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The National Archives of Australia's digital archiving program has been in operation since 2006. During this time, the organisation has shared with the international archival community its practical experiences, technical output, and lessons learned in building and managing a digital archive.

Less well known than the products and experiences (or the 'what') of digital archiving is the 'how': the circumstances and processes that enabled the development of the digital archive in the first place. These include various funding processes for public monies, and timely government initiatives supporting and promoting sustainable digital preservation.

This paper looks at the circumstances surrounding the development of digital archives in four jurisdictions – at a national level, Queensland, Victoria and New Zealand. It also looks at digital preservation challenges these organisations face in light of their legislative requirements, the state of recordkeeping in their jurisdictions, and the shifting digital landscape.