



An tUdarás Clárúcháin Maoine  
Property Registration Authority

# Preserve, Protect and Promote Access: Registry of Deeds Digitisation Strategy 2023-2025

To the Register appointed for registering Deeds &c

...of Lease bearing date the Eighth day of May One thousand seven hundred and twenty One ... City of Dublin Gloathier of the one part, and Joseph White of ... of the other part. Whereby she said Jacob Zool hath demised and set unto the said Joseph White ... on the Westside of New Street in the County of Dublin with the Backside behind the ... at the rear thereof, and the Backside adjoining to the said Slaughtier Howes on the West ... bounded on the East to the Kings Palace ... On the South to Marness's Holding, on the West to the Ditch which separates the ... belonging to the said Jacob Zool and on the North to another Holding of his then in the Occupation ... together with the Blood hole and all other the Appurtenances to the Premises belonging in as ample manner ... also the Wood ... each ... inches long and ... to the said ... of the said House, ... last past for the ... years, at the yearly rent of eight pounds payable quarterly, as also three Dozen of Ox Tongues at ... shillings fixed in lieu thereof at the Election of the said Jacob ... as Duties, which said Lease is witnessed by James Dwyer of the City of Dublin aforesaid ... Notary in the said City ... and Sealed

in presence of us  
James Dwyer  
1721  
John Smith Notary

The above named John Smith maketh Oath That he saw the said Zool and Joseph White duly Sealed and execute the above mentioned Lease (of which the above Writing is the Memorial) And also saw White sign and seal the said Memorial, And that he this Deponent Witness to the said Lease and Memorial, And that he delivered to Mr. William Barry Deputy Register on the Thirteenth day of ... 1721 At eleven o'clock in the Forenoon

John Smith

Lib 31 Pag. 169 - Mlp

Contents .....	0
Foreword from Chief Executive .....	3
1.0 Introduction .....	4
1.1 Purpose .....	4
1.2 Our History.....	4
1.3 Our Records .....	4
1.4 Our Stakeholders .....	5
2.0 Context for Digitisation .....	6
2.1 Introduction .....	6
2.2 Strategic Alignment .....	7
2.3 Legislative Framework and Governance .....	7
2.4 Strategy Development Methodology .....	8
2.5 SWOT Analysis .....	9
2.6 Benefits and Challenges of Digitising Registry of Deeds Collections.....	11
2.6.1 Benefits.....	11
2.6.2 Challenges .....	12
3.0 Vision, Mission and Values.....	14
3.1 Vision .....	14
3.2 Mission.....	14
3.3 Our Values Framework .....	14
4.0 Our Approach.....	15
5.0 Strategic Goals .....	15
5.1 Goal One: To adopt a best practice approach to all aspects of digitisation .....	15
5.1.1 Introduction.....	15
5.1.2 High Level Objectives .....	15
5.1.3 Actions.....	16
5.2 Goal Two: To Safeguard Long Term Access to our Digitised Collections.....	17
5.2.1 Introduction.....	17
5.2.2 High Level Objectives .....	17
5.2.3 Actions.....	18
.....	19
5.3 Goal Three: To embed innovation and collaboration in our digitisation activities .....	19
5.3.1 Introduction.....	19
5.3.2 High Level Objectives .....	19
5.3.3 Actions.....	21
.....	21

5.4 Goal Four: To make our digitised collections accessible and discoverable online.....	21
5.4.1 Introduction.....	21
5.4.2 High Level Objectives .....	21
5.4.3 Actions.....	23
6.0 Implementation and Review.....	25
Appendix 1: Summary Table of Registry of Deeds Records, Size, Existence of Copies .....	26
Appendix 2 Glossary of Terms .....	27
Appendix 3 Related Policy Documents and Statutes.....	29
Appendix 4 Members of Registry of Deeds Digitisation Advisory Group 2019-2022.....	30
Appendix 5 Bibliography of Registry of Deeds sources .....	32

## Foreword from Chief Executive

It is a great pleasure for me to introduce the *Registry of Deeds Digitisation Strategy: Preserve, Protect and Promote Access 2023-2025*.

The Property Registration Authority (PRA) is an organisation that has a long history of protecting property rights. In addition to protecting the title on the digital register, the PRA also has responsibility for the conservation and preservation of, and access to, important records in the Registry of Deeds, going back to 1708.

The Registry of Deeds represents the single largest collection of Irish 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century source material, undamaged by the disasters that struck other Irish records, and currently underutilised as a historical source. This new, rolling strategy identifies four main goals and related actions which will allow us to develop our digitisation capabilities and outputs over the next three years. The strategy is ambitious in scope, yet crafted to ensure targets are achievable and pragmatic.

As stewards of this data, a key goal in our strategy will be to focus on best practice in digitisation and archival management. We will safeguard any investment in digitisation by having robust digital preservation policies and procedures. We also acknowledge the value of collaboration and will leverage the knowledge and expertise of our partners to develop and deliver innovative and impactful digitisation projects. At the heart of the strategy is the goal to promote the accessibility and discoverability of our digitised records, ensuring our programme of digitisation meets the needs of our users and stakeholders.

It is a very exciting time for the PRA, particularly as during the lifetime of this strategy, we will merge with Ordnance Survey Ireland and the Valuation Office into a new body called Tailte Éireann. This new State entity will bring together land and property information services in the State, including registration, valuation, and surveying services. Being part of a new centralised organisation will facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge with our merger partners in the sphere of archives and records. This will create new opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues in Tailte Éireann to fully harness the cultural heritage potential of our records.

I wish to express my gratitude to everyone involved in the drafting of this Strategy, and in particular to the members of the Registry of Deeds Digitisation Strategy Advisory Group and our proof of concept project partners. These individuals and organisations have kindly shared their knowledge and expertise with us as we developed this strategy. Finally, I would like to thank our staff in the Registry of Deeds Archive Service and throughout the PRA. We have an innovative and responsive workforce and I look forward to working together on delivering on the key goals and objectives set out in this Strategy over the next three years.



**Liz Pope**  
PRA Chief Executive Officer

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to provide an overview of the key goals and high level objectives of the initial phase of the Registry of Deeds' programme for digitisation. The *Preserve, Protect and Promote Access: Registry of Deeds Digitisation Strategy 2023-2025* will outline the approach of the Registry of Deeds Archive Services in developing a sustainable programme of digitisation and our commitment to digital preservation. The strategy will be delivered through a combination of project work and business-as-usual activities, ensuring flexibility in response to the requirements of the PRA, Tailte Éireann and our stakeholders. The strategy does not detail our policies and procedures but rather is intended to provide a framework that will guide our programme for digitisation over the initial three year phase.

### 1.2 Our History

The Registry of Deeds has been the custodian of records of Ireland's property history since its establishment in 1708. The Registration of Deeds Act (Ireland) 1707 cited that the Registry's primary function was to formalise the transfer of land and to provide security of tenure by recording the existence of deeds and conveyances affecting a property. The system of registration, born in the context of the Penal Laws in Ireland, was intended to prevent perceived fraud and forgeries at the hands of Catholics in Ireland. Registration was not mandatory but there was significant uptake in Ireland, providing a comprehensive record of Ireland's land and property transactions from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present day.

These records are a unique resource for Ireland's social history and cultural heritage. The completeness of the collection is particularly valuable in the context of the destruction of the Public Record Office at the Four Courts in 1922. The Registry holds over five million memorial documents and 17,000 bound volumes telling the story of Ireland's social, economic, and property past. A portion of the collection continues to be in active legal use today, providing evidence of existence of deeds for unregistered land. This dual historical and legal function emphasises the value of the collection and the imperative to preserve it for future generations.

