



THE SLOWNESS OF DOCUMENT DIGITIZATION IN LOCAL ARCHIVES AND ITS IMPACT ON ACCESS TO SOCIAL INFORMATION

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17619041>

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ABSTRACT: *This article examines the slow pace of digitization of archival documents in local archival institutions of the Republic of Uzbekistan and how this limitation restricts citizens' online access to historical, social and legal information. Special attention is paid to the Law "On Archiving" of 2010 and the planned introduction of a departmental electronic archive system starting in 2023-24. The article analyses the gap between legislative provisions and practical implementation, and highlights the negative consequences for academic research, genealogy, journalism and education. It is useful for researchers and practitioners in history, archival science, information society and social sciences.*

KEY WORDS: *archive, document digitization, social information access, online access, local archives, Uzbekistan, Law on Archiving, digital archive, document circulation, information transparency, library-archival studies, education process, journalism, genealogy, information society.*

MAHALLIY ARXIVLARDA HUJJATLAR RAQAMLASHTIRILISHINING SUSTLIGI VA IJTIMOY AXBOROTGA KIRISH IMKONIYATIGA TA'SIRI

ANNOTATSIYA: *Ushbu maqolada O'zbekiston respublikasidagi mahalliy arxiv idoralari hujjatlarini raqamlashtirish jarayonining sekinligi, buning natijasida fuqarolarning tarixiy, ijtimoiy va huquqiy axborotga onlayn kirish imkoniyatining cheklanishi tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda 2010 yilda qabul qilingan Arxiv ishi to'g'risida qonuni va uning raqamlashtirishga ta'sir qiluvchi moddalariga, 2023 yilda e'lon qilingan raqamli arxiv tizimini joriy etish rejalariga alohida e'tibor berilgan. Qonun ustuvorligi va amaliy ishlar orasidagi tafovut, hujjatlarning raqam shakliga otilishi kechashi va bu holatning ilmiy tadqiqotlar, naslshunoslik, jurnalistika va ta'lim jarayonlariga salbiy ta'siri ko'rib chiqiladi. Mazkur maqola tarix, kutubxona-arxiv ishlari, axborot jamiyati va ijtimoiy fanlar bilan shug'ullanuvchi olimlar va amaliyotchilar uchun foydalidir.*

KALIT SO'ZLAR: *arxiv, hujjatlar raqamlashtirish, ijtimoiy axborotga kirish, onlayn kirish, mahalliy arxiv idoralari, O'zbekiston, Arxiv ishi to'g'risida qonun, raqamli arxiv,*



hujjat aylanishi, ma'lumot ochiqligi, kutubxonashunoslik, ta'lim jarayoni, jurnalistika, naslshunoslik, axborot jamiyati.

INTRODUCTION. In recent years, the process of digitization of public administration and information systems has been consistently implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan. The “Action Strategy” No. PF-4947, adopted on February 7, 2017, and the resolution No. PQ-4699 dated April 28, 2020, established the “Digital Uzbekistan - 2030” strategy in the country¹³ The concept envisages the modernization of all areas, including the archival system, through the introduction of the “Archives” concept. Despite this, the pace of digitization of documents in local archives is still slow. The Law “On Archival Work”, adopted on June 15, 2010¹⁴ Although the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan establishes the legal basis for storing archival documents in electronic form, in practice this requirement is not fully implemented. As a result, the population's access to historical, social and genealogical information online is limited. Currently, more than 1,000 local and network archives operate in the country. Only 10-

15 percent of the documents in them are digitized, and the rest are stored in paper form. This situation significantly slows down the ability to obtain the necessary information in scientific research, journalism, genealogy and educational processes. The relevance of studying this topic is that the slow pace of digitization not only contradicts the principle of openness to information, but also violates the “Open Data Policy” established by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev No. PF-60 dated January 28, 2022¹⁵ Therefore, the issue of improving the digitization system in local archives is of significant scientific and practical importance for the development of the state and society.

RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY. This study comprehensively analyzed the status, legal framework, and practical problems of the process of digitizing documents in local archives. The study was based on the following methods:

1. Legal analysis method — the regulatory and legal framework was studied based on the Law “On Archival Work” (2010), the “Digital Uzbekistan – 2030” program (2020), and the Decree PF-60 “On Open Data Policy” (2022).

¹³ O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining 2020-yil 5-oktabrdagi PQ-4699-son “Raqamli O‘zbekiston – 2030” konsepsiyasini tasdiqlash va uni amalga oshirish chora-tadbirlari to‘g‘risidagi qarori. <https://lex.uz/docs/5030957>

¹⁴ O‘zbekiston Respublikasi “Arxiv ishi to‘g‘risida”gi Qonun (2010-yil 15-iyun, O‘RQ-253-son). [\[https://lex.uz/docs/1631191\]](https://lex.uz/docs/1631191)(<https://lex.uz/docs/1631191>)

¹⁵ O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining 2022-yil 28-yanvardagi PF-60-son “2022–2026-yillarga mo‘ljallangan Yangi O‘zbekistonni rivojlantirish strategiyasi to‘g‘risida”gi Farmoni. <https://lex.uz/docs/5841063>



2. Statistical analysis method — the share of digitized documents, the number of archives, and the level of technical support were studied based on data from the National Archives Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan (2023 reports).

