

*A concise guide
to archiving
for designers*

*This document
contains images
that may influence
your conscience*

**Ten tips for designers to avoid
an archiving disaster.**



Do not keep everything. Archiving is identifying.

Archiving is not the same as keeping. It is about identifying items of lasting value. Consider what can contribute towards a representative overview. This includes not only the pieces that document the design process, but also other material that gives insight into the work (or life) of a designer or a studio.



Keep the process, not only the final result.

Save sketches, preliminary studies, models and prototypes. Also consider retaining documents such as correspondence, invoices, reports and publications. Keep copies of print, digital images and audiovisual media in your archive. A carefully preserved master as well as access copies should be kept. In short, keep anything that provides insight into why something appears as it does, and save it in more than one format.



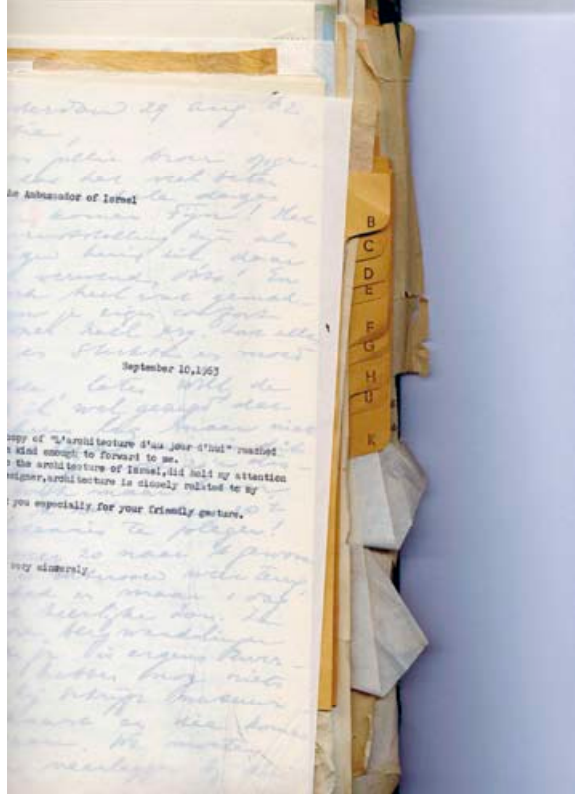
**Keep items that belong together,
together. Archiving is organizing.**

When organizing, maintain the original order. By doing this, you retain the context of the documents. If your items are out of order, you will soon forget why you wanted to keep them and the items will lose their meaning. Logical organization also makes items easier to find again. You can arrange items by the name of the client, the type of object, the year, etc.



Describe what you have and where you have it stored.

If you do not know what you have or where you kept it, it might as well be lost. By recording this information you ensure others can also find it. For example, document not only the client, the title, the type of object and the year, but also the box, file or tube and where it is stored. Develop a system that is intuitive and will work for both physical and digital files.



**Keep your archive in a safe
place – high and dry.**

Do not keep your archive in a basement, next to the washing machine, under a leaking roof, in a drafty shed or in any other area where items may be exposed to the elements. Avoid direct sunlight, heavy dust and extreme fluctuation in relative humidity and temperature.



Remove the enemies.

Most office supplies destroy paper over time. Softeners in plastic sheets tarnish the ink. The acid in cardboard folders and boxes make papers yellow and brittle. Do not use adhesive tape, metal fasteners or rubber bands. Paperclips and staples rust, and most adhesives, including that on Post-its, discolor and leave residue behind. Use care when removing these enemies from your archival material.



**Protect your archive from mold,
animals and bugs.**

Do not be an animal-lover when it comes to conserving your archive. Keep the storage area clean and dry, and do not allow mold, rot, insects, rodents or any pets near your archive. To promote a pest-free environment, keep food and water away from the archive.



Safely house your archives in suitable boxes, files, folders or tubes.

Do not stuff! Avoid putting too much in any box, file, folder or tube. Choose the right container for each kind of material. Buy acid-free and lignin-free boxes and folders, and do not stack the piles too high. And be sure to clearly and consistently indicate on the outside exactly what the contents are inside.



Think about digital durability.

The durability of digital storage such as CDs and DVDs is limited. Choose a storage system that will last longer (for example, a hard drive rather than a CD). Keep backups on several types of storage to minimize the risk of losing your data. Be mindful of magnetic fields that may wipe the data from the device. Consider remote storage for archival masters and digital backups. Transfer the data to newer storage from time to time.



Keep old technology and equipment.

Keep old equipment and software so that data can be accessed in the future.

Make sure you have enough time to migrate the data to modern storage to avoid media failure – a real threat for machine – readable formats when the technology becomes obsolete. Technology may be discontinued every five to ten years.



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