### 1.3 Our Records

The collections held by the Registry of Deeds include Memorials, Transcript Books, and Finding Aids (indexes). The latter includes the Names Index, the Lands Index and Abstract Books. The timeframe of the collections spans from 1708 to the present day, which requires us to make distinctions in our approach based on date of creation of the records. The business cases for digitising pre-1923 records can be centred on their historical value, uniqueness of informational content, physical format, and preservation priorities. There are no data protection considerations for this material. Post-1923 records are subject to the Data Protection Act 2018 and are more likely to be required to support essential legal services. Digitising post-1923 records should be considered within the wider context of the de-materialisation of PRA services and business continuity purposes.

**Memorials** were registered as evidence of the original deed or conveyance between 29 March 1708 and 30 April 2008. The records provide a synopsis of the deed, including dates, terms, parties involved and a description of the property affected. Memorials are the fullest statement of the deed and include original signatures. The level of conservation and preservation intervention required prior to digitisation for these series of records is high. Memorials were replaced by the Registry of Deeds (ROD) Application Form on 1 May 2008. Memorials/ROD Applications 1930 - 2018 have been

microfilmed by the PRA. ROD Applications from 2019 onwards will be scanned in lieu of microfilming.

**Transcript Books** contain full transcriptions of memorial documents, transcribed by Registry of Deeds clerks between 1708 and 1961. The level of preservation and conservation intervention required prior to digitisation for these records is low. Transcript books 1708-1929 have been microfilmed by the Church of Latter Day Saints, and six sample volumes 1708 -1832 were digitised by the PRA as part of our proof of concept digitisation projects in 2021. No copies exist of transcript books 1930 -1961.

The **Names Index** is an index of grantors named in transactions recorded at the Registry of Deeds. Grantor refers to the individual conveying or transferring ownership of a property. Names Indexes cover the period 1708 to 1969 in physical bound volume format and are held electronically post-1970. The level of preservation and conservation intervention required prior to digitisation for these records is generally low, with the exception of Names Indexes 1950- 1969 which are in poor condition due to frequent use. Names Indexes 1708 - 1929 have been microfilmed by the Church of Latter Day Saints. No copies exist of Names Indexes 1930 - 1969.

The **Lands Index** is a geographical index of transactions recorded at the Registry of Deeds. Entries contain the geographical denomination (listed alphabetically by first letter only), the barony or parish if present and the surname of the grantor only. Lands Indexes cover the period 1708 - 1949. Lands Indexes 1708 -1929 have been microfilmed by the Church of Latter Day Saints. No copies exist of Lands Indexes 1930 - 1949.

**Abstract Books** contain an abridged version of the details held within memorials. Abstracts cover the period 1833 - 1969 and include the registration number, date of registration, name and date of the deed, persons involved, description of the property and general nature of the deed. These records continue to be amended when a pre-1970 mortgage is vacated. Abstract Books exist in electronic format post 1970. A series of early Abstract Books, created retrospectively, exist for 1708 -1717, and 1800 -1832.

**Anonymous Business Partnership Registration:** An Act of the Parliament of Ireland to promote trade and manufacture by regulating and encouraging partnership came into effect in June 1782, with an amending Act in 1786. The Acts required the registration of partnership with the Registry of Deeds where the memorials were transcribed into special Anonymous Partnership Transcript Book volumes, which also recorded the dissolution of the particular partnership if that arose. No copies have been made of any of this succinct sub-series of Transcript Books (2 volumes), Names Index (2 volumes) and Memorial records (529 Memorials).

See Appendix 1 for Table summarising Registry of Deeds records series, dates, size, and existence of copies

## 1.4 Our Stakeholders

The collections held at the Registry of Deeds are of significant national and international importance and of interest to a broad spectrum of stakeholders, both as essential legal records and as a historical resource. Our internal stakeholders include our Tailte Éireann merger partners (Ordnance Survey Ireland and the Valuation Office) members of the Authority, PRA Management Board, PRA staff, and in particular the Registry of Deeds Archive Service staff. The Registry of Deeds' external stakeholders are varied, encompassing Government Departments, academic and cultural institutions, local and family historians, professional genealogists, legal professionals, our research and project partners, members of the public and those interested in cultural events.

Our digitisation strategy aims to consider the needs of all our internal and external stakeholders in conjunction with prioritising the preservation of and access to the records in our care. A cross section of our stakeholders is represented on the Registry of Deeds Digitisation Strategy Advisory Group, established in 2019.<sup>1</sup>



Image: Building façade showing Registry of Deeds and King's Inn, King's Inn Park.

## 2.0 Context for Digitisation

### 2.1 Introduction

In its custodianship role of the Registry of Deeds archive, the PRA has a responsibility to protect Ireland's cultural heritage and safeguard the Registry of Deeds' unique collections for future generations. The creation and curation of digital surrogates will provide an additional layer of preservation for the original records and the wealth of information they hold. Digitisation and online publication of records will be transformational in increasing how the records are accessed, and how the information can be searched and analysed, meeting the growing demand for and supporting the goals of increased digital public services set in *Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework*.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 3 for list of members

The strategic purpose for digitising the archive collections was initially established by the 2006 Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform Report.<sup>2</sup> In the period between the 2006 preservation report and 2018, the PRA was approached on numerous occasions to explore collaborative digitisation projects from a variety of commercial, academic, and non-profit organisations.<sup>3</sup>

The requirement for professional archives management was initially identified as a workforce priority in the PRA's 5<sup>th</sup> iteration of formal workforce planning in July 2018. On this basis, the PRA recruited its first Archives Manager in November 2018 to oversee the development of Archive Services at the Registry of Deeds, including a digitisation strategy. The Registry of Deeds Digitisation Strategy Advisory Group was established in June 2019, and in April 2020 a Digitisation Archivist was appointed. A key milestone was the acquisition of high-end reprographic A0 scanner in October 2021 which facilitated the delivery of two pilot proof-of-concept digitisation projects in 2022.

There is an enduring interest in the collections from external stakeholders. The development of a digitisation strategy at the Registry of Deeds is keenly followed by vested interest groups and members of the public. The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the benefits and opportunities of providing services online and digital access to Registry of Deeds records.

## 2.2 Strategic Alignment

Importantly, digitising cultural heritage for the benefit of the public also aligns with current Government policy and plans. There is increased public appetite and expectation for the delivery of public services electronically and our digitisation strategy will help deliver on this demand. The *Report of the Joint Committee on Maximising our Cultural and Genealogical Heritage* of 2015 identifies land and property records as one of the "four main record sets" which underpin genealogical research with specific reference to the Registry of Deeds.<sup>4</sup> Digitisation and developing online services forms part of the objectives of the *Creative Ireland Strategy 2017-2022*, *National Development Plan, 2018-2027*, *Our Public Service, 2020*, *Ireland's Diaspora Strategy, 2020-2025*, *Connecting Government 2030 - A Digital and ICT Strategy for Ireland's Public Service*, *Public Sector Climate Action Mandate 2022*, and the *Civil Service Renewal 2030 Strategy*.

In addition, the digitisation strategy, by increasing accessibility and fostering innovation supports the *UN Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all* and *UN Sustainable Development Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*.

The Registry of Deeds Digitisation Strategy is also informed by other important PRA strategies and plans including *PRA Statement of Strategy 2022-2024*, *PRA Data Strategy* and the annual business planning process.

## 2.3 Legislative Framework and Governance

Digitisation at the Registry of Deeds is guided by the following legislative measures:

- National Archives Act 1986

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<sup>2</sup>Department of Justice, *Report on the Protection of Documents held in the Registry of Deeds, 2006*

<sup>3</sup>Beyond 2022, Eneclann, Ancestry.com and FamilySearch are examples of organisations which have approached the PRA with tentative proposals to digitise Registry of Deeds records.

<sup>4</sup>[https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/31/joint\\_committee\\_on\\_education\\_and\\_social\\_protection/reports/2015/2015-04-02\\_report-on-maximising-our-cultural-and-genealogical-heritage\\_en.pdf](https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/31/joint_committee_on_education_and_social_protection/reports/2015/2015-04-02_report-on-maximising-our-cultural-and-genealogical-heritage_en.pdf), Date Accessed: 11 January 2021.



