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apac

Association of
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Collections

Digital Preservation Series

PART 2: OPTIONS FOR DIGITAL
PRESERVATION



Prepared by APAC Digital Preservation
Working Group

OPTIONS FOR DIGITAL PRESERVATION

There are a number of different options available when it comes to selecting a specific digital preservation service/solution for your organisation. These vary in terms of cost, features, documentation availability and compliance with existing digital preservation standards.

It is important to clearly identify what your requirements are and whether the potential service/solution can meet those requirements.

Some questions to ask yourself might include:

- Do you need storage as well as preservation capability?
- What's your budget?
- Are you looking for a service that will also provide access to content through a front-end?
- How varied are the types of digital content you wish to preserve and what is the volume?
- Will you need technical support?
- What about an exit strategy?

As discussed in [Making the Case](#) section 1.5 of the [National Theatre Digital Preservation Case Study](#), writing a Request for Information (RFI) can be very helpful in identifying appropriate suppliers. One of the key decisions you will make is whether to select an open-source or proprietary system. One of the key decisions you will make is whether to select an open-source or proprietary system.

OPTION 1: OPEN-SOURCE

Open-source options are cheaper (can be free) but they will require IT expertise in order to implement and develop, particularly if you are looking for bespoke functionality. Open-source systems developed by a user community may be more user-friendly and simpler to tailor to the requirements of your own organisation. You should however consider whether you have the staff know-how to manage a product that may have no support beyond basic online documentation or user forum.

OPTION 2: PROPRIETARY/COMMERCIAL

Proprietary/commercial systems will be costlier but may offer 'out of the box' functionality with little IT input needed and dedicated user support teams on hand. This is likely to make day-to-day use and succession planning much more straightforward. Proprietary systems may also be able to demonstrate compliance with particular legislation and standards so may be a less risky option. Commercial vendors will be keen to secure your business and promise end-to-end functionality but you should consider your requirements carefully and whether you need the level of service being offered.

Look at the volume and range of content you are hoping to preserve. If you only have a relatively small volume of material with few formats then do you really need an expensive commercial product?

If you are focusing on the preservation of multiple, complex documents in a wide range of formats then perhaps a product with an active user community will be crucial.

The National Archives (TNA) have produced a helpful guide comparing digital preservation products against a range of metrics. You can find a link to TNA spreadsheet guide [here](#).

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Stay tuned for
Part 3: Moving Image Preservation
to be published Summer in 2022.

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