

Checklist: testing for continuity of a digital asset

This checklist helps test that your information asset meets your users' needs to **find**, **open**, **work with**, **understand** and **trust** the information it contains. The term 'user' refers to anyone with a business requirement to use the information. Remember that different users may have different needs: you will be unable to manage the digital continuity of your information asset unless you understand what these needs are. If you are not confident that your information asset and its supporting technology meet your users' requirements, you may have experienced a loss of digital continuity of the information asset.

1. Can users find the information when they need it?

- Do users know where to look for the information?**
Does it have a defined filing location?
- Is the information where it should be?**
Do users understand where to file it?
Do your systems make it easy to file in the right place?
- Is it indexed and covered by your search tools?**
Do users have the correct permissions to enable them to find it?
Are the search tools easy to use?
Is it easy to identify information within the search results?

2. Can users access and open the information when they need to?

- Can users retrieve the information when they need it?**
Do they have the required privileges to access it?
Is it available to them within an acceptable timeframe?
Do they have the required hardware to access it?
- Can users open or render files as required?**
Do they have the necessary encryption keys or passwords?
Do they have the right software to open or view the file?
Is the file corrupt or otherwise un-openable?

3. Can users work with the information as they need?

- Does the environment enable users to work with the information?**
Do they have the required permissions to work with it?
Can they apply access controls to protect it as needed?
- Do users have the right technology and tools to use it as needed?**
Can users view, edit, share, publish or save it as needed?
- Do data structures and file formats support using the information?**
Can users manipulate, query, combine or report on it as needed?

Is the information complete?

- Are all embedded objects, elements, links or relationships present?
- Is any data corrupt or otherwise unusable?
- Does data quality adequately support the task being undertaken?
- Is the required supporting documentation available?

4. Can users understand the information?

- Can users understand what the information is about?**
Does its position in the filing structure tell the user what it is about?
Does its metadata describe what it is?
Is its scope or coverage clear?
- Can users understand what the information is for?**
Is it on an information asset list that states its business use?
Does its position in the filing structure indicate what it is used for?
- Can users determine how the information was created and used?**
Does its metadata describe why it was created?
Does its metadata describe how it is used?

5. Can users trust the information?

- Can users trust the accuracy of the information?**
Do they understand the assumptions made when it was created?
Do they trust the accuracy of each data element?
- Can users trust the history of the information?**
Do they know where the information came from?
Do they know how it has been handled and used?
Do they know who it has been shared with?
- Can users trust that the information is authentic?**
Is there reliable evidence of how and when it was accessed, changed, exported or copied and by whom?
Can they determine which version is current?