



# Value in a digital environment

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5 Jun 2007  
Digital Repositories: Dealing with the  
Digital Deluge, Manchester

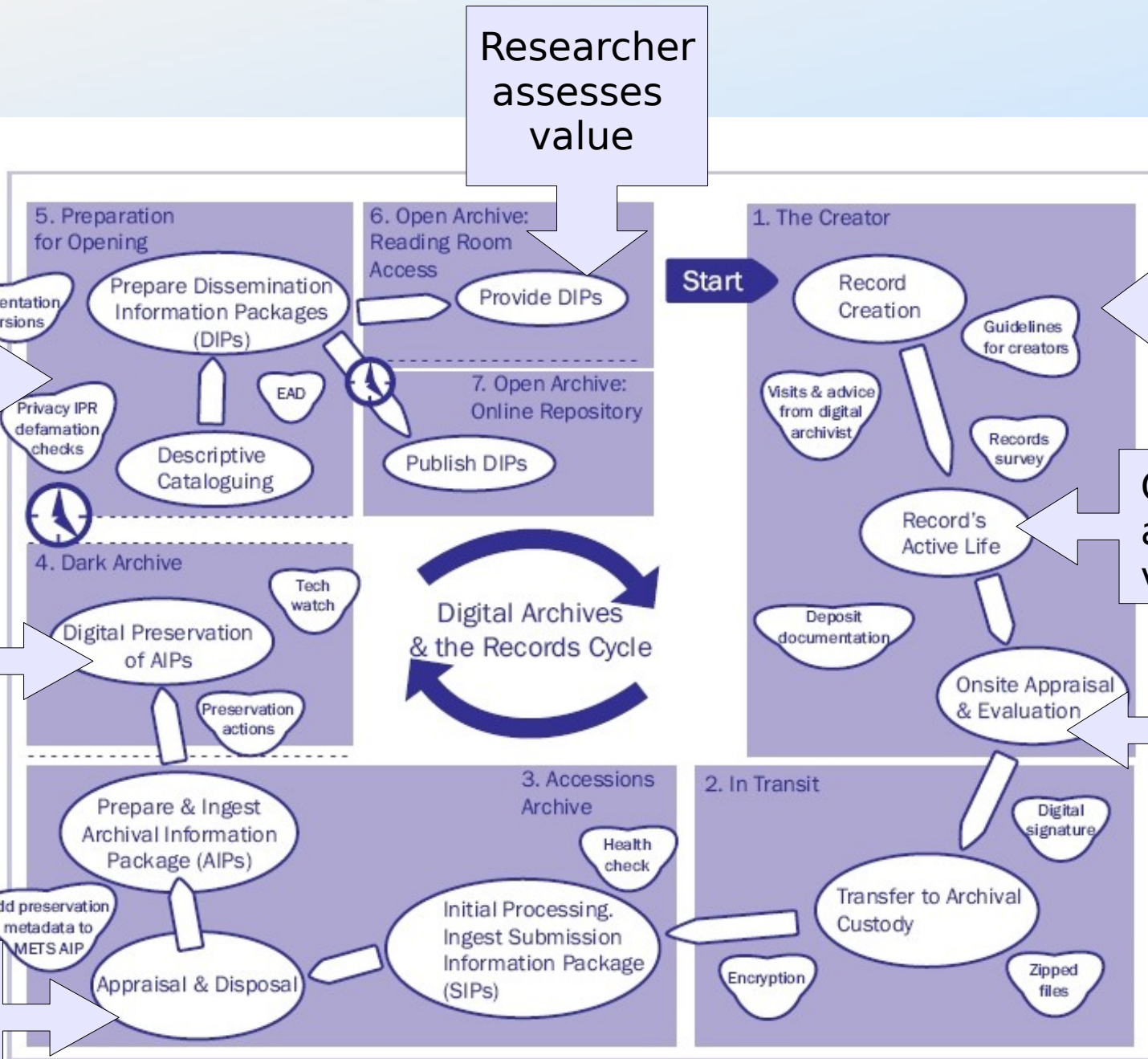


# Some questions?

- When do we assess value? Why?
- Who assesses value? When?
- How do we assess value?
- How do we preserve it?
- What impacts on value?
- Is it worth assessing value?
- How different are the answers to such questions in a digital environment?
- Context – PARADIGM project – explored preservation of historically valuable born-digital personal archives using politicians' archives.



