

Guidelines for the Digitization of Materials and Personal Information

There are a number of legal and ethical considerations that must be accounted for when proposing a digitization project. The following guide briefly outlines privacy legislation and its impact on digitization.

Privacy concerns must be considered when digitizing rare and unique materials, especially when this information has not previously been published or distributed widely. This applies to the records of individual people and organizations (private collections). Prior to digitizing material there must be thought given to whether making personal information openly available would be an unreasonable disclosure of personal information.

In British Columbia there are two pieces of legislation, and a variety of related judicial interpretations, that relate to privacy:

[Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)
[Personal Information Protection Act](#)

The following questions can help to determine whether there may be privacy restrictions.

Do the records contain personal information?

Personal information is defined as recorded information about an identifiable individual.

If you're concerned the material does include personal information, then consider:

1. Are the records containing personal information over 100 years old?
2. Does the personal information relate to someone who has been deceased for 20 years?
3. Have living individuals been consulted?

For further information please consult Director, Special Collections and University Archivist, Lara Wilson: ljwilson@uvic.ca.