- Copyright Act 2000
- Registration of Deeds and Title Act 2006
- Registry of Deeds Fees Order, Statutory Instrument No. 51 of 2008
- Registry of Deeds Rules, Statutory Instrument No. 51 of 2008
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Tailte Éireann Bill, 2022

## 2.4 Strategy Development Methodology

The Registry of Deeds Digitisation Strategy was developed following an extensive process of information gathering, consultation, analysis and proof of concept projects.

Activities included:

- Stakeholder analysis and engagement, including the coordination of the Registry of Deeds Digitisation Strategy Advisory Group. The Group features representatives from a cross section of our stakeholders, vested interest groups, and professional experts who have provided advice on the development of a programme for digitisation at the Registry of Deeds. Meetings have included open discussion forums, survey on digitisation priorities, and presentations from representatives of different user groups and experts.
- A literature review has been conducted in the form of a thorough investigation of professional publications, case studies, digitisation policies and strategies with professional institutions and lessons learned from similar projects in cultural heritage organisations.
- Consulted international best practice for the production of digital surrogates and engagement with the digital humanities. Standards for the management of digitisation outputs including the OAIS reference model (ISO 14721) and the NDSA Levels of Preservation. Attendance at professional events on best practice for digital archives and networking with colleagues within the profession also informed strategy.
- Review of existing Registry of Deeds and Title Act 2006, Registry of Deeds 2008 statutory instruments, and consideration of our obligations under other relevant legislation such as National Archives Act 1986, Data Protection Act, 2018 and Freedom of Information Act, 2015.
- Development of collection level descriptions and box list for main record series at Registry of Deeds to facilitate greater understanding of the scope and extent of collections. Collection lists have been published on prai.ie.
- Analysis of the *Registry of Deeds Preservation Assessment Survey* (March 2020). This survey, carried out by team of consultant conservators engaged by the PRA in 2019, assigned preservation priority bands to the Registry of Deeds records. The bands range from very low, medium and high priority.
- Development and delivery of two proof-of-concept digitisation projects:
  - *Deeds and Sasines Research Network Project*: A collaborative research project which ran from Sept 2020 to June 2022 and was funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Irish Research Council. Partners included the PRA, National Records of Scotland, Trinity College Dublin and ADAPT (Beyond 2022).
  - *Beyond 2022 and Registry of Deeds Transkribus Model Proof of Concept Project*: A partnership project with Beyond 2022 to create a Registry of Deeds specific

*Transkribus* model and to test accuracy of model by digitising three Transcript Books (1800 pages) and analysing quality of transcription generated by *Transkribus*.

- Preparation of a SWOT analysis which provides a framework for our digitisation strategy and high level goals. This is set out below.

## 2.5 SWOT Analysis

S	STRENGTHS
1	Archives Manager and Digitisation Archivist with professional qualifications and archive project experience
2	A0 Size Book and Document Scanner suitable for large scale archive digitisation projects in situ
3	ROD Digitisation Strategy Advisory group established with broad membership of stakeholders and expertise
4	Existing knowledge of the archive collection as a whole from ROD Archives staff and staff commitment
5	Management Board and Authority support for ROD digitisation initiatives.
6	Inclusion of ROD digitisation in PRA Statement of Strategy 2022-2024
7	Completeness of the ROD collection 1708-present day
8	Registry of Deeds Preservation Assessment Survey completed
9	Good condition of bound volumes -majority requiring minimal conservation intervention to digitise
10	Successful implementation and lessons learned in digitisation pilot projects and ad hoc scanning requests
11	Creation of Collection Level Descriptions/Box Lists/Item level lists to ascertain size and scope of different series
12	Microfilm copies of Memorials/ ROD Applications 1930-2018 held by PRA
13	Outreach programme providing evidence of public engagement and interest in Registry of Deeds archives
14	Good understanding of needs and priorities of different user groups
15	Organisational experience of Land Registry folio and map digitisation programme, 2002-2010

W	WEAKNESSES
1	Day-to-day operational demands and commitment to turnaround times impacting strategic development
2	Skills gaps within organisation - conservation, records management, digital humanities
3	Existing PRA digital infrastructure and storage not suitable for large scale programme of archival digitisation
4	Competing priorities in terms of ICT strategic focus during the period of the ROD Digitisation Strategy.
5	Opportunity cost to PRA/Tailte Éireann if committing to large scale programme of digitisation of Registry of Deeds records
6	Requirement to access records for legal purposes - requires continuous availability of records during digitisation
7	Condition of Memorials - preservation and conservation intervention required pre and post scanning
8	Limited tracking system of ROD Memorials/Applications/Bound volumes
9	Registry of Deeds building not fully compliant with archival standards such as BS EN 16893 and BS 4971 2017

10	ROD Rules and Fees Orders do not include appropriate fees structure for services required by historical researchers
11	Microfilm Copies of Transcripts and Indexes 1708-1929 not held by PRA
12	Legacy issues in relation to microfilming of ROD Applications and poor quality images from 1960s/1970s
13	Poor condition of Names Indexes 1950-1969 due to high volume of handling
14	Limitations of Names Index and Lands Index as finding aids
15	Limited knowledge of organisational history (18th/19th century) of Registry of Deeds to contextualise public register records

0	OPPORTUNITIES
1	Archival and historical value of the records held and broad spectrum of interest in records
2	Important source for family historians and building connection with Irish Diaspora
3	Digital Humanities innovations such as NLP, entity searching and Tranksribus increase accessibility of digitised collections
4	Engagement with academic researchers and potential to collaborate on research funding applications
5	Existing partnership with Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland (Beyond 2022)
6	Building relationship with Digital Repository of Ireland as experts in digital preservation
7	Promote PRA mission of safeguarding property rights and transactions in Ireland by highlighting role as long term custodians of property records
8	Engagement with our merger partners to identify synergies in relation to digitisation and digital preservation
9	Geotagging of records to allow for search by place and across time, link Registry of Deeds with other important archival sources
10	Existence of microfilm copies of Transcripts and Indexes 1708-1929 held by NLI, PRONI and FamilySearch.org
11	Potential synergies with Government of Ireland policies such as Digital First, Civil Service Renewal 2030 Strategy, National Development Plan
12	Co-operative approach to archive and records function in Tailte Éireann to build a shared community of practice and fully exploit the cultural heritage potential of records
13	Potential new revenue sources for digitised records

T	THREATS
1	Security Breach to Registry of Deeds building /damage to records
2	Cyber Security for digitised records/metadata
3	Staff attraction, recruitment and retention - both professional and support roles
4	Disjointed branding - Registry of Deeds / landdirect / PRA / Tailte - can be confusing for end users
5	Changes in organisational priorities following Tailte Éireann Merger
6	Legislative changes to Land Law, Data Protection, Freedom of Information, Data Sharing, Open Data and the Reuse of Public Service Data through Acts, Directives and Regulations or policy changes which impact digitisation work
7	3rd party sites and platforms being mistaken for PRA/Registry of Deeds
8	Reliance on partners such as DRI, VRTI and their continued existence and business continuity planning

9	Re-occurrence of COVID-19 or other pandemic impacting project deliverables
10	PRA loss of intellectual control if microfilmed copies of Indexes and Transcript Books harnessed by other organisations/projects
11	Adverse economic environment, impact on public expenditure, insufficient funding received for digitisation projects through the estimates process

## 2.6 Benefits and Challenges of Digitising Registry of Deeds Collections

### 2.6.1 Benefits

#### *Preservation of the Original Records*

It is the responsibility of the PRA as custodian of the Registry of Deeds archive to ensure the long term preservation and accessibility of these records. A Preservation Assessment Survey, completed in March 2020, identified risks posed to the collections, particularly through daily access and handling. Digitisation will mitigate the risk of further physical deterioration of the original records by reducing the need for regular physical access.