# Digital archives lifecycle



Researcher assesses value

Creator assesses value

Creator assesses value

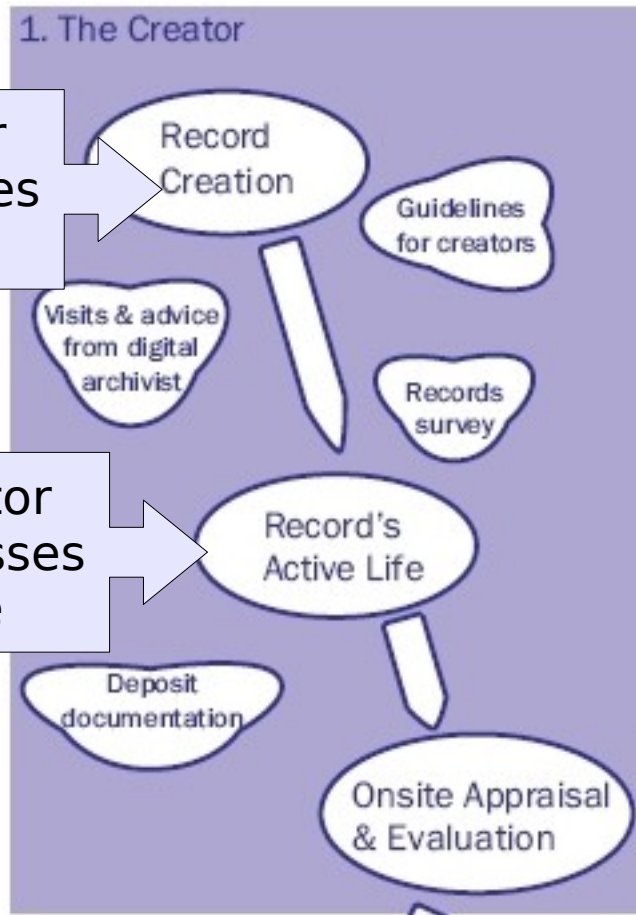
Archivist assesses value

Archivist adds value

Archivist preserves value

Archivist preserves value

# Impact of creator decisions on value



- Arrangement (or lack of...)
- Storage decisions
- Format choices
- Retention decisions
- Naturalness
- Metadata
- Preservation awareness
  
- All tend to be geared towards creator's short- to medium-term needs
- Encourage proactive approach to collection development

# I know it's obsolete, but is it valuable?

**Date:** Wed, 16 Nov 2005 09:44:33 +0000  
**Reply-To:** Helen Palmer <archives@CERN.DIGION.GOV.UK>  
**Sender:** "Archivists, conservators and records managers."  
<ARCHIVES-NRA@JISCMAIL.AC.UK>  
**From:** Helen Palmer <archives@CERN.DIGION.GOV.UK>  
**Subject:** Amstrad disks

