The authority and direction for the Institute Archives was set forth in the Institute Archival Policy, which was adopted by the MIT Corporation on May 28, 1976. The document directs the Institute Archives to collect the official papers of MIT as well as privately owned material bearing on the history of the Institute and of science and technology. The Archives follows the Collection Policy for Archives and the Manuscripts and an Institute Records Access Policy that were both approved in 1980.

The statements laid out in this document address the addition of digital (born-digital and digitized) material being accessioned or donated to the Institute Archives and Special Collections (hereafter referred to as Archives). These practices are consistent with the 1976 and 1980 MIT policies. In keeping with good practice and consistent with our peer institutions we are documenting our practice and making it transparent to both our MIT colleagues as well as external constituents.

**Digital Archives Practice for Institute Archives and Special Collections at MIT**

The Collection Policy for Archives and Manuscripts applies to both analog and digital files that contain information that falls into the categories for collection material.

Digital material will be accessioned into collections with the same considerations as non-digital material for appropriateness and collection policy adherence.

The Archives will not keep copies of commercial software, operating system software, nor other non-archival material that may be transferred to the Archives in the course of transferring digital material.

Digital files shall be transferred only after notification by the transferring office and verification by the Archives.

Digital files transferred to the Archives will be the archival / record copy. This shall be verified by the office of origin.

The Archives does not accession digitized files of paper records, when the paper records are the official copy. Check with Archives staff prior to preparing this type of material for transfer to the Archives.

Carrier media used to transfer electronic files to the Archives will not be returned [to the person or office that did the transfer].

Information describing the contents, the creator(s), and the creation of the files will be provided to the Archives during transfer.

The Archives may, at its discretion, weed or deaccession duplicate versions of documents when they are accessioned both electronically and in paper format.
Access copies (derivatives) of born-digital or digitized material will be created only after the digital files have been accessioned into collections and will be generated in the appropriate access format for the required use.

Digital files that are used as access copies will be cared for separately from digital files that are accessioned as archival files. Metadata will enable tracing back to the original source files and collections.


The Archives will preserve the original file as received and may make transformations to it over time in order to provide access according to current norms and practice.

**Lower-level procedures for Archives digital material**

- Original filenames (as transferred to the Archives) will be kept as metadata.
- Filenames will be changed to the current naming convention upon acquisition.
- UUIDs (Uniform Unique Identifiers) will be assigned to files for long-term access.
- Metadata for the collection, aggregate, and file-level will be kept as metadata.
- Rights and permissions statements for archiving, access, and use will be documented.
- Technical and transformative information will be kept as metadata.
- Access copies will be used for patron access and description for archives finding aids, reference services, etc.
- Master files accepted for archiving and preservation will be kept in the preservation system as part of the AIP (Archival Information Package).
- Files that have undergone transformation according to preservation strategies will be kept as part of the AIP in the preservation system.

**Document References**

  http://web.mit.edu/policies/13/13.3.html
  http://libraries.mit.edu/archives/managing/policy-access.html

**Document Management**

These statements were approved May 2012 by the Head, Institute Archives and Special Collections, and will be reviewed annually.

Prepared by Kari R. Smith, Digital Archivist, MIT Libraries  
Updated November 2012.