



Opening the Archives

Niamh McDonnell
Senior Archivist
Archives & Government Services

Open Data Seminar
Wood Quay Venue
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- Background: National Archives Act, 1986, Regulations 1988.
- User profile.
- Identification of data sets.
- Potential use of National Archives data sets.
- Issues to consider.
- Next steps.
- Future developments.
- Useful sources for GDPR.



National Archives Act, 1986

In establishing the National Archives, the 1986 Act abolished two older archival repositories:

State Paper Office of Ireland

- Established by Queen's Letter in 1702
- Preservation of records of offices of central executive of British government in Ireland



Public Record Office of Ireland

- Established under the Public Records (Ireland) Act, 1867
- Preservation of legal records





National Archives Act, 1986

- No legal provision for preservation of records of institutions of central government established after independence until 1986. (PRONI 1923).
- Records of Departments of State (departmental records) eligible for **transfer** to the National Archives when **30 years old** to be made available for public inspection (Section 8).
- **Departmental records include all records regardless of format “made or received, and held in the course of its business, by a Department of State”.**
- The Act applies to all government departments, all court offices, 61 bodies listed in the schedule to the Act and committees, commissions or tribunals of enquiry appointed by Government, a member of Government or by the Attorney General.
- National Archives Act, 1986 Regulations, 1988 – procedures for appointing officers within Departments, transfer, withholding of records.



User Profile

- **Visitors to the Reading Room of the National Archives:**
 - 60% of users from Local History or Genealogy background.
 - 40% of users are academic historians, journalists & legal researchers.
- **Online traffic:**
 - Main website: www.nationalarchives.ie c.500,000 visits p.a.
 - Project microsites – Genealogy records, Decade of Centenaries, Chief Secretary’s Office Registered Papers:
 - www.genealogy.nationalarchives.ie
 - www.census.nationalarchives.ie (c.25 million visits since launch)
 - www.centenaries.nationalarchives.ie
 - www.csorp.nationalarchives.ie
 - www.treaty.nationalarchives.ie
- **Website review:**
 - Phase 1: launch of new website January 2019.
 - Phase 2: Review of microsites & genealogy data sets 2019.
- **Open Data:**
 - Inclusion in Strategic Plan, 2018 – 2020.
 - Development of Open Data policy by end of 2018.



Data Audit to Identify Suitable Data Sets

- **Four categories used:**
 - Genealogy.
 - Decade of Centenaries Projects.
 - Departmental Records.
 - Business Records.
- **Identification of level of input required:**
 - Genealogy
 - most obvious but most problematic.
 - Poor standard of indexing / inaccurate data sets.
 - Images digitised from microfilm, indexing outsourced.
 - Decade of Centenaries
 - Indexing work by NA staff or staff employed on contract.
 - Very low error rating, limited scope.
 - Departmental Records
 - Catalogues prepared to ISAD(G) by NA Archivists.
 - Accurate, high standard of information, specialist researchers.
 - Business Records
 - Limited appeal.
 - Some preparation required to collate data.



Genealogy Data Sets

- **Preparation of 1901 / 1911 Census data sets**
 - Correction of indexing errors by contractor in 2017/18: 220,000 emails.
 - Huge interest in historical census data – historical research / commercial value.
 - Massive driver of growth in genealogy tourism – Genealogy Advisory Service.
 - Regular requests for access to raw data.
 - Stored on government servers – sql database.
 - Decision to release census data not yet taken – resource implications, technical framework/infrastructure, ICT staffing issues.
- **Other genealogy data sets**
 - Similar issues to census – inaccurate data / indexing errors.
 - Potential extension of Census correction project as part of review of microsites.



Decade of Centenaries Data Sets

- Projects relating to WW1, 1916 Rising and foundation of the State.
- Free access to digitised collections with contextual essays:
 - 2012 launch of digitised wills of 9,000 Irish soldiers who died in WWI – indexed by name, service number, War Office number, War Office date, date of death.
 - 1916 Projects – very successful:
 - Dublin Metropolitan Police Reports, 1915 – 1916 daily report of activity of visitors to Tom Clarke’s shop.
 - Property Losses (Ireland) Committee, 1916 – 6,500 compensation claims, indexed by Name & Address of claimant, Business Name & Address.
 - ITUC Annual Reports, 1901 – 1925, Partnership with ICTU.
 - 1916 Court Martial files – digitised copies purchased from TNA (UK National Archives), Partnership with Universities Ireland.
- Forthcoming projects:
 - 2019 launch of the digitised archives of First Dáil & indexed catalogue.
 - Possible digitisation of FIN/COMP files – indexed to townland, potential for use of geo location data to map Civil War activities in 26 counties.



