

# The role of digital technologies in managing digital heritage: findings from the InMAP study

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**Abstract.** In recent decades, memory institutions have increasingly undertaken initiatives to collect the intangible—whether by preserving oral memory or documenting processes of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) heritagisation. These efforts of documentation have frequently resulted in the creation of digital collections and archives, becoming also digital heritage. Within museums, such collections now occupy a more prominent position in contemporary practice, gradually consolidating as instruments for deepening territorial knowledge and strengthening museum–community relationships. In doing so, they contribute to the construction of more plural, inclusive, and socially grounded museum narratives.

While the specific challenges posed by digital and digitised collections are well recognised in theory, systematised information on their development and impact within the Portuguese memory institutions landscape remains scarce. The InMAP project—Memories and Archives: Mapping the (In)Tangible (2023.10222.S4P23)—sought to address this gap by surveying the current state of digital collections dedicated to the intangible, drawing on a national sample encompassing museums, libraries, archives, universities, and heritage associations.

Documentation, digital preservation, and digital access constituted central areas of enquiry, given their relevance to collecting and archiving the intangible. The research combined two complementary instruments: a nationwide questionnaire survey yielding 195 valid responses (of which 123 entities are actively engaged in this field), and semi-structured interviews with 19 professionals from representative organisations across the sample.

This poster presents the study’s main findings on the role of digital technologies in documenting the intangible and managing related digital collections, and reflects on the key challenges identified. While the integration of digital tools into the day-to-day work of memory institutions is widely recognised, several constraints still limit more effective and sustained use. These include insufficient capacity-building, resulting in gaps in digital skills; fragile digital infrastructure (e.g., inadequate or absent information management systems, limited storage, and a lack of equipment); and restricted digital access, where only some organisations have a website through which to present their heritage, revealing uneven (technical and digital) capacity to publish and disseminate digital heritage content.

These gaps jeopardise long-term preservation, collection management, re-use, and overall sustainability.

**Keywords:** Digital Collections, Intangible Heritage, Memory Institutions