LATVIEŠU ARHĪVI PASAULĒ

GUIDELINES FOR PROCESSING AND DIGITIZING ARCHIVAL MATERIAL IN THE LATVIAN DIASPORA COMMUNITY ARCHIVES

GLOSSARY

born-digital – artifact that originated in a digital format

cloud – the storage space service accessible online that is provided through internet-connected devices

digital archive – a collection of digitally produced documents and/or artifacts that are dematerialized by digitizing them

digitization – the process of converting information (artifact) into a digital format

external hard drive – a storage device that can be externally connected to a computer

PCIe cards – a computer part that ensures the connection of high-speed components

time base corrector – a device that ensures the elimination of errors present in analogue recording formats

USB Cassette Converter – the device that enables the conversion of cassette from analogue to digital format

USB-to-composite video converter – the device that enables the conversion of analogue video format to digital by connecting the video playback device and a computer

SORTING

Evaluate whether the artifact is worth preserving using the material prepared **by the WFFL** *(see the attachment).*

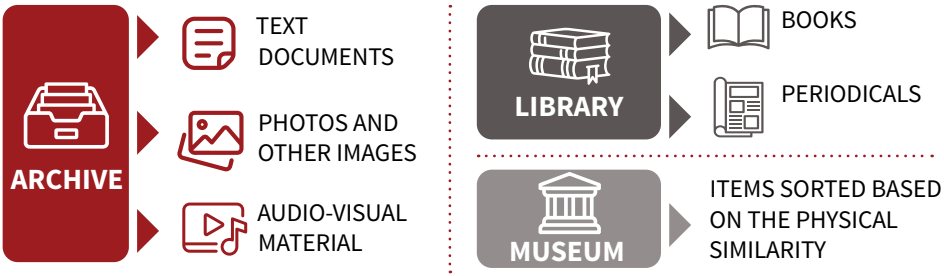
Check whether the artifact is already in collections of the LNB, LNA or other institutions: www.periodika.lv; http://diaspora.arhivi.lv/.

See the sorting guidelines developed by the ALA: https://alausa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Sorting-Guidlines.pdf.

Consult experts in professional institutions or central Latvian diaspora organizations.

SYSTEMATIZING

Systematize the sorted collection (suggested to be done using an agile approach: separate the collection into smaller chunks that are to be **processed)** by dividing the artifacts based on their physical format into three categories:



The artifacts within each category are ordered using one or more systematization models:

1. CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER – starting with the earliest document and finishing with the latest;

2. ALPHABETICAL ORDER – order the documents alphabetically based on their title;

3. THEMATIC ORDER – the collection is divided into sections based on the common theme and the documents within the sections are ordered chronologically;

4. ORDER BY CORRESPONDENT OR AUTHOR – the collection is divided into sections of persons and institutions and the documents within the sections are ordered chronologically;

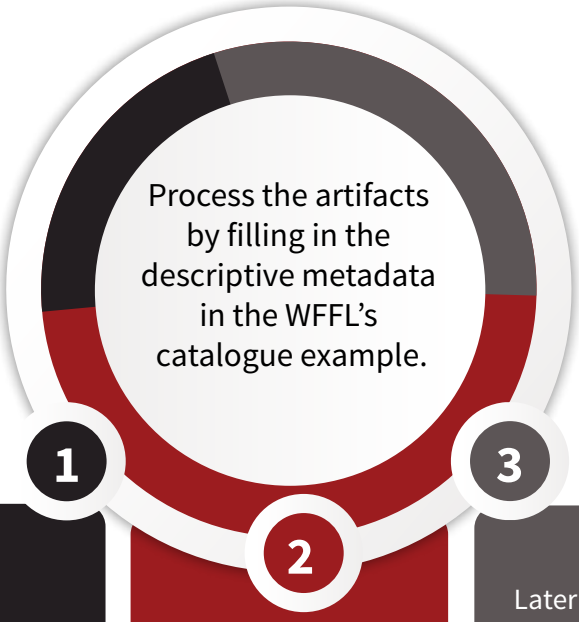
5. GEOGRAPHICAL ORDER – the collection is divided into sections related to locations and the documents within the sections are ordered chronologically.

EXAMPLES:

The models can be merged and adjusted to the particular collection, for example, the head of the LAAJ work group on archives Ilga Vēvere has developed her own archival material systematization model that is based on hierarchy and chronological principles. The highest level of the system is the states of Australia, then each state is subdivided into organizations that are located within the state, then the activities of each organization are subdivided into years and within each year the artifacts are ordered chronologically. Separate sections of the collection are devoted to significant persons in Latvian communities in Australia and larger events such as annual Latvian Cultural Days in Australia.