Decade of Centenaries Data Sets

- Indexing carried out inhouse by archivists, archive assistants.
- Very low error rating.
- Used by new type of archive researcher:
 - Interested in historical mapping, analysis of historical data.
 - Growth in study of digital humanities, data science.
- Examples of use of this data:
 - Archaeology of 1916 Project – UCD & Dublin City Council
 - Use of PLICs as a primary source of damage to buildings, location of fighting.
 - DMP Reports
 - mapping of activity around Tom Clarke's shop.
- Other potential use to analyse claims:
 - Treatment of class distinction/socio-economic background of claimants.
 - Types of items claimed for – curtains, delph as an indicator of the ferocity/location of the fighting.
 - Combining data with other available sources – census reports etc.



Use of PLICs

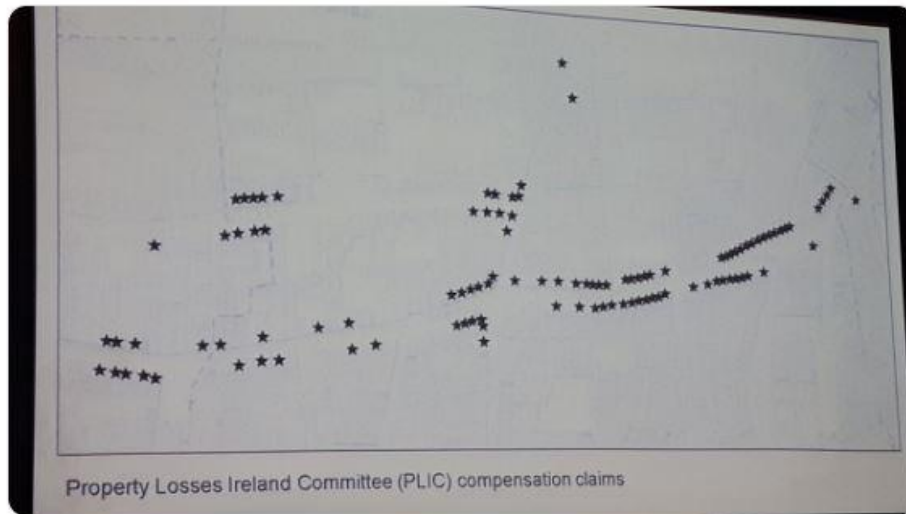
- **Archaeology of 1916** <https://thearchaeologyof1916.wordpress.com/>



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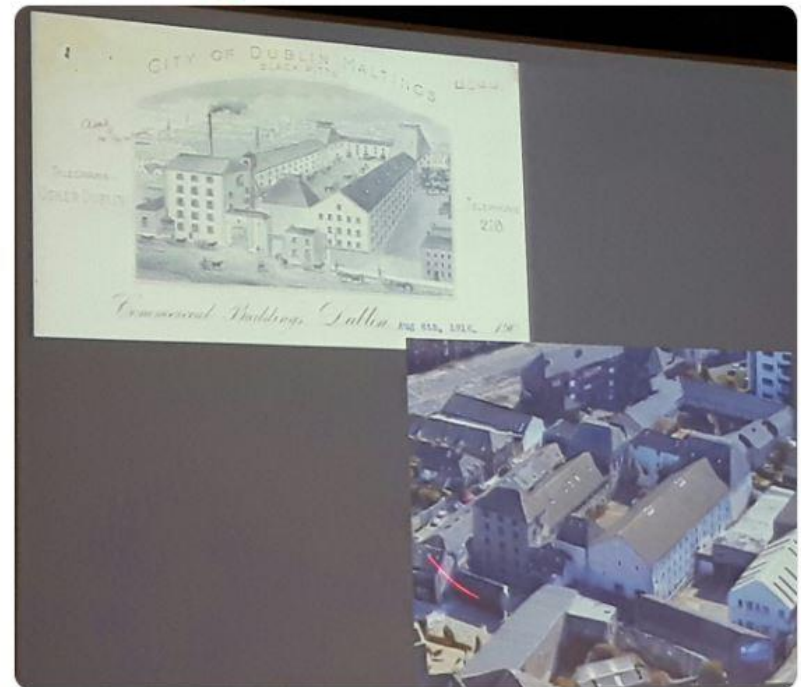
@NARIreland

