures at short notice, however the enactment of these will be subject to NRS discretion.
11. Views and recommendations from website owners on which of their sites should be archived permanently will be considered.
12. Other guiding principles which NRS will consider in determining sites for capture and the frequency of their capture, 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.
13. Social media is currently out with the scope of this Service
14. These principles are guided by [NRS Record Policies](#). They will help influence our selection of sites, and at what frequency these sites are captured. The NRS Web Continuity Working Group will convene quarterly 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.

Permissions and Intellectual Property

15. For organisations which directly deposit their archival records with NRS, permission to archive their website will form part of their record transfer agreement with NRS. A representative from the organisation will be requested to complete a short questionnaire on the structure and management of the website, for operational and legal purposes. Organisations who do not yet have an existing relationship with NRS, but whose website is selected for archiving, will also be asked to complete the same questionnaire and confirm permission for capture. This permissions model ensures that all archived content can be freely made available online to users.
16. Ownership and responsibility for all archived content will rest with website owners. The website may also be subject to publicity rights, privacy rights, or other legal interests. NRS will only archive content which is in the public domain, and will not attempt to capture anything which resides behind a firewall/password/user registration process, nor which is known to contain sensitive or personal information. The service will also not capture websites where the website

owner does not have copyright permission for all content on the site. The Service will not capture content from organisations' intranets or extranets.

17. 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 <http://webarchive.nrscotland.gov.uk/>".
18. NRS will not accept responsibility for the accuracy of archived websites' content.
19. 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](#).

Wider context

20. NRS is conscious of the innovative global web archiving professional sector, and of the institutions who are engaged in this activity across the UK and Ireland. NRS will actively participate in this sector. We will work closely with our local partners, including the National Library of Scotland, to advise website owners on the archiving process and site design, and take steps to ensure that our goals and ambition are aligned as efficiently and effectively as possible. We will also work with other national institutions to ensure that web archiving and continuity achieves maximum impact.
21. 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.
22. This policy will be reviewed annually until 2019, after which it will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years.

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Appendix 1: Composition of NRS Web Continuity Working Group

Each quarter, NRS will convene a 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.

This group will consist of the following NRS staff members:

- Head of Digital Records Unit
- Web Archivist
- Web Continuity Assistant
- A representative from Government Records Branch
- A representative from Court & Legal Records Branch
- A representative from Private Records Branch
- An external representative from one of our stakeholder bodies

Appendix 2: In-scope Websites for the Web Continuity Service

NRS will publish a list of those websites we have selected for capture as soon as possible. This list will be published here, and will be subject to quarterly review.