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Best Practices for Born Digital Archival Items

Many organizations now hold a wealth of items that are born digital, that is they were not converted from a paper format, but originally produced electronically. The most common types of born digital items are:

- Image
- Electronic document (Microsoft Word, Excel and other document programs)
- PDF
- Email
- Presentation (PowerPoint, Keynote, etc.)
- Social Media Post

These types of items may be managed in a system in the exact same manner as those that are converted from paper. The same fields that manage a digitized photograph or slide, for example, will be used to catalog any type of digital image that originated in a digital format. The templates corresponding to the above list are:

- Photographic Image
- General Document
- Correspondence
- Social Media Post*

* Social Media Posts templates will record the following fields:

- Name
- Creation Date
- Creation Time
- Platform (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.)
- Account Name
- Account Handle (e.g. @historyit)
- Post Text
- Link to Post
- Associated Handles
- Reposts
- Impressions
- Engagement / Engagement Rate
- Language
- Era
- Event
- Subjects

If any images are associated with a particular post, they may be uploaded in the management system in the same way that any digital asset is associated with its record. Note that most social media platforms will allow users to download their posts in Excel or .csv format. These may easily be converted to a format to integrate into the digital archive.