

CESEM Digital Preservation Strategy

1. Introduction

CESEM (Centre for Music Studies) is committed to preserving its digital assets to ensure long-term access to research data, digital archives, and scholarly outputs. This strategy outlines the principles and practices that guide the preservation of digital materials, ensuring their accessibility for future generations of researchers, students, and the broader community.

2. Objectives

- Maintain the integrity, authenticity, and usability of digital assets created or acquired by CESEM.
- Ensure that digital materials, including music scores, audio recordings, datasets, and research documentation, remain accessible and retrievable over time.
- Support the continued availability of scholarly outputs and data, fostering open access and research transparency.

3. Scope

This strategy applies to all digital materials held by CESEM, including but not limited to:

- Digital-born materials (e.g., research data, audio recordings, digital images, publications, and documentation).
- Digitized materials (e.g., scanned music manuscripts and prints, historical documents, audio-visual materials).
- Metadata and documentation related to the creation and management of these digital assets.

4. Guiding Principles

- **Sustainability:** Implement cost-effective and scalable solutions for digital preservation that can adapt to technological changes over time.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure that digital materials are accessible to current and future users, both internally and externally, while respecting copyright and data protection regulations.
- **Integrity:** Maintain the integrity of digital assets, ensuring that they remain true to their original form.
- **Authenticity:** Document provenance and employ version control to preserve authenticity.
- **Interoperability:** Use standardised file formats and metadata schemas to ensure interoperability with other digital archives and preservation systems.

5. Preservation Strategies

- **Backup:** Establish a system for regular backups of digital assets, stored in geographically distinct locations, to prevent data loss due to hardware failure or destruction.
- **Format Migration:** Monitor the digital file formats used and plan for periodic migration to newer, stable formats to avoid obsolescence (e.g., migrating from proprietary audio formats to widely accepted open formats such as WAV or FLAC).
- **Metadata Management:** Use standardized metadata (e.g., Dublin Core, Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard ([METS](#)), or Metadata Object Description Schema ([MODS](#))) to describe digital objects, ensuring discoverability and context for future users.

- **Digital Repositories:** Store digital assets in trusted digital repositories (e.g. [Zenodo](#)) that comply with international best practices and standards, such as the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) model.
- **Cloud Storage Solutions:** Use cloud-based storage solutions, preferably the NAS (Network Attached Storage) system provided by NOVA University, for multiple copies of digital collections, ensuring secure access and facilitating collaborative research efforts.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The Digital Strategy operates on three levels with specific responsibilities and tasks:

- The **Digital Curator** oversees the implementation of the digital preservation strategy and coordinates preservation activities across CESEM.
- The **IT Support Team** manages the technical infrastructure, including storage, backups, and system security, ensuring compliance with preservation requirements.
- **Researchers** create high-quality data and metadata and play a role in selecting materials for long-term preservation.

7. Training and Awareness

- Implement regular training sessions for CESEM staff and researchers to ensure they are aware of best practices in digital preservation.
- Hold workshops and create resources on metadata creation, data management plans, and the use of digital repositories.

8. Review and Evaluation

- Review the digital preservation strategy every two years to adapt to technological changes, new research needs, and emerging best practices.
- Audit the digital collections to assess the effectiveness of preservation activities and to identify any risks or vulnerabilities.

9. Collaboration and Partnerships

- Collaborate with national and international research institutions, libraries, and archives to share knowledge, resources, and technologies related to digital preservation.
- Create strategic partnerships with trusted digital repositories and preservation networks (e.g., [ROSSIO](#), [Europeana](#), [DARIAH](#), European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage ([ECCCH](#))) to ensure the sustainability and accessibility of digital collections.

10. Conclusion

By implementing this digital preservation strategy, CESEM aims to safeguard its rich digital heritage and research, ensuring that materials documenting the study of music and musicology remain accessible and usable for future generations. This strategy will enable CESEM to continue its mission of advancing knowledge and research in the field of musicology through the responsible stewardship of its digital assets.

[last update 21 May 2025]