



How do you make digital pictures, important electronic documents and digital home movies last?
You have to make important decisions and actively manage your digital files for them to last long enough to pass them to future generations. The Library of Congress has some tips to help you get started:



Identify what you want to save

Where are the files that you create located? On your computer? On your camera? Online? Are they scattered around on unmarked CDs?

Gather everything that you want to collect into one place.



Decide what is most important to you

Select the images, e-mails, and documents that have long-term value to you and your family. If there are multiple versions of the same file save the highest quality version



Organize the content

Create a consistent organizational structure. Create a main archive folder and title it something like, "My Archive." If you want to organize your files further, create other folders inside the master folder and name them with simple titles such as "video," "photos" or "documents."



Make copies and manage them in different places

Make at least two copies of your archive folder—more copies are better. One copy can stay on your computer or laptop; put other copies on separate media such as DVDs, portable hard drives, or Internet storage and store the extra copies in different geographic locations.



Manage your archive over time

Be sure to check your saved files at least once a year to make sure you can read them. Plan to migrate your archive every few years to a new computer or storage system.