Your Digitized Legacy: What It Is and How To Protect it, Part 1

Overview:

Did you know you have a legacy? Any documentation can be part of your lasting mark that you will leave for your family and friends. Your legacy could consist of not only birth certificates, deeds, journals, and other standard documents, but also the stray photo, recipes, craft projects, etc. In this two-part class series, you will learn what can be included in your legacy and ways you can protect it.

What is digitization?

Digitization is the act of converting an object or document into a digital form saved online, on an external drive, or in another digital place. Digitization is important not only for sharing between friends and family, but also for protection. If anything were to happen to the original, you have a digital copy saved in another safe location.

Part 1 of this series will explore the many different options available to you through the Wellesley Free Library. Have you heard about our Library of Things? This unique and ever-expanding collection offers many different materials and objects for you to take home, like puzzles and a microscope. New to the Library of Things: “Save Your Memories Kit!” This kit includes the items discussed in this class.

Part 2 will cover storage and organization options for your digital files.

Items able to be digitized with the Save Your Memories Kit:

- Photographs
- Documents (birth certificates, deeds, etc.) or anything on paper
- Old home videos on VHS
- Film/slides
- Cassettes
- Childhood crafts/drawings
- And much more!

Remember: even if you do not plan to share your digital items with family and friends, having a digital copy of each item included in your legacy is highly recommended as a safeguard.

Please note: Many items in the “Save Your Memories” kit require a micro SD card to operate. They do not come with an SD card. We recommend that you buy a separate SD card to dedicate to digitizing your legacy. Please remember to remove your SD card before returning the item to the library. Lost SD cards are not guaranteed to be returned to you.
Before You Begin:

If your legacy is not already organized, we recommend that you physically organize your items before digitization. This helps keep the digital files organized, and therefore usable!

**First:** Separate items. Make piles according to how you would like to organize the digital files. You can be as thorough as you wish. For example, you can simply scan all your children’s childhood art projects together if you want to make sure you have digital copies. Or, you can separate each child’s artwork into separate projects. To go further, you can even separate out each child’s artwork, and then divide them by grade! You can get as detailed as you wish. And remember: you can always separate the digital files later, but it is easier to do so beforehand with the physical items.

**Second:** Create a naming convention. A naming convention is a fundamental system by which you name your digital files. The convention follows a standard that you set so that you can search through your digital files. Recommendation: include names, dates, locations, and other specific information in your naming convention.

**Tips:**

- Use underscores or capital letters instead of spaces.
- Type out the full four-digit year (ex: 1972 vs. 72). Your items might last until 2072!
- Use specific names/locations wherever possible.
- Don’t feel you have to abbreviate. “Florida_2015” is preferable to “FL_15;” your descendants may not understand what FL means if they do not have context. Of course, this is up to your personal preference.
- Be as consistent as possible when naming your files. The more work you do now, the less guesswork you will have to do later!
- Keep folders clearly labeled, and name files as if they are subsets of that folder. For example, the folder “Florida_2015” could contain photos called “Florida_2015_1” for “image 1,” or you can call it “Florida_2015_Day1,” “Florida_2015_AuntAmelia,” “Florida_2015_DinnerAtGrandpas” etc. You can get as specific as you wish.
  - The key here is that the title of the folder is included in the image. If a file called “Image1” were to be separated from the folder in the future, no one would know where it goes. “Florida_2015_1” at least explains that it is part of the “Florida_2015” vacation collection.

**Further recommendations:**

- Keep a master list of naming conventions/folders. You can use an excel sheet or word document.
  - Use this document to explain in full sentences what is in each folder.
• You can also use this document to explain any abbreviations you might use. Keep in mind that this master list may be separated from the collection in the future.

• Use as many sub-folders as you feel comfortable with!
  o For example: your main folder could be called “Florida_2015” and have sub folders for each day, activities you did, places you saw, etc.

• Work on one “pile” at a time. Digitize and organize each project before moving on. That way, you can make sure your naming convention for the “Florida_2015” vacation is consistent, that you didn’t miss anything, and that it is all organized before moving on to “Iceland_2016.”

• Finally, remember that you can get as in-depth as you want! If your goal is simply to digitize for safe keeping, that is fine. Do as much or as little as you wish, and work according to your personal preferences. If the above recommendations do not work with your lifestyle or personal collection, devise something that works for you!

Let’s get started!

Digitizing Documents, Photos, and Flat Items:

Do you have a collection of your children’s childhood art projects? How about a collection of newspaper clippings about family or friends? Or do you simply want to protect birth certificates and other sensitive documents? The handheld scanner included in the Save Your Memories kit is perfect!

This handheld scanner works wonderfully on standard sized paper documents. You will need your own micro SD card to operate the scanner.