*The Canadian Latvian Archives and Museum collection is subdivided into four major categories: biographies, music, culture, and organizations. The category **biographies** is the part of the archive that consists mostly of collections from individuals. The category **music** consists of artifacts that convey information about music and music events in Latvian communities in Canada; the category has a subdivision of Latvian Song festivals as there are large number of artifacts concerning these events. The category **culture** consists of artifacts that convey information about various cultural events in Latvian communities in Canada and the artifacts are mostly printed articles cut from the newspapers. The category **organizations** contains the documentation of Latvian diaspora organizations in Canada.*

CATALOGUING



Use **standardized entries.**

It is suggested to create the indexes in a way that the **first characters of the index** signify the organization that owns the archive *(for example, KLAM could use its abbreviation)* and the **next characters** are the letter identifying the type of the archival material that is followed by the number of the order.

Later on, **name the files of the digitized** item using the **item's index within the catalogue.**

PREPARING FOR DIGITIZATION

Plan the digitization project:

1. 

   Select the artifacts for digitizing *(select the ones that are often used, valuable, etc)* and **clean them** with appropriate methods.

2. 

   Plan and evaluate the human, financial, and technological resources.

3. 

   Ensure that there is **enough memory space** on the computer, external hard drive or cloud (contact the WFFL to apply for free cloud space) and **prepare the digital archive.**

4. 

   Analyse the available technology, **select** the formats of the digitized versions and **adjust** the parameters of the chosen devices to get the highest resolution and quality of the file.

5. 

   Prepare the workspace (lighting, cleanliness, transportation of the artifacts to the digitization workspace and back to the preservation space), **set-up and test the devices**

IMAGE DIGITIZATION

Before the image digitization the workspace and the chosen equipment must be prepared by configuring the light, colours, other parameters, and the programs used.
Scan or take a photo of the image and save the file and its back-up copies.

Device	Suggested format of master (original) digital file – uncompressed	Resolution
Flatbed scanner	TIFF	600 DPI for 18x24cm and larger images; 720 – 3200 DPI for 13x18 and smaller
Digital photo camera	JPEG	The highest possible
Smartphone camera or scanning application	JPEG, PDF	

- Some smartphone scanning applications (e.g. Microsoft LENS – PDF scanner, Google Drive, SwiftScan: Scan PDF Documents, Genius Scan – PDF Scanner App) offer direct uploading of the digitized object to the cloud.
- **Do not edit the original file**; the editing can be done to the copy files that can be in various formats.
- **Digitize the reverse side** of the image if it contains information.
- If the photos are stored in an album, **digitize the whole pages of the album** to preserve the original view **and then each photo separately.**

TEXT DOCUMENT DIGITIZATION

The documents must be free from dust, any folding creases must be smoothed out, and any clips, tapes and other unnecessary details must be removed carefully.

Also, it must be made sure that the document contains all the pages in the right order, and the pages must be numbered if there are no page numbers.

Before digitizing the periodicals **check** whether they are already digitized and published in the LNB digital library: **www.periodika.lv**

Only attempt to digitize books if they **are not in any digital library;** they are **unique, rare, valuable,** or in **need of preserving digitally.**

Device	Suggested format of master (original) digital file – uncompressed
Flatbed scanner	TIFF – for single page documents; PDF/A (PDF/A-2u) – for multiple page documents
Digital photo camera	JPEG
Smartphone camera or scanning application	JPEG, PDF

The use of a camera instead of a scanner might be a preferable choice **if the document exceeds the size of the scanner.**

PHYSICAL ITEM DIGITIZATION

If the items are **flat** and can be digitized by scanning, follow the workflow of image or text document digitization. **Three-dimensional** items should be digitized using a photo camera or a smartphone camera.

The workspace should have a **neutral – white, black, or grey –** background which should be in the form of a backdrop placed on the table and behind the item that is about to be photographed.

The lighting of the workspace should be well-adjusted avoiding hard shadows and using soft light from diffused natural or artificial sources.

It is **recommended to use a tripod** or **regular camera stand** to ensure the stability of the shot and select a turntable so that all the sides of the item can be captured.

The items must be photographed **in a position they are preserved in**, *for example, a vase that is preserved in a vertical position must be photographed vertically.*

The image frame of the item **must be filled as much as possible.**

Each image of the item (master file) should be saved **as a separate file in uncompressed TIFF, PDF, or DNG** format.

AUDIO-VISUAL ARTIFACT DIGITIZATION

To digitize various audio-visual artifacts **special devices are needed**.
If you do not have or cannot purchase the devices, it is recommended to sort the audio-visual material and transfer the valuable artifacts to the Latvian State Archive of Audiovisual Documents.

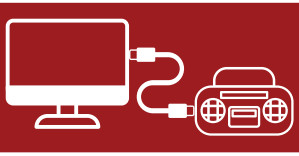
You should only attempt to digitize the audio-visual material if it is in good condition so as not to increase any damage there may be to the material.

