

The Preservation Policy of the Federal Archives, Germany

A comprehensive approach to preservation and digital access

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28–29 June 2023, Berlin,
Germany

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29.06.2023

www.bundesarchiv.de



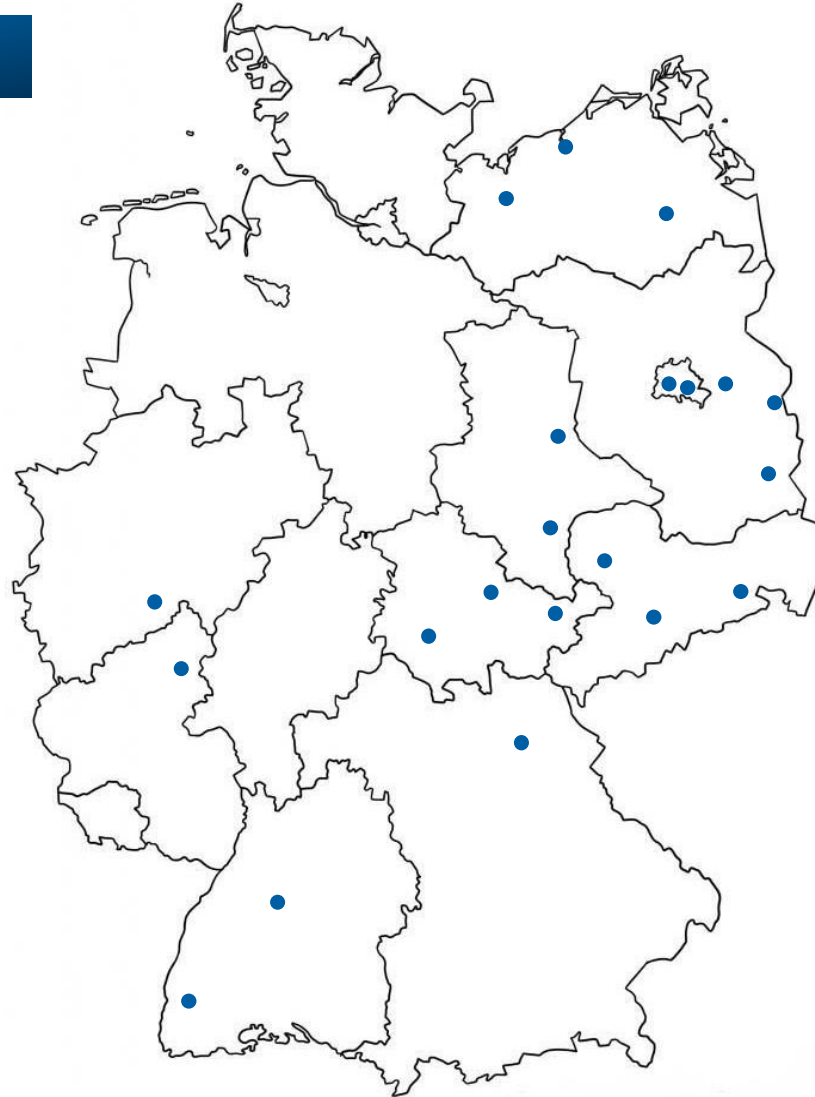
Facts and Numbers



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Offices



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Challenges

large amounts of
industrially made paper

unsuitable storage

demand for mass-
digitization

many sites all over
Germany

funding

finding well-
trained staff

integrating staff,
workflows and
expectations



Preservation Policy 2022

Large-scale Digitization

- Digitization of 0.5% p.a.
- Standards for digitization
- Digital preservation

Preventive Conservation

- Risk assessment
- Optimized Storage conditions
- Environmental Monitoring
- Disaster preparedness
- Pest Management

Conservation

- Basic conservation treatment in preparation for digitization
- Further treatment only if necessary
- Projects

comprehensive approach to preservation and digital access.



Preservation Levels

All archival records are subject to basic conservation treatment and preventive measures.

Preservation Level

Highly prioritized records/fonds
(*Kernbestände*)

Medium level (about 80% of the Federal Archives' holdings)

Low level (*Zwischenarchivgut*, non-appraised records)

Storage, digitization and conservation

Storage: cool conditions (8-14 °C, 40-50% rh)
Digitization: high priority, systematic approach
Conservation: necessary treatment

Storage: room conditions (16-20 °C, 35-55% rh)
Digitization: on demand
Conservation: basic treatment

Storage: room conditions (< 25 °C, 25-60 % rh)
Digitization: generally no digitization
Conservation: generally no conservation treatment



Reasons for Digitization

Surrogates for usage

priorities: most important records, frequently used fonds

- Altes Reich/Deutscher Bund
- 1933-1945
- allied war criminal trials
- Bundeskanzleramt
- MfS/Stasi

Digitization on demand

- starting in 2024
- prevents repeated scanning of frequently used files
- availability in invenio

Acceleration of internal processes

- card indexes with information on people
- easier and faster research
- AI helps indexing names and other information
- online availability is dependent on date of birth



Quality and Standards

Metamorfoze preservation imaging guideline (KNB)
(level: metamorfoze light)