#### *Business Continuity*

The existence of digital surrogates of the Registry of Deeds records would help mitigate against the risk of loss or damage to records in the event of disasters such as fire, flood or theft. It would also provide us with additional options for blended working and online service delivery for customers, and ensure our services were less impacted by COVID-19 or future pandemics.

#### *Access, Inclusion and Discoverability*

Digitisation, alongside cataloguing activities, creates opportunities for enhanced access to the Registry of Deeds' collections. It can alleviate some of the barriers to access traditionally experienced by our users, helping us to fulfil our Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty. It can also encourage new forms of engagement and research.

#### *Partnerships and Collaboration*

Digitised collections will open the Registry of Deeds to new partnerships and present opportunities to place our collections in a broader historical and geographical context.

#### *Reputational Benefits*

An effective digitisation strategy with managed outputs will hold reputational benefits for the Registry of Deeds, Property Registration Authority and Tailte Éireann when established among our stakeholders, cultural heritage colleagues and members of the public. High profile digitisation projects in Ireland, such as the Census of Ireland 1901 and 1911, and the Military Service Pensions Collection (1916-1923) have significantly enhanced the public profile and engagement of the public with the National Archives of Ireland and Military Archives respectively.

#### *Innovation*

The Registry of Deeds has been engaging in collaborative projects to explore innovative ways to render digitised collections accessible and discoverable. Our digitisation strategy will pursue work and enable the Registry of Deeds to examine emerging technologies in transcription, natural language processing and new ways of delving into our digitised cultural heritage material.

#### *Improved Processes for Staff*

In the longer term, digitisation will streamline workflows for staff when conducting essential functions of the Registry of Deeds. Digitised content that is easily accessible and searchable can help

reduce turnaround times for searches, copying services, and lessen the need for staff to use physical volumes. It will lead to reduction in staff time in processing records i.e. filing, retrieving and copying.

## 2.6.2 Challenges

### *Costs and Resources*

The long term costs of digitisation can be considerable and will vary according to the scope and aims of a project and the quality of digital images required. Costs include software, hardware, staff time to manage relationships with partners, prepare tenders, manage projects, prepare records for digitisation, digitise (in-house or third party service provider), apply metadata, quality control checks, and long term costs of managing digital images. Each project will require formal business case application where full costs, staffing and resource requirements are outlined, along with return on investment and cost of inaction.

### *Digital Infrastructure and Storage*

One of the primary challenges to any archival digitisation project is establishing sustainable, cost-effective and secure digital storage. The PRA has a limited amount of available ICT network storage meaning that alternative solutions must be assessed for all projects to ensure digital surrogates are available in the long term. A digital storage solution should be scalable to support the Registry of Deeds digitisation and digital preservation activities.

### *Digital Preservation*

Digital material is subject to a myriad of different hazards in comparison to hardcopy/paper archives. This includes bit rot and data decay, obsolescence, human error, inadequate metadata capture and disaster. Digital preservation is a series of managed activities necessary to ensure continued access to digital materials for as long as necessary. Its effectiveness hinges on three factors, organisational buy-in at high level, appropriate technology, and adequate resourcing. A fully digital preservation policy is required to ensure that digitised collections and associated metadata are available for future generations.

### *Balancing Strategy with Everyday Access and Copy Demands*

The Registry of Deeds operates a service to provide plain and certified copies of Memorials/ ROD Applications. This involves the scanning of Memorials/ROD Applications for the production of a single-use digital file which is then printed and the digital file is discarded, contradicting the best practice advice of 'SOAP' - scan once for all purposes. The Hornet A0 installation has already led to transformation in how we issues copies of oversize (larger than A3) memorials. However further workflows will need to be developed in order to integrate this day-to-day service into a sustainable programme of digitisation and manage any potential priority conflicts.

### *Obsolescence*

Hardware and software obsolescence is an ongoing issue facing digitised collections. Floppy disks, cassette tapes and VHS tapes are examples of everyday storage media that have been rendered obsolete by other emerging technologies. Obsolescence can also impact on the file formats selected, particularly if propriety file formats have been selected for use. We will need to monitor developing technologies, determine whether a data storage or file format technology is becoming obsolete, decide what equipment is important to keep into the future and consider how collections will be migrated from one technology to another as required.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth R. Leggett, *Digitisation and Digital Archiving*, (London, 2021), p. 210.

### *Microfilm Degradation*

Microfilm is one technology in which Registry of Deeds has relied on and invested heavily in the past as a business continuity and access measure. However, Microfilm is now becoming obsolete and existing microfilm holdings are subject to degradation.



**Image: Digitisation of Transcript Books on Book Scanner at Registry of Deeds**

## 3.0 Vision, Mission and Values

### 3.1 Vision

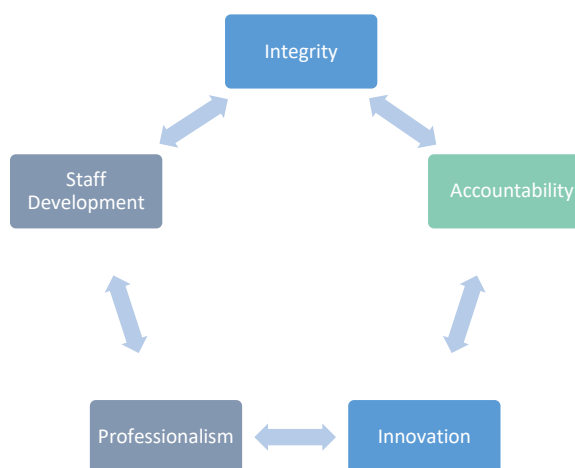
To preserve, protect and promote access to the unique Registry of Deeds public records, ensuring our records are accessible and discoverable for all.

### 3.2 Mission

To develop a sustainable, scalable digitisation programme for the Registry of Deeds public records in a manner which safeguards the original records, digital surrogates, and property rights, and visibly contributes to the preservation and promotion of Ireland's cultural heritage.

### 3.3 Our Values Framework

Our Digitisation Strategy subscribes to the values framework espoused in the *PRA Statement of Strategy 2022-2024*, the *Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviours*, and the *Archives and Records Association (Ireland and UK) Code of Ethics*. The values and qualities that guide our policies and behaviour are:



- **Integrity**  
Integrity is the governing ethos of the PRA. We will be guided by the responsibility to protect our collections, and have an ethical approach to all our partnerships and projects.
- **Accountability**  
Our digitisation projects will embrace value for money and sustainability. We will be transparent in our decision making processes.
- **Professionalism**  
We will be guided by best practice approach, professional expertise and consultation.
- **Innovation**  
We will explore new technologies and digital humanities approaches.
- **Staff development**  
Develop staff knowledge and skills in creating and managing digitised collections.

## 4.0 Our Approach

With limited resources, it is not possible to prioritise all collections for digitisation at the same time. Over the next three years, we intend to focus on three different strands:

1. Digitising microfilm content and utilising *Transkribus* to enhance discoverability of this content. This approach will allow us to deliver visible results quickly, in a cost effective manner, which will have immediate benefit to our stakeholders.
2. Develop smaller bespoke digitisation projects. This work will focus on increasing public engagement with historically significant, vulnerable and underused aspects of collections.
3. Build capabilities to deliver a scalable, cost effective digitisation programme into the future including an intuitive and fit for purpose front end for users.