AUDIO CASSETTES

1 If you have a functioning audio cassette deck:

NECESSARY HARDWARE	a computer with installed PCIe cards for converting analogue audio output to digital
	the necessary wires to connect the audio cassette deck to the computer
	headphones or speakers to monitor the sound
SOFTWARE	audio capture and editing software (e.g. *Audacity*)

WORKFLOW:

1. 
   connect the devices and set-up the audio capture software
2. 
   load the tape in the audio cassette deck
3. 
   start the recording in the selected audio capture software
4. 
   start the playback in the audio cassette deck
5. 
   monitor the recording while it takes place *(if there are any issues, stop the recording)*
6. 

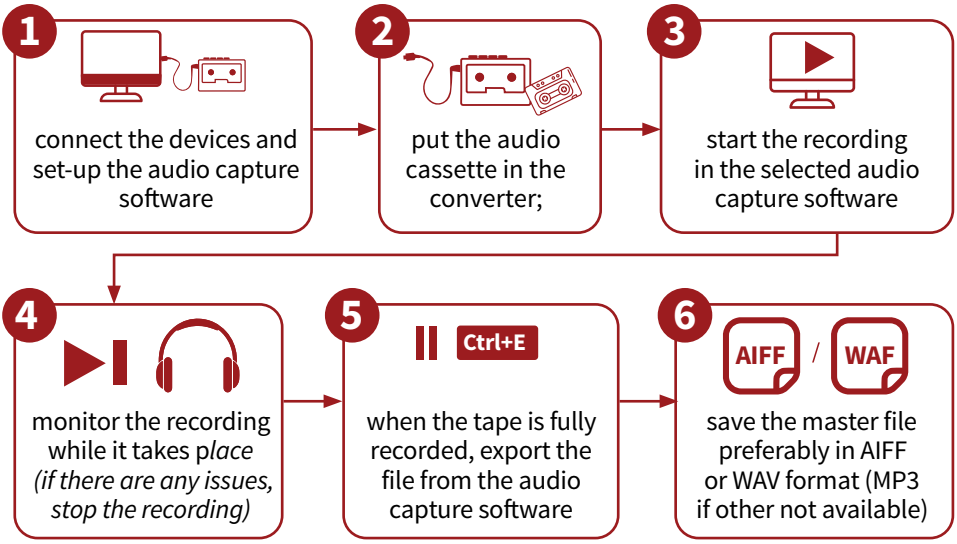
   when the tape is fully recorded, export the file from the audio capture software
7. 

   save the master file preferably in AIFF or WAV format (MP3 if other not availablei)

2 If you do not have a functioning audio cassette deck, but have purchased USB Cassette Converter:

NECESSARY HARDWARE	USB Cassette Converter
	computer
	a USB cable with 3,5mm minijack
	headphones or speakers to monitor the sound
SOFTWARE	audio capture and editing software (e.g. software that is accompanied with the converter or *Audacity)*

WORKFLOW:



The workflow of other analogue audio formats is similar to both approaches, **just for each format a different playback device or the converter must be available/purchased.**

VIDEO CASSETTES

Both a playback device and a converter from analogue to digital format is necessary.
The workflow for VHS video cassettes is replicable to other analogue video cassettes formats (just a different playback device is necessary).

NECESSARY HARDWARE	functioning VHS videotape player (a playback device)
	USB-to-composite video converter
	computer
	the necessary wires to connect player, converter, and computer
	time base corrector (optional)
	headphones or speakers to monitor the sound
SOFTWARE	video capture and editing software (e.g. software that is accompanied with the converter or other that allow importing a video from a digital video camera like W*indows Movie Maker*)

WORKFLOW:

1.  connect the devices in such order: the playback device – time base corrector (if used) – video converter – the computer
2.  set-up the video capture software and insert the video cassette in the playback device
3. 

start recording with the video capture software and monitor the process
4. 

when the tape is finished, export the master file in MPEG-2 or raw video format

PHYSICAL DIGITAL RECORDINGS

1 IF YOU HAVE A COMPUTER WITH A DISC DRIVE

insert the disc into the disc drive and simply copy the files to the computer and/or the cloud.

2 IF YOUR COMPUTER DOES NOT HAVE A DISC DRIVE

- **purchase an external Blu-ray drive** that can play CD, DVD and Blu-ray format discs
- connect the external disc drive to the computer and insert the disc
- import the files from the disc to the computer using software capable of disc-ripping *(e.g. Windows Media Player, Freemake Video Converter, HandBrake, MakeMKV, WinXDVD, Ripper Platinum utt.).*

BORN-DIGITAL ARTIFACTS

- The process of collecting, sorting, and systemizing born-digital material is similar to the processing of a physical archive.
- The processing of born-digital material begins with identifying all the places the born-digital material is stored and selecting the material that is worth preserving.
- Then the selected born-digital artifacts are collected and systematized in a digital archive and described within a catalogue.
- As with the digitized artifacts, for born-digital artifacts it is also necessary to create back-up copies and store them in a different place.

