

CASE STUDY

University of Warwick

**Evolving Digital Preservation
Through Partnership**



Arkivum



UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Introduction

Since implementing Arkivum in 2020, the University of Warwick has continued to develop and mature its digital preservation programme, creating flexible workflows that support an increasingly diverse range of born-digital collections.

Within the Library and Archives Service, the Modern Records Centre preserves nationally significant collections, including the archives of major UK trade unions, campaigning organisations and the University's own institutional records. Alongside these collections, the digital preservation team is responsible for safeguarding born-digital archives, electronic theses and sensitive university records for the long term, while ensuring researchers can access material safely and appropriately.

Working in partnership with Arkivum over the past six years, Warwick has continually refined its preservation workflows, embraced new capabilities and developed an approach that balances long-term preservation, operational efficiency and secure access for researchers.



“IngestIQ ironed out a lot of headaches we were having. We had an issue which we explained, and then we got a solution back”

Building a Sustainable Digital Preservation Programme

As the volume and variety of born-digital material continued to grow, Warwick's digital preservation programme evolved to support an increasingly broad range of collections.

The team manages everything from legacy files recovered from floppy disks through to modern cloud-based transfers, alongside digital-first PhD and Master's theses. Each collection presents different preservation, metadata and access requirements.

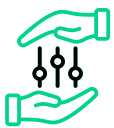
Some material must remain completely restricted because it contains sensitive personal information or confidential university records. Other collections need to be available to researchers, but only within a controlled reading room environment rather than on the public internet.

Rather than applying a single approach to every collection, Warwick has developed flexible workflows that reflect the different needs of its archives while remaining manageable for a relatively small digital preservation team.



A Partnership That Continues to Evolve

Since adopting Arkivum in 2020, the University has continued to enhance its digital preservation capability as new requirements have emerged.



Tailored preservation structures

Different archive structures have been developed to support different types of content. Electronic theses, for example, are preserved as dark archives. As most theses are already available through the University's repository, Arkivum creates the preservation copy, which is only accessed in exceptional circumstances such as authorship or examination queries.



Controlled researcher access

Similarly, highly sensitive university committee records are preserved in separate data pools with tightly controlled internal access, while archive collections intended for researchers can be made available through Arkivum's integrated access platform.

As both Warwick's preservation programme and the Arkivum platform have evolved, the University has continued to adopt new capabilities that further improve efficiency and strengthen its digital preservation workflows.

Continuous Workflow Improvement

One of Warwick's ongoing priorities has been reducing the amount of manual work involved in preparing digital collections for long-term preservation. Warwick incorporated DROID into its preservation workflow to identify file formats, generate checksums and capture technical metadata. This provides the preservation team with a reliable understanding of each collection before ingest, ensuring technical metadata is captured consistently and accurately.

The introduction of Arkivum's IngestIQ provided another opportunity to improve the workflow.

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By automatically generating metadata from existing DROID reports, IngestIQ enabled the University to retain valuable technical information while significantly reducing manual preparation. The result is a more efficient ingest process that preserves original folder structures, maintains essential metadata and eliminates unnecessary duplication of effort.

As Rachel MacGregor explained during ArkFest, IngestIQ addressed one of the team's longest-standing workflow challenges, demonstrating how the ongoing partnership continues to deliver practical improvements as the University's preservation programme matures.



Supporting Research Access

Digital preservation is only part of the challenge. Warwick also continues to develop secure and appropriate ways for researchers to access digital collections while protecting sensitive information and respecting copyright restrictions.

Using Arkivum's AToM access interface, the team developed a controlled access portal that enables researchers to discover collections and explore metadata through the catalogue before accessing original digital content where appropriate.

Rather than replacing the University's existing archive catalogue, the portal complements it. Researchers continue to discover collections through established catalogue services before accessing preserved digital content through Arkivum when appropriate.

This approach enables Warwick to balance openness with appropriate controls, ensuring sensitive material remains protected while valuable archive collections become easier to discover and use.

Empowering the Archives Team

Recognising that successful digital preservation depends as much on process as technology, Warwick has invested significant time reviewing and refining its workflows.

The team has mapped end-to-end preservation processes, identified unnecessary manual steps and introduced automation wherever possible. Staff across the Library and Archives Service have also been involved through structured user testing, allowing workflows and the access portal to be refined before wider rollout.

This collaborative approach has helped build confidence across the wider archives team as responsibility for digital preservation continues to expand beyond specialist staff.



Six Years of Progress

Since implementing Arkivum, the University of Warwick has established a mature and adaptable digital preservation environment that continues to evolve alongside its collections.

The partnership has enabled the University to:



Establish secure long-term preservation for **born-digital archives, electronic theses** and **institutional records**.



Develop **tailored preservation workflows** for different collection types and access requirements.



Reduce manual metadata creation through the adoption of IngestIQ.



Preserve original folder structures and valuable technical metadata throughout the ingest process.



Deliver **secure researcher access** through an **integrated digital reading room**.



Continue refining workflows and **adopting new capabilities** as preservation needs evolve.

Looking ahead

Digital preservation at the University of Warwick is an ongoing programme rather than a one-time implementation.

As digital collections continue to grow, the team remains focused on refining workflows, expanding automation and improving the experience for both archivists and researchers.

Working in long-term partnership with Arkivum, the University continues to build on the foundations established in 2020, adopting new capabilities as they become available and ensuring its preservation platform evolves alongside changing requirements.

Today, the partnership is focused on making digital preservation more efficient, sustainable and accessible for future generations of researchers.

About Arkivum

Arkivum is recognised internationally for its expertise in the archiving and digital preservation of valuable data and digitised assets in large volumes and multiple formats. The long-term security, integrity and accessibility of data is crucial for all Arkivum's clients and partners, who share a commitment to good practice in its stewardship and governance.

Arkivum's specialist software and services are chosen by major institutions and commercial organisations in a diversity of sectors, including life sciences, research (CERN), financial services, and organisations in higher education, culture and heritage. Confident in Arkivum's reputation and resources, they are in a position to maximise insight and discovery by deriving optimum long-term value from their data, collections and intellectual property.

Headquartered in the UK, with presence in the US, Arkivum advocates the use of the FAIR principles in data management: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable. Arkivum is also certified in ISO 9001 and 27001.



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