## 5.0 Strategic Goals



### 5.1 Goal One: To adopt a best practice approach to all aspects of digitisation

#### 5.1.1 Introduction

There is no standalone national or international digitisation standard that should be adhered to. What we have available are best practice guidelines. The Registry of Deeds is committed to reflecting best practice in terms of conservation, preservation, creation of digital surrogates, digital curation, digital preservation and user experience. We will be guided by best practice advice from organisations such as the Digital Preservation Coalition, Digital Repository of Ireland and National Archives of Ireland. We will also consider the full lifecycle process of cataloguing, conservation, preservation, technical development and digital preservation in all digitisation projects. This approach will protect the investment in digitisation, avoid duplication of effort and funding, and ensure long-term preservation of our original records and digital collections.

#### 5.1.2 High Level Objectives

##### **I. We will ensure the preservation of the original records as part of the digitisation process**

The Registry of Deeds is committed to the preservation of its collections. The conservation and preservation needs of our records will be assessed prior to imaging. Collections will be surface cleaned, rehoused and receive conservation intervention as required. Options for filling skills gaps in relation to conservation for immediate projects and in longer term will also be considered.

##### **II. We will implement best practice in the capture of digital surrogates**

The Registry of Deeds will develop policies and procedures for the capture of archive-standard digital surrogates, establishing acceptable file formats, minimum technical specifications and metadata requirements, informed by best practice standards and needs of specific projects. A policy of 'scan once for all purposes' (SOAP) will be pursued where possible to minimise the physical risk posed to our records during the digitisation process.

##### **III. We will capture appropriate metadata to enrich access to our collections**



We will ensure that published digital images are accompanied by comprehensive descriptive, structural and administrative metadata.<sup>6</sup> Metadata will be reviewed and enriched over time as the team becomes more skilled in managing outputs. The metadata standard adopted will be influenced by metadata standards of the Digital Repository of Ireland, requirements of project partners and user groups.

**IV. We will benchmark our procedures against industry standards**

We will regularly review digitisation and digital curation workflows and monitor developments in the field to ensure that our practices continue to align with current industry standards. The information made available online by the Digital Preservation Coalition and the Digital Repository of Ireland will inform decisions regarding the latest best practice approaches.

**V. We will ensure our staff are appropriately trained and there is appropriate bench strength via workforce planning**

We will provide training to digitisation staff to ensure their confidence in book handling, operating equipment and standards and workflows. Digitisation staff will be supported in attending relevant training and professional events as they arise. Regular contact will be maintained with technical support for digitisation hardware and software.

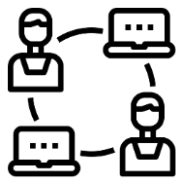
**VI. We will take a project management approach to digitisation work**

The PRA Project Management Policy 2021 will be adhered to for all digitisation projects. The PRA’s Project Management Office and its resources will be utilised to ensure that projects proceed on the basis of their alignment to the strategic goals of the organisation.

5.1.3 Actions

1.1	Implementation the Recommendations of the Preservation Assessment Survey (March 2020) in relation to any digitisation work undertaken.	Ongoing
1.2	To develop a tender for Conservation Services to support digitisation activities over the next three years.	End Q1 2023
1.3	Create Digitisation Project Manual detailing file format and metadata requirements, and workflow procedures for each project undertaken.	Ongoing
1.4	To develop a training programme for all new staff and refresher training on annual basis for existing Registry of Deeds Archive Service staff.	Ongoing
1.5	Annual Skills Gap Review and robust Workforce Plan for Registry of Deeds Archive Service.	Ongoing
1.6	Project Management documentation submitted to PMO Office including sunset review of all digitisation projects to capture lessons learned.	Ongoing

<sup>6</sup> Guided by existing industry standards including PREMIS and Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DCMI).



## 5.2 Goal Two: To Safeguard Long Term Access to our Digitised Collections

### 5.2.1 Introduction

The production of archive quality digital surrogates requires a sustainable long-term repository solution to ensure their storage, preservation and access. A detailed business case to acquire a trusted digital repository was prepared by Registry of Deeds Archive Services and agreed by the PRA Management board in October 2021. The business case recommended that the PRA becomes members of Digital Repository of Ireland (DRI). The DRI gained the Core Trust Seal in 2018 and is aligned with OAIS (Open Archival Information System) reference model (ISO 14721).<sup>7</sup> This certification means a repository is sustainable and trustworthy for its stakeholders.<sup>8</sup> Each digital object published in the DRI will be given a persistent identifier through the DOI (digital object identifier). This makes them more citable than a URL and will help with long-term discoverability. By utilising the DRI membership services, we can ensure the digital preservation of PRA's digital surrogates in a scalable, best practice and cost effective manner.

### 5.2.2 High Level Objectives

#### **I. We will be active members of DRI and develop an ingest workflow with the Digital Repository of Ireland**

We will utilise the broad range of benefits of DRI membership including participation in the community network for the exchange of ideas, approaches and best practices. As members of the DRI we will test and develop an ingest workflow that works for both organisations and that meets DRI file format and metadata standards. Collections selected for ingestion into DRI will be subject to Data Protection Impact Assessment and Fraud Impact Assessment. We will explore options for a Registry of Deeds specific front end for access to our digitised collections held by the DRI.

#### **II. We will develop a digital preservation policy which complements our DRI membership**

We will create instructions for the maintenance of digital surrogates through a structured digital preservation policy. This will include integrity checks (checksums) of digital files over time using specialised software, disaster recovery protocols and appropriate file backups. It will aim to achieve at least Level 1 compliance with the National Digital Stewardship Alliance (NDSA) *Levels of Digital Preservation*.<sup>9</sup> This aim is recognised in *PRA Statement of Strategy, 2022-2024* which included a high level objective to develop a digital preservation strategy for born-digital and digitised records.

#### **III. We will consider long term storage requirements and associated cost implications for all digitisation projects undertaken**

Overtime, we may find that not all digitised collections are suitable for ingest into DRI, particularly if incompatible with GDPR or Registry of Deeds Fees Order. Equally, as well as retaining access copies, the PRA may decide for certain projects to retain preservation quality Tiff digital surrogates. Therefore, business cases for each digitisation project undertaken, will also include a data management plan. Working with our PRA ICT colleagues we will explore options for secure digital storage including cloud storage where necessary.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.iso.org/standard/57285.html>. Date Accessed: 17 November 2020.

<sup>8</sup> [Why certification – CoreTrustSeal](#), Date Accessed: 19 September 2022

<sup>9</sup> <https://ndsa.org/publications/levels-of-digital-preservation/>, Date Accessed: 9 November 2020.

### 5.2.3 Actions

2.1	To implement business case for a Trusted Digital Repository Solution as approved by PRA Management Board Q1 2021	End Q2 2023
2.2	To be active members of the Digital Repository of Ireland including participation in members events, training initiatives and workshops	Ongoing
2.3	To develop an ingest workflow with DRI and successfully ingest 1800 digital images into DRI by end 2022	End Q4 2022
2.4	To prepare and implement ingest schedule with the DRI for 2023 and 2024	Ongoing
2.5	To explore options for a Registry of Deeds specific front end for accessing DRI materials (see also related action 5.5)	End Q4 2023
2.6	To contribute to the PRA Digital Preservation Policy, with specific consideration to digitised collections.	End Q4 2023
2.7	To develop process to carryout regular integrity checks (checksums) of digitised collections using specialised software	End Q4 2023
2.8	To create data management plans for all digitisation projects to ensure appropriate storage available.	Ongoing



## 5.3 Goal Three: To embed innovation and collaboration in our digitisation activities

### 5.3.1 Introduction

The successful completion of two pilot proof-of-concept projects in 2022 was anchored on collaboration with Beyond 2022 (now VRTI) and a network of partners for the Deeds and Sasines Research Project. These pilot projects enabled the testing of key elements of digitisation work and provided evidence to support future, larger grant and business case applications. Both projects also utilised new AI technology in the form of *Transkribus* software platform which enhances the discoverability of digitised records. As a participating institution in Beyond 2022 Phase II (2019–2022), the Registry of Deeds contributed 3,600 images from our eighteenth century Transcript Books to the ground breaking Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland ([www.virtualtreasury.ie](http://www.virtualtreasury.ie)), launched in June 2022.