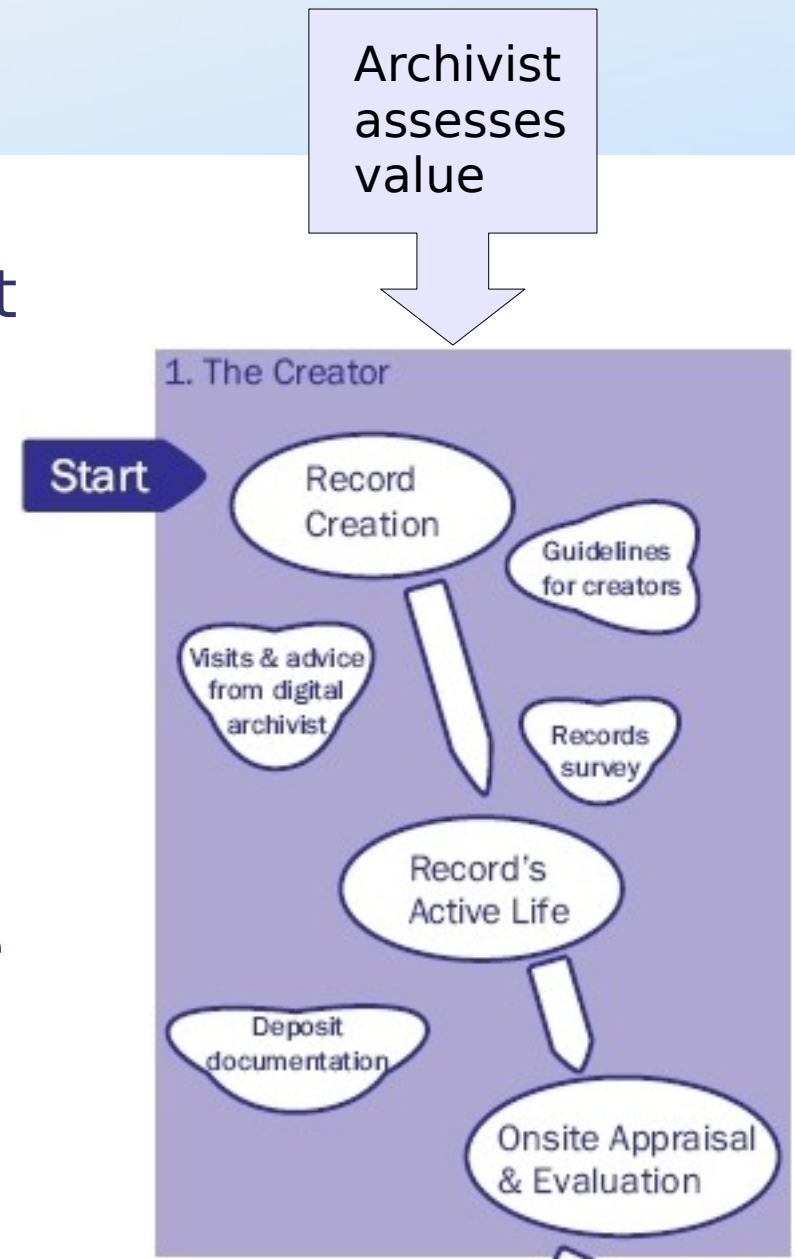
Hello all,

Please forgive a question on a subject which I know has come up before, but I was wondering whether there were any new thoughts on the subject. We are currently cataloguing a collection of personal papers amongst which is a box of about forty 3" Amstrad disks. I know that there are companies which will migrate this data to newer formats, but we currently have no way of knowing what is on these disks, whether it is material replicated elsewhere in the collection, and whether migration will be worth the cost. Has anyone found any way around this issue? Does anyone have an old Amstrad PCW9512 we could beg or borrow (we probably wouldn't resort to stealing)? Has anyone had any positive (or negative) experiences with companies offering migration services? Any advice would be most welcome.