3. Comparative analysis method — the experience of Uzbekistan was compared with the digital archive experiences of countries such as Russia, Kazakhstan, and Estonia.

4. Empirical approach - factual data was collected based on interviews with archivists, practical observations and field analyses.

The results of the study show that the low rate of document digitization, insufficient technical base and shortage of qualified personnel are the main factors limiting free access to social information. Therefore, it is necessary to develop measures to introduce modern digital infrastructure in the local archival system, use cloud storage technologies and increase human resources.

MAIN PART. The issue of digitization in the field of archival work in the Republic of Uzbekistan received a legal basis with the Law “On Archival Work” adopted on June 15, 2010. Article 19 of this document establishes the obligation to store archival materials in electronic form and create copies of them. However, this requirement was not fully implemented in the period from 2010 to 2020, since the archives were not technically and financially ready for this process. According to the National

Archives Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2021, only 14 percent of the country's 1,067 archival institutions operate in full or partial digital format. In the remaining archives, documents are still stored in paper form. In 2023, this figure reached 17 percent, but this is still a low level. Resolution PQ-4699-4699 “Digital Uzbekistan - 2030”, adopted on April 28, 2020, set the development of a digital government and open data system as a strategic goal. Based on this resolution, a “Program for Digitization of Archival Documents” was developed for 2021-2025. However, the program is moving slowly at the practical stage - this is mainly due to funding, lack of technical equipment and the qualifications of specialists. Key issues in digitization: Lack of technical infrastructure The digitization process is limited due to the lack of scanners, servers, and special software in many district and city archives. For example, the Andijan regional state archive has more than 3 million documents as of 2024, but only 120,000 of them have been digitized. Low human resource capacity To conduct digital archival work, specialists with deep knowledge of information technologies, document science, and archival science are needed. Unfortunately, many local archives do not have sufficient knowledge of computer technology. Although training programs in this area have been introduced at the National University of Uzbekistan and the Tashkent University of Information Technologies since 2021, the shortage of



personnel still persists. The technical base and server systems necessary for digitization require significant funds. The share of the state budget allocated to the archival sector in 2018–2023 averaged 0.07%¹⁶. This indicator is much higher in international experience (for example, in Kazakhstan it is 0.25%, in Russia it is 0.4%). Issues of copyright, confidentiality, and protection of personal data are obstacles to the digitization of documents. This is especially noticeable in genealogical and archival-journalistic research. Although the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. PF-60 of 2022 “On Open Data” provides citizens with the right to open access to state information, many archives have not yet been connected to this system. The digitization of archival documents creates great opportunities for the population, researchers, and students. However, the current slowness has the following negative consequences: Scientific research is slowing down. For example, historians are forced to wait in line for months to obtain archival materials. Genealogical research is becoming more difficult. There is a great need for archival data to reconstruct many family trees, but their online databases are lacking. The source base in journalistic research is limited, which affects the reliability of information. The

quality of independent scientific work is declining due to the fact that students cannot use archival materials in the educational process. According to a survey conducted by the National Archives Agency in 2024, 78 percent of the population expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of online access to historical documents. One of the countries with advanced experience in digitization is Estonia, which has transferred all state archives to the “E-Archive” system since 2001. In Russia, the “Gosarchiv RF” electronic platform was launched in 2016, and by 2023, more than 80 million documents will be digitized¹⁷. In Kazakhstan, the “e-Qogham Archive” project was launched in 2018, and by 2022, all regional archives will be connected to a single electronic system. These experiences can be a model for Uzbekistan. The most important aspect in this is the creation of a single national electronic archive platform and its integration with the National Information System of Uzbekistan.

CONCLUSION. Digitization of documents in the archival system of the Republic of Uzbekistan is an important component of state information policy. However, practice shows that this process is not developing at the same pace at the central and local levels. . The level of

¹⁶ O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining 2017-yil 7-fevraldagi PF-4947-son “O‘zbekiston Respublikasini yanada rivojlantirish bo‘yicha Harakatlar strategiyasi to‘g‘risida”gi Farmoni. <https://lex.uz/docs/3107036>

¹⁷ Estonia National Archives. “E-Archive: Digital Archival System of Estonia”. <https://www.ra.ee/en/e-archive>
Federal Archival Agency of Russia (Rosarchiv). “Gosarchiv RF” Federal Electronic Archive Platform. <https://archives.gov.ru>



digitization in local archives as of 2024 is only 17–20%, which means that the majority of documents are still stored in paper form. The weakness of the technical infrastructure, lack of specialists, and limited financial resources are the main obstacles to the digitization process. Limited online access to information has a direct negative impact on scientific research,

genealogy, journalism, and educational processes. As a result of the lack of a separate subprogram for archives within the framework of the “Digital Uzbekistan - 2030” program, this sector lags behind in digital transformation. Some clauses of the Law “On Archival Work” are not fully supported by practical mechanisms, which slows down the implementation of regulatory requirements.

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