Moving forward, we recognise that a collaborative approach to digitisation activities will enhance the knowledge base and skillsets of Registry of Deeds staff and will place the Registry of Deeds collections within their broader national and international context. Our perspective is that more can be achieved by working together than by working separately. Innovation will form a cornerstone of our digitisation activities and we welcome technical and procedural transformations which will help us achieve our goals.

### 5.3.2 High Level Objectives

#### **I. We will develop a framework for evaluating future research and partnership requests.**

Collaboration provides exciting opportunities to expose our collections to wider audiences, public engagement and scholarship. However, enthusiasm for new projects needs to be balanced with appropriate assessment of any new risks they may bring. Each new venture will be carefully considered alongside the goals, benefits, processes and resources involved.

#### **II. We will continue to utilise *Transkribus* as a tool to enhance discoverability of Registry of Deeds collections.**

*Transkribus* is an extremely powerful and useful tool that machine reads handwritten historical records, creating accurate and searchable transcriptions. Testing has shown that *Transkribus* is equally effective on images created as colour TIFF digital surrogates and images created by digitising microfilm. The models which have been created to date will require further refinement and enhancement for specific Registry of Deeds record sets. Any front-end platform utilised to access Registry of Deeds records, whether shared or standalone, will also require integration capabilities with *Transkribus* outputs. To-date, the purchase of *Transkribus* credits has been borne by project partners, but costs for PRA standalone projects will need to be built into future business cases.

#### **III. We will build on the relationships developed by the Deeds and Sasines Research Project**

The network brought together a network of academic historians, digital humanities experts, National Records of Scotland and academic institutions. The goodwill generated from this initial research project, along with lessons learned, has provided a platform to explore future grant funding and research proposals within the academic sector.

#### **IV. We will deepen our role as a key participating institution with the Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland (Beyond 2022)**

As part of the VRTI phase III (2023-2025) project, the PRA has an opportunity to deepen our collaborations by contributing to the VRTI International Advisory Panel and selecting additional Registry of Deeds records to display in the VRTI. The VRTI project will continue to be a world- leader in the digital humanities field and using innovation to link data concerning localities and communities across time will be a key component of phase III.

**V. We will look for opportunities to collaborate with our Tailte Éireann merger partners**

The digitisation of archives is an area which offers excellent opportunity for synergies and knowledge sharing among Tailte Éireann merger partners. There is huge potential to use linked data approaches to create a single access point platform for researchers to access collections from all three organisations. Any Registry of Deeds digitisation projects undertaken will have sustainability and future compatibility with Tailte Éireann partners embedded from the point of concept and throughout.



### 5.3.3 Actions

3.1	To develop a framework by which to consider research or partnership requests	End Q1 2023
3.2	To continue to utilise and develop Registry of Deeds <i>Transkribus</i> models in order to create searchable transcriptions of digitised collections.	Ongoing
3.3	To develop in-house expertise on the refinement of Registry of Deeds <i>Tranksribus</i> models	End Q4 2023
3.4	To develop proposal for phase two of Deeds and Sasines Research Network activities	End Q2 2023
3.5	To build on existing relationship with Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland (Beyond 2022) including development of new projects.	Ongoing
3.6	To continue engagement with Tailte Éireann merger partners on archives services and digitisation matters	Ongoing

## 5.4 Goal Four: To make our digitised collections accessible and discoverable online

### 5.4.1 Introduction

Digitising our collections has the potential to transform how they are used and experienced, making accessibility possible regardless of geography. However, there is no point in amassing thousands of digital images unless the content is searchable, and understood. In order to reach new audiences and reveal new knowledge, we will need to consider our online service delivery, and how we support and encourage active engagement with our digitised collections. This will align with the human-driven digital experience expectations in Connecting Government 2030: A Digital and ICT Strategy for Ireland’s Public Service

### 5.4.2 High Level Objectives

#### I. We will understand our users’ needs through research and engagement

We have some big challenges to deliver an intuitive experience for users wishing to access our digitised collections. User research is the only way to find out what works best when delivering online services. We will engage with stakeholders to inform the development of a user centric public access portal for our digitised collections.

#### II. We will further develop the business case for digitising 3,500 microfilm rolls of Memorials/ROD Applications 1930-2018

Microfilm technology is subject to degradation and is becoming obsolete. As we currently hold 3,400 microfilm rolls, it is essential that we migrate these to a digital format. This will ensure continued access to content and introduce efficiencies in the delivery of copying services.

#### III. We will engage with National Library of Ireland, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and Church of Latter Day Saints to explore opportunities to acquire and enhance discoverability of existing microfilm collections for Registry of Deeds Names Indexes, Lands Indexes and Transcript Books

Obtaining copies of microfilms to digitise ourselves or acquiring digitised outputs of these existing microfilm collections offers a remarkable opportunity to make a large quantity of our records

accessible quickly and in cost-effective manner. It would enhance our business continuity measures organisationally and reduce priority to re-image these records as archival quality TIFFS. As well as digitising microfilm, a complementary programme of work is required to create metadata and *Transkribus* outputs for the content to ensure it is searchable.

#### **IV. We will ensure our online publication of collections are accessible to all**

The development of public platform for online access to Registry of Deeds digitised collections is a key component of our strategy. We will ensure that our platform meets the PRA's obligations for digital inclusion and web accessibility under EU Directive 2016/2102. The Directive requires websites and mobile apps of public sector bodies to be compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1, Level AA.<sup>10</sup> Our platform, whether shared or standalone, must also be compatible with *Transkribus* outputs.

#### **V. We will prioritise the use of open source file formats to ensure interoperability and cross collaboration**

We will explore interoperability with external resources and connectivity with other digital collections and repositories, e.g. Logainm Linked Data, International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF), Europeana and others. This will help future proof our projects<sup>(11, 12, 13)</sup>

#### **VI. We will ensure our collections are discoverable**

We will publish ISAD (G)-compliant collection-level descriptions for the collections held at the Registry of Deeds. We will improve discovery through human centred design by better integrating our archival descriptions with supporting information like research guides and 'how to videos', thus improving the whole user journey. Digital objects published in the DRI will be given a persistent identifier through the DOI (digital object identifier) ensuring collections are open research compliant and helping with long-term discoverability.

#### **VII. We will encourage use and engagement with our digitised collections**

We will encourage use of our digitised collections in our outreach programme, taking the broad spectrum of current and potential users into consideration. This will contribute to the reputation and public image of the PRA and promote our responsibilities as custodians of a valuable aspect of Ireland's cultural heritage.

#### **VIII. We will provide clarity to users of our digitised collections on access rights and permissions to use images**

The 2000 Copyright Act provides for Government Copyright – Section 240 (1) and Section 240 (2) deals with a public register, as well as Library and Archive exemptions. It can be interpreted that it is a matter for the Property Registration Authority to decide what the terms of the copyright are for our digitised collections. As far as is possible, we will consider implementing an *Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Ireland (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 IE)* licence for collections over 100 years old, other than records which are subject to Registry of Deeds Fees Order. This allows for sharing of material, subject to the correct acknowledgements, but not for commercial use and it prohibits any alterations or changes to the copied records.<sup>14</sup> It will allow us to create content that is freely discoverable and re-usable, whilst considering our obligations under the Registry of Deeds Fees Order.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/web-accessibility>. Date accessed: 17 November 2020.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.logainm.ie/en/inf/proj-machines>. Date Accessed: 13 November 2020.

<sup>12</sup> <https://iiif.io/>. Date Accessed: 13 November 2020.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.europeana.eu/en>. Date Accessed: 17 November 2020.

<sup>14</sup> [Creative Commons — Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Ireland — CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 IE](#). Date accessed: 1 June 2021.

