

The National Library's Preservation Policy

Objectives

The National Library has as its premier aim to administer our dynamically growing collection of sources of Norwegian cultural and social history to the advantage of present and future users. We shall make sure that the sources are secured an optimal lifespan, given the at all times given frames and usage requirements that apply to both the content of meaning they distribute and the physical medium through which the content is distributed. It means that we shall work in the areas of preventative preservation, active conservation and restoration, and production of surrogates. We want to be a national centre of competence for the preservation of the types of material the collection comprises. The whole organisation has responsibility for securing optimal preservation conditions for the collection.

The Aims Shall Be Reached by:

- Further developing storage systems and infrastructure which secure preservation and retrieval of physical and digital material
- Handling and storing the objects in the collection in line with guidelines based on international standards and knowledge of the material
- Using metadata as the basis for implementing preservation measures, together with prioritisation of the volume of these
- Carrying out active preservation and restoration
- Securing the collection against damage and theft
- Reproducing source material for preservation purposes (making surrogates)
- Developing and offering professional competence in the area of preservation
- Being an active part in a national and international network of professional preservation

Storage Systems and Infrastructure

It is necessary both for analogue and digital material to have an infrastructure which secures safe preservation and retrieval. For analogue material, the infrastructure includes necessary playback and conversion equipment, together with climatically regulated depots with procedures for access and use. For digital material, the infrastructure includes data storage for digital long-term preservation, digitalisation equipment which secures a high degree of authenticity, tracks for digitalisation and digital delivery, structures which secure logical migration, together with technical equipment which secures access to the content of the documents in a long-term perspective.

Handling and Storage

All types of mediums shall be handled and stored in a way which secures optimal lifespan. It shall be done by taking a starting point in international standards and by following recommended guidelines which take their starting point in documented knowledge of the material. The most important factors which secure the material in the National Library an extended lifespan, are a stable, regulated climate within recommended margins, guidelines for the use of original material which have as an aim to minimise wear and tear, together with use of playback equipment which to the least extent possible contributes to the decomposition of the objects.

Metadata

For all types of material, it is important to have sufficient metadata to be able to file, retrieve and preserve the material. Choice of level, quantity and system for metadata is made with the starting point in the Bibliographical Plan.

Preservation metadata give information about conditions concerning the physical and technical characteristics of the source material, so that posterity can experience it as closely as possible to the way it appeared originally. Preservation metadata make it possible to read or play back the content, to understand its history and context, and offer a basis for implementing preservation measures.

To secure that the preservation metadata are registered on a safe level, there must be procedures for all types of material. The procedures must define the quantity and type of preservation metadata which are necessary, together with a relevant registration system for the data. All metadata, including preservation metadata, must be secured an optimal lifespan. This means that the preservation policy must also include metadata.

Active Conservation and Restoration

In some cases the material is in such a bad condition that it obstructs usage. Evaluation of condition and usage requirements gives the starting point for embarking on conservation and restoration measures. Conservation measures are measures which prolong the lifespan of the material, and shall allow for safe use of it. Restoration is measures which involve that the material is returned to its previous condition to preserve the meaning content and the aesthetic expression. Both originals and surrogates may be restored. Conservation and restoration shall be done by following internationally established ethical guidelines. All completed conservation and restoration measures shall be documented.

The Collection's Physical Security

Safeguarding the collections against damage and theft is a fundamental part of the preservation philosophy of the National Library. Safeguarding in this connection means organisational and technical limitation of access, monitoring of the material, use of guards and catastrophe plans. To achieve the desired level of security, updated procedures shall be posted in the area.

Production of Surrogates

The main reason to produce surrogates (copies) of a source has to do with preservation and distribution of content of meaning. This will be relevant for sources where the physical medium is about to break down, where the condition is so poor that the source is no longer able to be used, or where the medium can no longer be decoded with the usual accessible readers. The surrogate production secures the content of the source beyond the lifespan of the original object. When surrogates are being produced, the source always loses something of its information value. That is applicable to the secondary information which can be read from the physical original object. To compensate for this loss of information as much as possible, it is important that such reproduction processes are documented in the form of preservation metadata.

Professional Competence

The professional National Library environments which have preservation as their particular responsibility, shall sustain a high professional level and function as national centres of competence within their fields. In dialogue with other national and international participants we shall have a particular focus on development methods within the fields of conservation, restoration and digital preservation.

National and International Preservation Methods Networks

In order to build up and share competence of preservation methodology, we wish to participate actively in national and international networks. In the field of preservation, we offer services and competence to the sector of culture and knowledge.