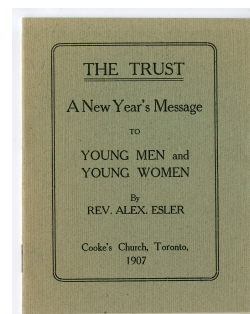




## Independently Digitizing Your Records

It is recommended that microfilming and/or digitizing be done professionally as a way of backing up your congregation's important and historical records. As noted in our *Microfilming and Digitizing Records* information sheet, this can be done quickly, and for a relatively low cost through the Archives. However, you may be in a situation where you are thinking of digitizing records on your own. This can be a worthwhile project but can also be more challenging and time-consuming. To help ensure your project is as successful as possible, we have provided the following guidelines:

- Gather the records you wish to digitize and create a list
- It is logical to start with the oldest record, however, we encourage you to start with something relatively new. As you begin the project, you may find that you have to re-scan a document until you find a process that works for you and ensures the best product. By using a newer, less fragile book or register you will save wear and tear on the older items in your collection.
- Records should be scanned at the very least at 300dpi (anything lower than this and the image quality becomes poor)
- When scanning a page, don't crop the edges, rather scan a little extra space or border around the page so that the digital version will readily show that the whole page has been copied.
- Computer technology is constantly changing. To help ensure your digitized records don't become obsolete in 5 or 10 years, we encourage you to digitize them using the PDF/A file format, which is an "archival" version of the widely used PDF format.
- Create a separate file for each individual book, register or document. For example, a Session Minute book containing 100 pages should ideally be digitized as one, multi-page file rather than divided into 4 or 5 smaller files. This will help prevent sections of the book from becoming "lost".
- Please use a standard naming convention that will clearly express what the file contains, for example:
  - St Andrews Church – Anytown Ontario – Marriage Register 1912-1946
  - St Andrews Church – Anytown Ontario – Property Deed 1887
  - St Andrews Church – Anytown Ontario – Annual Report 1945



*For more information on structuring digital files, view our newsletter on digital records.*

### Other considerations when digitizing your congregation's records:

- Keep a "back-up" copy of the scanned files on a USB or external hard drive and store it offsite in a safe and secure location separate from the originals. If anything should then happen to the originals, i.e. a fire at your church, you can be assured that the digital copy will still exist.
- Remember that some of these documents such as church registers and historic membership rolls contain personal information. Please ensure that the digital copy you make is always kept in a safe and secure location, and that no one unauthorized will have access to it.



[presbyterianarchives.ca](https://presbyterianarchives.ca)