**IX. We will make recommendations to review and update the Registry of Deeds Fees Order.**

The provision of access to Registry of Deeds records online will comply with existing Registry of Deeds Statutory Instrument Rules and Fees Orders or appropriate waivers acquired. The Registry of Deeds Fees Order requires updating to include services relating to provision of ‘on demand’ digital images and copying services for non-legal purposes in order to expand online content in the future.

**X. We will strengthen our understanding of the organisational history of the Registry of Deeds.**

In order to fully understand and interpret the Registry of Deeds records, a comprehensive organisational history is required. This will allow us understand how and why specific record series were created, how policies, procedures and processes evolved throughout its 315 years, and what success and challenges the organisation had in meeting its goals.

5.4.3 Actions

4.1	Convene Registry of Deeds Digitisation Strategy Advisory Group meetings 3 times per annum over next 3 years.	Ongoing
4.2	To communicate digitisation strategy and ROD Archives projects/activities to internal and external stakeholders.	Ongoing
4.3	To assess condition of microfilm held by PRA and external parties to determine if suitable for digitisation.	End Q1 2023
4.4	Prepare Business Case for digitising microfilms of ROD Applications and Memorials 1930-2008	End Q2 2023
4.5	Prepare Business Case for enhancing discoverability of records held on microfilm by Church of Latter Day Saints, PRONI and NLI.	End Q4 2023
4.6	Develop business case for public platform delivery of digitised collections either via existing partnerships or standalone front end. (see also Action 2.5)	End Q2 2024
4.7	Publication of ISAD (G) Collection Level Descriptions and supporting guides for main record series held by Registry of Deeds	Ongoing
4.8	Prepare Review and Recommendations for Registry of Deeds Fees Order	End Q4 2023
4.9	Develop copyright statements for specific series of digitised collections from the Registry of Deeds to inform future use and reuse of our digitised collection	End Q4 2023
4.10	Deliver annual outreach programme , taking the broad spectrum of current and potential users into consideration	Ongoing
4.11	Develop research partnership proposal/business case to write the organisational history of the Registry of Deeds.	End Q4 2024





Image: Shelving in the Public Room of the Registry of Deeds.

## 6.0 Implementation and Review

The PRA's Registry of Deeds Digitisation Strategy Advisory Group was established in June 2019 and comprises internal and external stakeholders. The forum will meet three times per annum for the duration of the strategy. The purpose of this group, as per the terms of reference, will be to provide oversight and advice with regards to strategy implementation.

The PRA has an internal Registry of Deeds Digitisation Strategy Sub-Group comprising the Archives Manager, Digitisation Archivist, Head of Quality and Compliance, Records Manager, and Chief Technology Officer. This group has met on an ad hoc basis since 2019. It is proposed that the group will play a central role in driving the implementing of the strategy and will meet on bimonthly basis during the implementation phase.

The action plan deriving from this digitisation strategy will assign responsible owners and timelines to each activity. Where new opportunities, priorities and challenges arise, these should be reported to the PRA Management Board and built into the dynamic action plan.

Overall responsibility and final decision making on the Registry of Deeds digitisation strategy currently lies with the PRA Management Board. It should be noted that in terms of projects and activities outlined in the strategy, all are subject to approval of formal business cases, must align with the PRA's Digital First Strategy, and are subject to completion of data protection impact assessments and fraud impact assessments. In addition, all such projects must comply with the requirements of:

- *Circular 14/2021: Revised arrangements for oversight of digital and ICT initiatives in the Civil and public service.*
- Administrative arrangements in place under *Circular 14/2021* advised to its agencies by our parent Department, Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage.
- *The Public Spending Code.*

It is recognised that the reporting and implementation structures may change during the lifetime of the strategy with the establishment of Tailte Éireann in 2023.



## Appendix 1: Summary Table of Registry of Deeds Records, Size, Existence of Copies

Record Series*	Sub-Series	Format	Items	Pages**	Copies	Conservation***	Notes	Statutory Considerations
<b>Memorials</b>	1708-1832	Parchment	588801	883,201	No	High		Registry of Deeds Fees Order
	Wills 1708-1832	Parchment	2040	3,060	No	High	IMC Abstract of Wills	
	1833-1929	Parchment	1,596,600	2,394,900	No	High		Registry of Deeds Fees Order
	1930-2018 (30 April)	Paper/Parchment	3,079,800	6,159,600	PRA Microfilms	Medium	Blue Ink Fade	Registry of Deeds Fees Order
<b>ROD Applications</b>	2018 ( 1 May onwards)	Paper	48,900	97800	PRA Microfilms	Low		Registry of Deeds Fees Order; GDPR
	2019-2021	Paper	65285	181000	PDF Scans	Low	Project PRA-024-01	Registry of Deeds Fees Order; GDPR
<b>Transcript Books</b>	1708-1832	Volumes	890	530030	LDS Microfilms	Low		
	1833-1929	Volumes	5322	1,995,750	LDS Microfilms	Low		
	1930-1960 (with gaps)	Volumes	1137	426375	No	Low		GDPR
<b>Lands Index</b>	1708-1832	Volumes	165	81,500	LDS Microfilms	Low		
	1833-1929	Volumes	1310	652,000	LDS Microfilms	Low		
	1930-1946	Volumes	78	39,000	No	Low		GDPR
	Dublin City and County, 1920-1949	Volumes	47	23,500	No	Low		GDPR
<b>Names Index</b>	1708-1832	Volumes	211	63,300	LDS Microfilms	Low		
	1833-1929	Volumes	574	172,000	LDS Microfilms	Low	Duplicate Volumes (with gaps); 1910-1929	
	1930-1969	Volumes	346	109200	Duplicate Volumes (with gaps)	Medium	High use by Law Searchers	GDPR
<b>Abstract Books</b>	1708-1717 (with gaps)	Volumes	22	1,297	No	Low	Not verified	
	1800-1832	Volumes	751	21455	No	Low	Not verified	
	1833-1969	Volumes	7,491	412,000	No	Low	High use by Law Searchers	GDPR
	1970-Present	Volumes	Computerised	Computerised	Computerised	Digital Preservation Policy		
<b>Anonymous Partnerships</b>	Transcript (1786-1860)	Volumes	2	1200	No	Low	IMC Publication Forthcoming	
	Names (1786-1860)	Volumes	2	800	No	Low	IMC Publication Forthcoming	
	Memorials (1786-1860)	Parchment	1200	2400	No	High	IMC Publication Forthcoming	
	Memorials (1708-1786)	Parchment	500	750		High	IMC Publication Forthcoming	
<b>Satisfactions</b>	1708-1832	Parchment	3300	3300	No	Low		

### Remarks

\* Table incorporates the main record series held at Registry of Deeds but is not conclusive list.

\*\* Pages are estimated for some collections based on sample analysis

\*\*\* Conservation categorisation is based on the Registry of Deeds Preservation Assessment Survey, 2010

## Appendix 2 Glossary of Terms

**Access.** Continued, ongoing usability of a digital resource, retaining all qualities of authenticity, accuracy and functionality deemed to be essential for the purposes the digital material was created and/or acquired for.

**Audit Trail.** Documentary evidence of the sequence of activities that have affected a record.

**Authenticity.** A digital object is authentic if it “is what it purports to be”. In the case of digital materials, it refers to the fact that whatever is being cited is the same as it was when it was first created, unless the accompanying metadata indicates any changes. Confidence in the authenticity of digital materials over time is particularly crucial owing to the ease with which alterations can be made.

**Back up.** The copying of files to a secondary site and alternative media for preservation in case of equipment failure or other catastrophe.

**Born Digital.** Digital files that were created in digital form; those that were not derived as a surrogate from physical form.

**Checksum.** A unique numerical signature derived from a file. Used to compare copies to detect errors in the in the data.

**Cloud storage.** A storage model in which data is stored on remote servers accessed via the internet. It is usually maintained, operated and managed by a service provider.

