



Why Should I Care About Personal Archiving?

According to the Washington DC Memory Lab, there are three main reasons:

- Daily organization. Personal collections are larger than ever, spanning physical things like keepsakes and journals, to digital things like Word documents, photographs, email, and social media accounts. Taking steps to care for your stuff will help you locate, reference, and re-use what you create.
- Security. Losing track of your assets and online accounts is a threat to your online identity and personal security.
- Legacy. What you produce purposefully (like a home movie or photograph) and what you produce in daily life (like a calendar appointment or email) could be important for your loved ones and for the cultural record.

Getting Your Materials Ready for the Memory Lab

1. Locate everything you want to save. This may include photo albums, file folders, carousels of slides, CDs of photographs and more.
2. Organize by clumps that make sense to you. Here are a few examples:
 - Years
 - Holidays
 - Stages of Life
 - Types of material
3. Curate
 - Do you need all the photos of the beach that you took on vacation? Or are there one or two key photos you want to preserve?
 - Remember! Making digital copies of your important items is important, but it is also time consuming.
4. Prioritize
 - Determine which items are most important to you. These may be things requested by friends or family, or simply the thing you love most.

Planning Your Visit

1. Decide where you will store your digital files. This can be an external hard drive, 8GB (or higher) thumb drive, or to the Cloud.
2. Decide how you will organize your files.
 - Will you place all the images from 1980 into the same folder? All Halloween images together?
3. Call the library at (415) 485-3321 and ask to reserve the Memory Lab.
 - Reservations can be made in 3 hour time slots.
 - A librarian will assist you for 5-10 minutes to get you started.

Important Facts About Scanning Your Materials

Dots Per Inch (DPI)

- DPI refers to the number of dots per inch used by a printer to print an image or document.
- DPI also refers to the number of dots (or pixels) per inch the scanner uses to scan the image.
- When scanning, you want to make sure that the DPI you use is high enough get a great quality image. However, the larger the DPI you use, the larger the file it creates will be and the longer it takes to scan.

Instructions provided in the lab include recommended DPI to use for documents, photos, slides, and negatives.

File Formats

- We recommend saving your materials as a TIFF or a JPEG. These are formats that don't require special software to open.
 - **TIFF:** Lossless, larger file size, used by the Library of Congress
 - **JPEG:** Lossy, smaller file size, generally good enough for personal archiving.

Free Cloud Storage Providers

(Note: We do not endorse any specific cloud storage provider)

- Dropbox – 2GB free storage
- Google Drive – 15GB free storage
- Mega – 50GB free storage