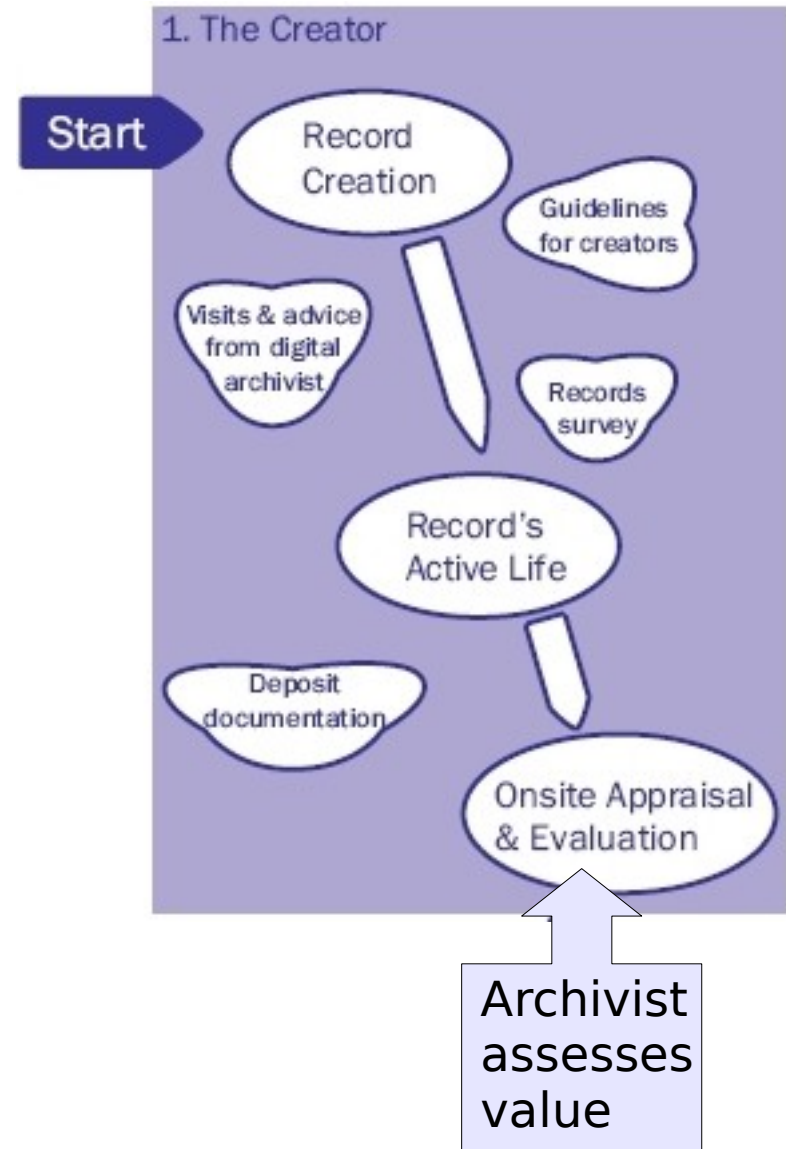
# Collection development

- Limited resources require decisions about what to collect
- Collection development policies
- Digital provokes re-think of collection development strategies: more proactive
- Benefit of hindsight lost in proactive collecting; digital degradation and obsolescence are risks in reactive collecting
- What is valuable? To whom?
- Involve researchers in shaping collection policies & strategies