**Copyright.** A legal right that may affect how some digital records are processed or made accessible.

**Designated Community.** An identified group of potential consumers who should be able to understand a particular set of information from an archive. These consumers may consist of multiple communities, are designated by the archive, and may change over time.

**Digital Curation.** Digital curation is the management and preservation of digital data/information over the long-term.

**Digital Surrogate.** A digital version of an analogue object, one that is intended to serve as a stand-in for the object itself.

**Digitised Collections.** Digital representations of analogue collections.

**Digital Preservation.** Refers to the series of managed activities necessary to ensure continued access to digital materials for as long as necessary.

**Digitisation.** The process of creating digital files by scanning or otherwise converting analogue materials. The resulting digital copy, or digital surrogate, would then be classed as digital material and then subject to the same broad challenges involved in preserving access to it, as "born digital" materials.

**Ingest.** The process through which digital objects are added into a managed environment.

**File Format.** A standard way that information is encoded for storage in a computer file. It tells the computer how to display, print, and process, and save the information.

**Fixity Check.** A method for ensuring the integrity of a file and verifying it has not been altered or corrupted.

**Linked Data.** Structured data which is interlinked with other data so it becomes more useful through semantic queries.

**Metadata.** A set of data that describes and gives information about other data. Examples in digitisation include administrative metadata, technical metadata, preservation metadata and descriptive metadata.

**Off the shelf.** A product that is purchased ready to use, not tailored or designed for specific requirements.

**Open Archive Information System (OAIS).** An Archive, consisting of an organization, which may be part of a larger organization, of people and systems, that has accepted the responsibility to preserve information and make it available for a Designated Community.

**Production Master Files.** Produced by processing the content in one or more archival master files, resulting in a new file or files that rival those of the archival master, e.g. a large map may be produced by stitching together a set of image files.

**Trusted Digital Repository.** A trusted digital repository has been defined as having “a mission to provide reliable, long-term access to managed digital resources to its designated community, now and into the future”.

**XML.** Extensible Markup Language, a widely used standard for representing structured information, including documents, data, configuration, books, and transactions

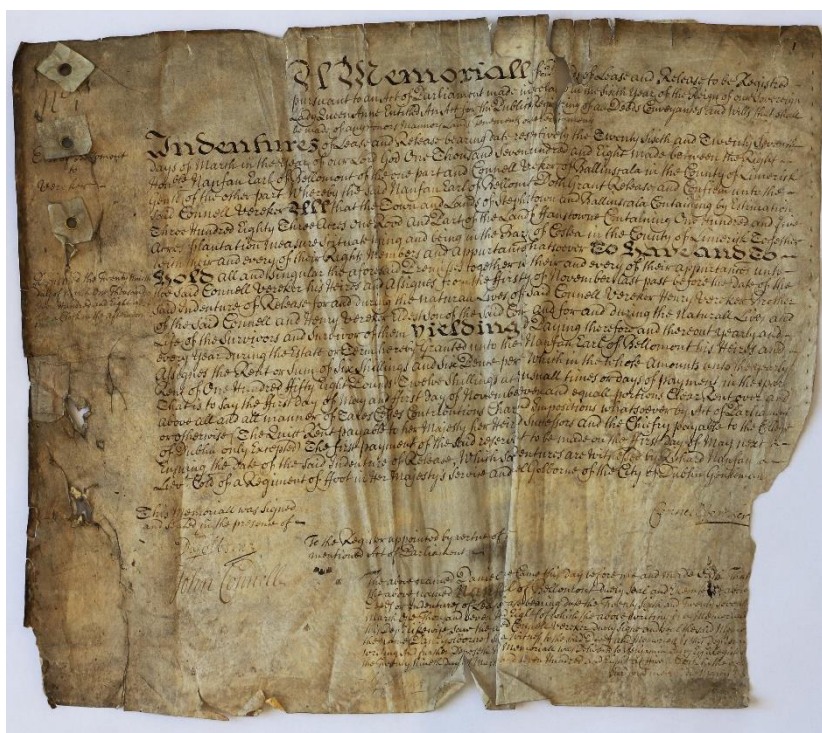


Image: Memorial No. 1 registered 25 March 1708 at the Registry of Deeds.

## Appendix 3 Related Policy Documents and Statutes

*Archives and Records Association (Ireland and UK) Code of Ethics*

*Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviours*

*Civil Service Renewal 2030 Strategy: 'Building on our Strengths'*

*Connecting Government 2030 - A Digital and ICT Strategy for Ireland's Public Service (March 2022)*

*Creative Ireland Strategy, 2017-2022*

*Declaration on Public Service Innovation in Ireland*

*Diaspora Strategy, 2020-2025*

*Government Cloud Computing Advice Note, October 2019*

*Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework 2022*

*National Archives Act, 1986*

*National Development Plan, 2018-2027*

*National Digital Strategy, 2013 (Updates version in development, latest update June 2020)*

*Our Public Service, 2020*

*PRA Data Strategy and Recommended Actions, 2021-2023*

*PRA Dematerialisation and Digitalisation: A Digital First Strategy 2022-2024*

*PRA Records Management Policy*

*PRA Statement of Strategy 2019-2021 and 2022-2024*

*Public Sector Climate Action Mandate 2022*

*Public Service Data Strategy, 2019-2023*

*Registry of Deeds Fees Order S.I 51/2008*

*Registry of Deeds Preservation Assessment Survey ( March 2020)*

*Report of the Joint Committee on Maximising our Cultural and Genealogical Heritage, 2015*

## Appendix 4 Members of Registry of Deeds Digitisation Advisory Group 2019-2022

### Current Members of ROD Advisory Group ( Dec 2022)

#### External Members

Hazel Menton	National Archives of Ireland
David Huddleston last	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
Dr Natalie Harrower	Digital Repository of Ireland
Dr John McCafferty	Irish Manuscript Commission
Dr Eoin Kinsella	Irish Association of Professional Historians
John Grenham	Accredited Genealogists Ireland
Fiona Fitzsimons	Association of Professional Genealogists
Dr Patrick Walsh	Trinity College Dublin
Dr David Brown	Trinity College Dublin
Louise Kennedy	Local Authority Archivists and Records Management Group
Padraig Laffan	Federation of Local History Societies
Susie Bioletti	Institute of Conservator-Restorers in Ireland
Louise Purcell	Department of Housing and Local Government
Colin Loughheed	Registry of Deeds Northern Ireland
Shane Tierney	Registry of Deeds Northern Ireland
Mark Service	Registry of Deeds Northern Ireland
Dr Gabriel Brennan	Law Society of Ireland
Paul Gorry	Accredited Genealogists Ireland
Roz McCutcheon	Irish Genealogical Research Society
Grania Peden	Valuation Office
Geoff Farrell	Valuation Office
Gerard O'Keefe	Ordnance Survey Ireland
Roy Arnott	Rochford Brady Group
Beatrice Kelly	Heritage Council of Ireland

#### Internal PRA Members

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Aileen McHugh	Head of Operations
Ellen Murphy	Archives Manager
Mark McNamara	Group Secretary
Orla McCartney	Digitisation Archivist
Aidan Timmins	Compliance Manager
Helen Murray O'Connor	PRA Authority Nominee
James O'Boyle	Financial Controller
Ciarán Mulhall	ICT Operations, Infrastructure and Security Manager
Jean Murray	Human Resources
David Nugent	Communications Manager

#### Former Members of ROD Advisory Group

Dr Michael Willis	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
Martin Morris	Local Authority Archivists and Records Management Group
Louise Purcell	Department of Housing, Heritage and Gaeltacht
Anne Durkin	Valuation Office
Roy Arnott	Rochford Brady Group
Deirdre Hennessy	PRA, Group Secretary
Cillian Fearon	PRA Records Manager
Aoife Morrissey	PRA Records Manager
Leanne Harrington	PRA Digital Archivist



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