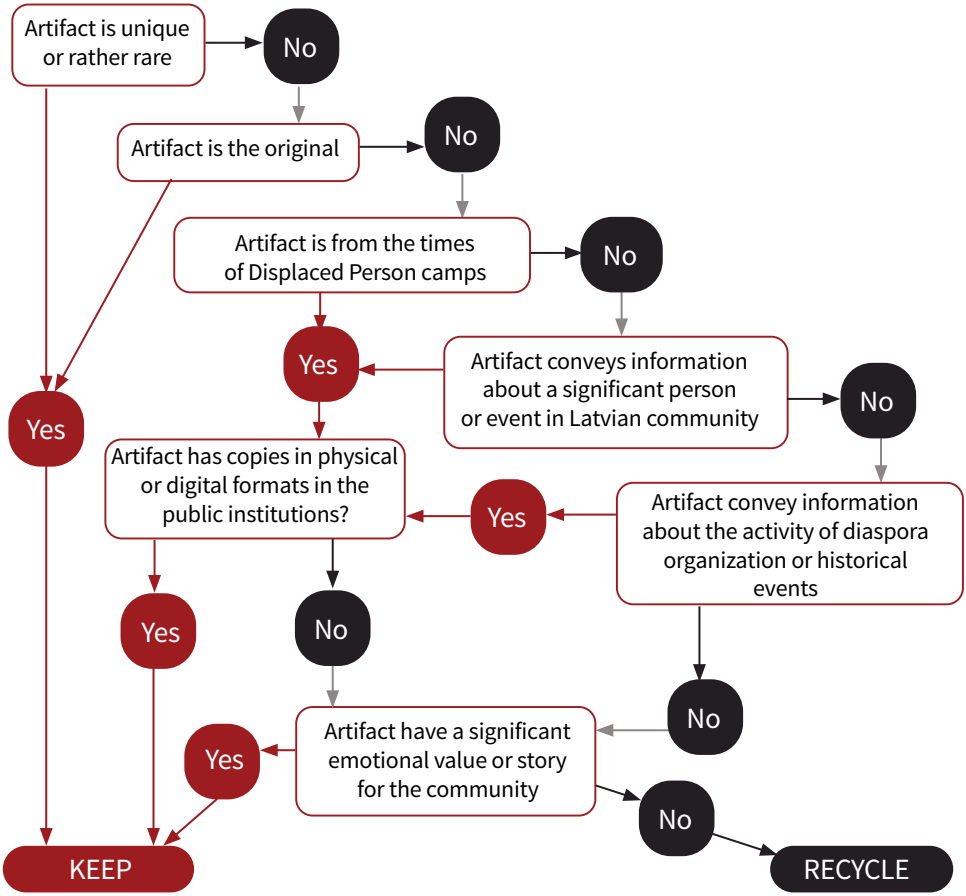
TIPS

- The WFFL suggests using Google Drive or other scanning applications on your smartphone to increase the speed of digitization and the quality of digital files.
- Each digitized artifact should have its master or original file that is uncompressed and in a lossless format if possible, and two back-up copies of a master file in other places, for example, an external hard drive and the cloud.
- When a physical object is digitized, the digitization fact must be registered in the catalogue.
- Organize the digital archive based on one or more models from the section “Systematizing” (physical format is not important in the digital archive).
- Name the files of the digitized item using the item’s index within the catalogue.
- Accompany the digital archive with a description about the contents of the collection, the indexation system, and the systematization model used.
- See the informative videos prepared by the WFFL and experts about preserving and handling of archival material: https://arhivi.pbla.lv/informativie-video/.

*MATERIAL PREPARED BY THE WFFL

Criteria questions for appraisal:

- Is the artifact unique or rather rare?
- Is the artifact an original?
- Does the artifact cover the time period before the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia?
- Is the artifact in Latvian language and created before World War II outside Latvia?
- Is the artifact from the times of Displaced Person camps (except books)?
- Does the artifact convey information about a significant person in Latvian community and/or Latvia?
- Is the artifact a newsletter or other kind of publication of a community organization?
- Does the artifact convey information about events organized in Latvian communities?
- Does the artifact convey information about the activity of diaspora organization?
- Does the artifact have a significant emotional value or story for the community?
- Does the artifact convey information relevant to historical events?
- Does not the artifact have other copies in physical or digital formats in the public institutions?



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