1. Insert the micro SD card into the slot on the side of the scanner (with metal contacts facing up).
2. Press and hold the power button until the screen blinks to life.
3. Make sure the format is set to desired format (JPEG recommended).
4. Situate scanner on the document, ensuring the paper is between the lines indicated on the scanner. Place the scanner on the edge of the paper about 3/4 of an inch onto the page.
5. Press the scan button once. You will see the “Scan” light turn green.
6. Gently and steadily slide the scanner down the length of the document.
7. When you reach the end, press the “Scan” button again once. The green light will turn off, and the screen will indicate that a scan is on your SD card.
8. Continue scanning! As you scan documents, the screen will indicate the number of scans performed on the screen.
9. When finished, plug in the scanner (while it is powered on) into your computer using the cord provided. The computer will recognize it as an external USB drive.
10. Find the folder marked “DCIM” and open it to reveal the folder called “100MEDIA.”
11. Scanned JPEGs will be in the “100MEDIA” folder.
12. Use your naming conventions (see above) to rename scans and keep them organized!

*Tip: Take a look at your scans periodically. There may be a smudge on the scanner (cleaning cloths are included in the kit) or the color may need to be recalibrated (instructions included in the kit).

Digitizing Cassette Tapes

The Ion Tape Express Cassette to Digital Converter is a foolproof way of converting all your favorite cassette recordings to a digital file. The converter does not require an SD card, but does require you to install the software on your PC or Mac. The software is included, as well as instructions. Simply insert the software disc into your computer and follow the install instructions.

Full instructions for using the cassette converter are included, as well as headphones and a quickstart guide. Converting your tapes is as easy as pressing play!

Digitizing Film or Slides

The Wolverine F2D Titan Film to Digital Converter is the perfect apparatus for digitizing slides or many film formats. Please note this device requires an SD card.

The Kit includes an extensive set of instructions, adapters to help insert your film, and a cleaning brush in case the lenses are smudged. The instruction manual also contains a link to an online instruction video.

Many different film formats are compatible with this device, including Slide Positive, Color Negative, Black & White, and Movie Positive (Super8) film. See below for all formats compatible with this device.

1. Simply insert your SD card before powering on the converter.
2. Select the type of material you are going to convert using the left and right arrow buttons, then click OK once the correct material is highlighted.
3. Use the appropriate adapters to fit your film or slides through the converter.
4. Once you see the image of the slide or film on the screen, adjust accordingly to get the clearest image possible. Press the “Convert” button once you are ready to convert the
image. You can use the “Mirror” key to mirror the image left to right, or “Flip” to flip the image upside down if needed.

5. You can also change color components. In “Convert” mode, press “OK/Enter” to and chose “EV” (Ex “R” (red), “G” (green), or “B” (blue) to adjust color and brightness. A change to “EV” will adjust brightness, with a positive (+) change making the image brighter, and a negative (-) change making it darker.

6. Press the “OK/Enter” key to save each adjustment, and the arrow keys to move on to other color components.

7. When you have made all your adjustments and are ready to save the converted image, simply use the “OK” button until the image is saved.

Repeat!

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*Tip: Take a look at your files periodically. There may be a smudge on the lenses (cleaning brush is included in the kit) or the color may need to be recalibrated (instructions included in the kit).
Digitizing VHS Tapes and Home Movies:

The ElGato Video Capture cable is perfect for use with your current VCR. Simply download the software by visiting www.elgato.com/videocapture/download and connect your VCR to your computer using the cables provided.

Make sure you are matching colors between the black and white cables to capture both video and audio. Plug the other end into the VIDEO OUT and AUDIO OUT outputs on your VCR. Some VCRs will have only one AUDIO OUT spot. You may need to use a y-splitter or y-adapter (not included) to use both audio cables in the system. This will ensure all audio outputs are captured.

After set up:

1. Open the ElGato software you previously downloaded.
2. Name your file and approximate its length or size.
3. Choose which type of signal you are using (this cable uses composite).
4. You can play with the aspect ratio (basically, the size of the screen) to decide which option you like best.
5. Push play on your VCR!
6. You can adjust brightness, contrast, etc. using the menu and the “video” tab.
7. You can adjust the audio by using the menu and “audio” tab.
8. You can also change where you would like to save the file on the menu.
9. Click continue.
10.You have further options (such as automatically stop recording after the amount of time you selected in step 2, or muting sound if you are doing other things).
11.Click on “Start Recording.”
12.You can “Stop Recording” at any time.
13.After stopping the recording, you can further trim your video if you only want to capture certain parts.
14.After saving, you have different options for using software on your computer (such as QuickTime player, iMovie, etc.) or uploading to YouTube.