ISO 19264-1:2021 (level: B)

- objective testing of scan-equipment quality
- used in tenders for equipment and digitization contracts



Scanning Equipment

overhead scanners/cameras

- bound or fragile papers
- always in combination with book cradles

hybrid scanning systems

- overhead cameras in combination with feed scanners
- loose papers and index cards
 - good or acceptable paper stability

other materials/systems

- maps, posters, photos etc.:
- large format scanners (partly with book cradles)
 - photo scanners
- microforms without paper records
- mass-microfilm/-fiche scanners



Conservation

The Federal Archives has 4 conservation units, located at the sites of the digitization units
Capacities will be expanded following the roll-out of digitization programs

Assessment prior to digitization



Basic treatment and housing



Preparing for digitization



Further conservation treatment if necessary (projects)

- Minimal risks
- Minimal intervention;
- Complete Capture
- Reversible methods;
- Full documentation

→ The Federal Archives' mass-deacidification program will not be continued



Preservation-friendly Digitization

Challenges

mass processes

fragile and bound papers

digitizing a page in full and
as true to the original as
possible

Solutions

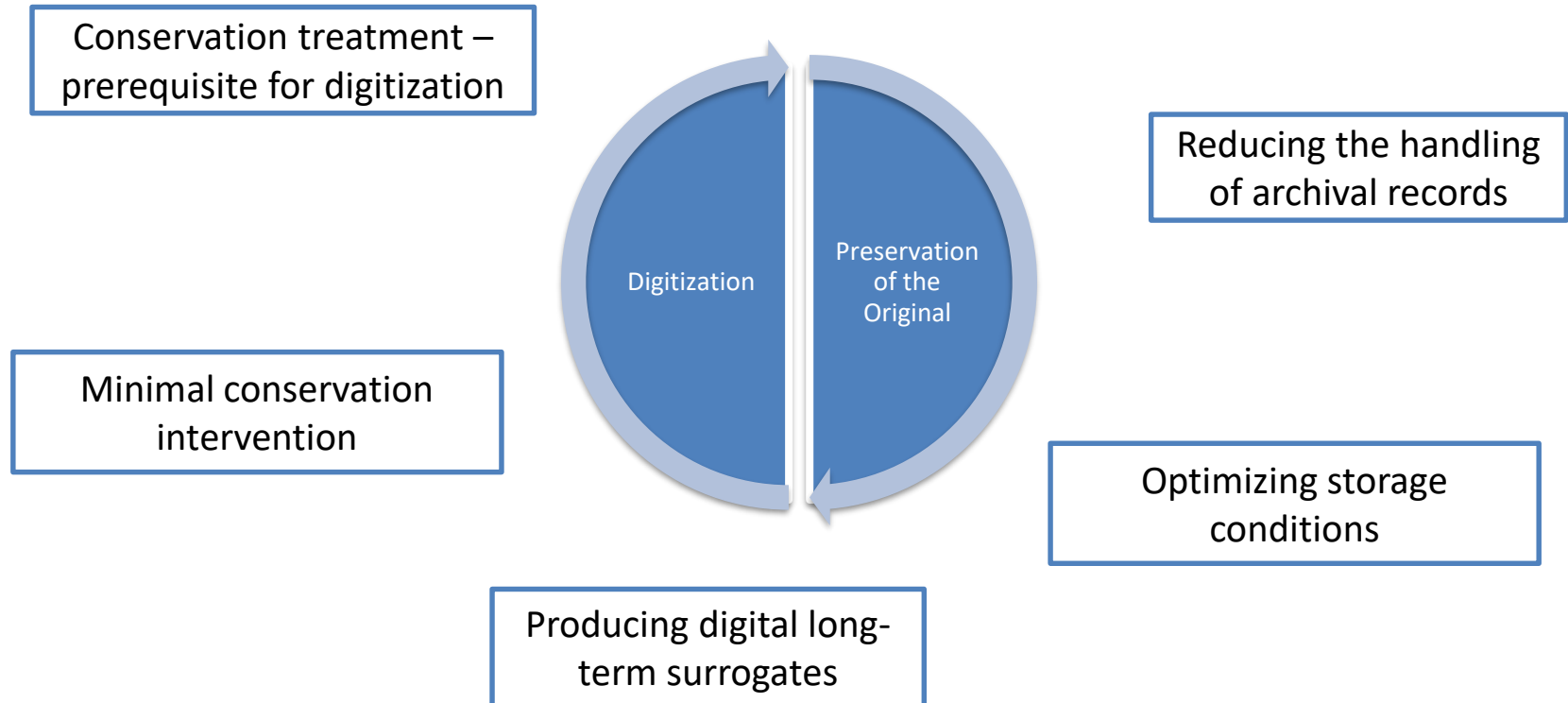
development of
appropriate equipment
with manufacturers

working together with
conservation and
restoration

norms and guidelines



Preserving of original records and digitization are complementary aspects of the Federal Archives' preservation strategy



Thank you!



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Präsentation:

Titel: **The Preservation Policy of the Federal Archives, Germany**

vorgetragen von: Jens Niederhut, Kristina John

vorgetragen am: 29.06.2023

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