museum
National Museum of Ireland
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

Collections Information and Documentation Policy

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NMI Collections Information and Documentation Policy

This National Museum of Ireland (NMI) policy addresses all aspects of collections information at the National Museum of Ireland. It acts as a framework to ensure the comprehensive documentation of museum heritage objects and the management of this information. This policy is focused on museum heritage objects and their data. There is a separate policy for **Loans** of museum heritage objects. There are also separate policies for **NMI Archives**, and for **NMI Library**.

Legislative Basis

The NMI manages its collections of Museum Heritage Objects under powers conferred by section 11 of the **National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997**. This states that:

12. — *(2) The Board shall have all such powers as it considers necessary or expedient for the performance of its functions under this Act including, but without prejudice to the foregoing, the following powers:*

> (e) to promote research and scholarship,

> (f) to disseminate and promote the dissemination of literature and information relating to the collection of the Museum,

> (n) to catalogue the museum heritage objects in the collection of the Museum,

The term "museum heritage object" is defined in the 1997 Act as:

(a) any object in the collection of the Museum on the Museum establishment day,

(b) any object (including archaeological objects, objects relating to the decorative arts or natural sciences or to history or industry or folklife) over 25 years old considered appropriate by the Board for inclusion in the collection of the Museum concerning human life in Ireland, the natural history of Ireland, and of the relations of Ireland with other countries, and

(c) any other similar objects;

This policy is in place in order for the Board of NMI to fulfil its statutory role to catalogue the objects in its care, to manage these objects effectively, to document the condition of objects and their treatments, and to make information on these objects available.

Documentation of Museum Heritage Objects

NMI is committed to Spectrum, an international standard for museum collections management. Where possible, NMI will exceed the minimum requirements of Spectrum.

1. NMI will maintain a Spectrum-compliant Documentation Procedural Manual. This suite of procedures describes how museum records are created, maintained, and secured, in order to ensure accountability, consistency and continuity of practice.
2. NMI will maintain a Spectrum-compliant Entry/Exit Record system to record the entry/exit of all museum heritage objects into/out of the museum except as loans (see **Loans Policy**).

3. NMI will maintain its system of Accessions Registers and maintain secure copies of all records relating to acquisition and accession of all the objects in the collection, past or present.
4. NMI will follow a written Collections Documentation Strategy to address the capture of historic information relating to the museum heritage objects in its care and to develop records beyond inventory standard.
5. NMI will continue to follow the Inventory Strategy to ensure database entries for all collections in its care to the Spectrum Inventory Standard.

Collections Information Management

NMI manages the data relating to the collections in its care with the aim of ensuring that systems are secure from inappropriate access, robust in terms of long-term stability and reliability, and grow steadily in quality as a valuable information resource.

1. NMI will ensure that paper records relating to museum heritage objects are created using stable materials, stored, secured, and handled appropriately.
2. NMI will ensure that digital systems support Spectrum requirements.
3. Procedures will be maintained to manage location and movement control.
4. Systems will be maintained to support audit, and track deletions or editing of digital records.
5. Systems will be maintained to record, maintain and centralise all collections information, including all information relating to collections care and management.

Collections Information Access

NMI manages the data relating to the collections in its care with the aim of ensuring that systems support open access of information of a non-sensitive nature and make the data resources widely available to a range of users.

1. NMI will work towards placing collections information online for full public access.
2. NMI will continue to provide researchers with information from its systems on request.
3. Sensitive information including storage location, valuation, insurance, and provenance will be restricted in terms of access.
4. NMI will establish copyright and title of museum heritage objects in advance of releasing images and information on open platforms.