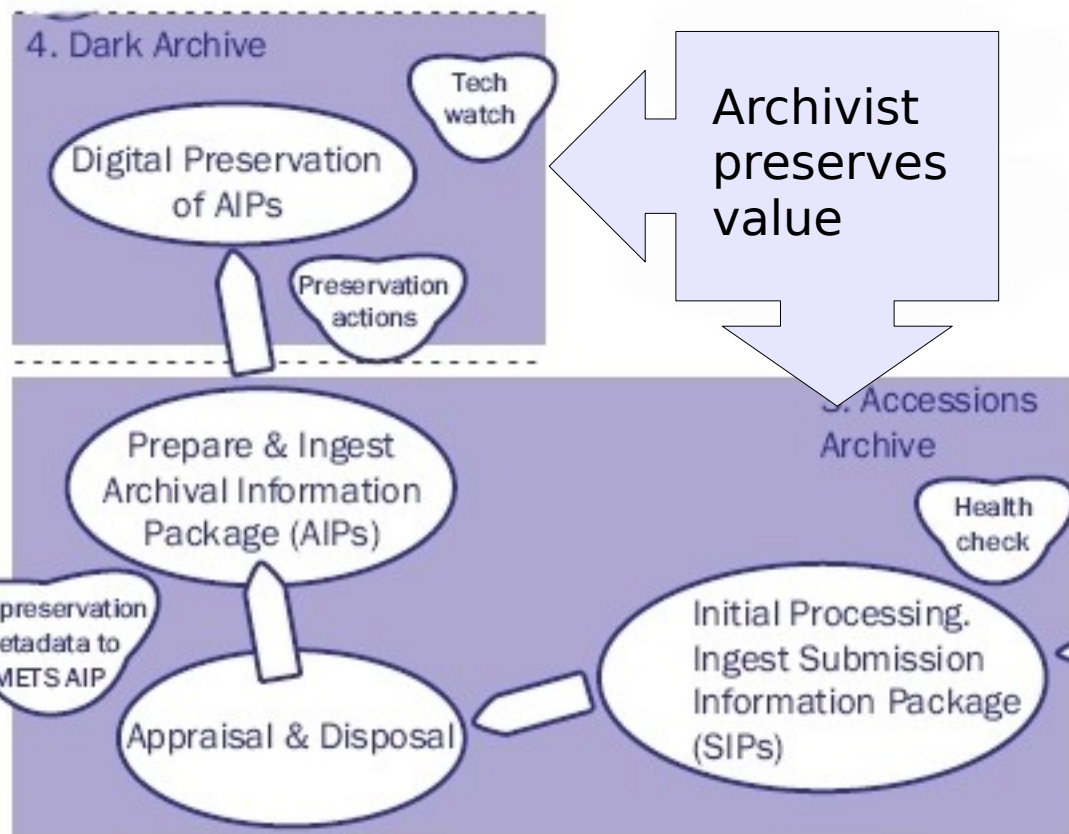


# Selection and appraisal

- Selecting record series
- Appraisal: content, context, structure and technical
- Functions and activities
- Records of these
- Creator input
- Potential research value
- Informational & evidential
- Authenticity, context & provenance
- Monetary value?

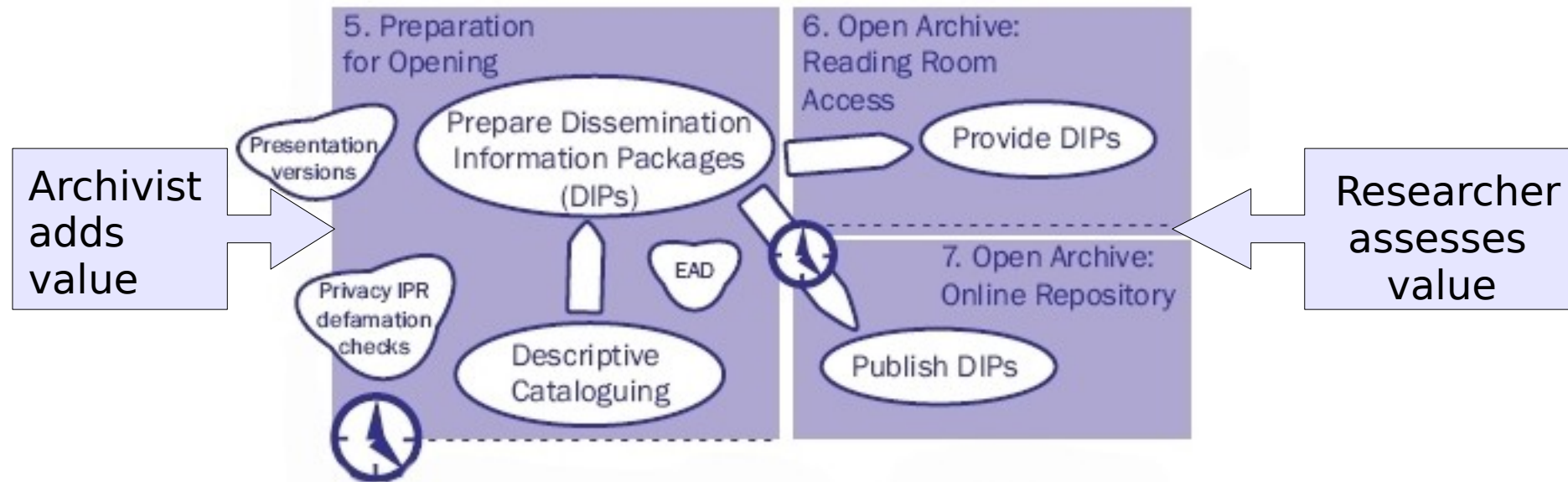


# Repository preserves value



- Authenticity - evidential requirements
- Format migrations, accidental and malicious damage all threaten to undermine authenticity
- Risks mitigated through
  - Repository security
  - Preservation metadata – various inc. METS & PREMIS
  - Documented processes
  - Preservation monitoring and actions

# Archivists add value on access; researchers evaluate



- Archivists create finding aids/ways of interrogating the archive
- Researchers evaluate relevance of holdings; authenticity, content, ease of use, etc.



# Questions

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