

Preservica Metadata

The Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) uses Preservica, a digital preservation system, to store, preserve, and provide access to born-digital materials.

The Society of American Archivists defines “born-digital” as information created in electronic format.¹ Some common types of born-digital records are Microsoft Word documents, emails, and images taken with a digital camera. By their nature, born-digital records are rather recent historical records. They differ from files created in analog formats that are later digitized. Digitized records from ADAH’s collections are available through the [Digital Collections](#) page.

When viewing the records in Preservica, you may see metadata terms that provide additional detail and context. See the chart below for an introduction to the terms.

Some of the metadata terms refer to the concept of “migration.” Migration is the process of moving records from an older file format to a more stable file format. An archivist performs this process to ensure the record is accessible over time.

Metadata Field	Metadata Meaning
Object types	
Collection	Highest level of organization. All the files from one creator stored together.
Record	Folder level of organization.
File	Individual object level of organization.
Collection level	
ER number	ADAH numbering system for electronic records collections.
Record level	
Digital surrogate	If the files are digitized copies or born-digital originals. Born-digital originals are marked “false.”
Catalogue reference	Folder name.
Coverage from and coverage to	Date range of the files. This does not always indicate the actual age of the files. Records have been copied or altered over time, which can change the date metadata.
File level	
Extant	n/a
Directory	n/a
File size	Size of the file measured in bytes.

¹ “Born-digital,” Society of American Archivists, accessed January 22, 2018, <https://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/b/born-digital>

Last modified date	Date the file was last modified. It will typically be the date the file was migrated for preservation.
Title	Title the original software autogenerated for the file during creation. It is typically the heading or first sentence of the document.
Number of images	How many individual images make up the file. If the file was originally a PDF, this will be the number of pages. If the file was migrated to a PDF for preservation, this will be zero.
Creating application	Software used to create this file's manifestation. If the file was migrated for preservation, the creating application will be "writer."
Creation date	Date the file's manifestation was created. If the file was migrated for preservation, the date will be the day of migration.
Encrypted	If the file has been encrypted. Non-encrypted files are marked "false."
Number of pages	Number of individual pages in the file.
Creator	The author the original software autogenerated for the file during creation. It is populated with the name of the user signed into the workstation during the file creation. There is no guarantee that a specific individual was at the workstation creating the record.

For additional assistance using Preservica to access ADAH historical records, contact ADAH reference staff at (334) 242-4435.