A distribution map of NAI PLIC compensation files correlates to location of barricades during #1916 Rising [@archaeology1916](#)



3:24 AM - 14 Dec 2016

Letterheads found in NAI PLIC compensation files were used to reconstruct buildings that have changed or no longer exist [@archaeology1916](#)





Use of DMP Reports

- <http://www.anquantarbuile.com/social-network-of-the-1916-rising>

A Social Network of the 1916 Rising compiled from documents released by the

[@NARIreland](#)

[#history](#) [#dataviz](#)



A Social Network of the 1916 Rising

Using files from the National Archives to graph a network of the 1916 Rising.

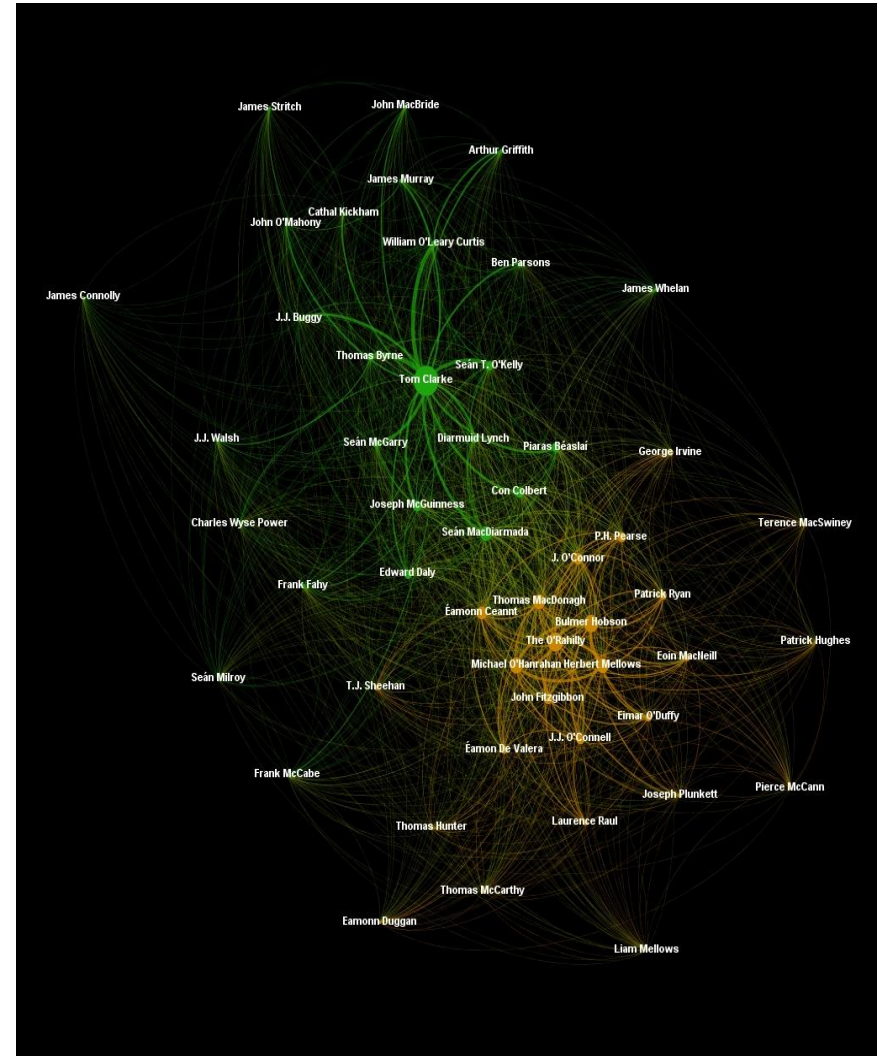
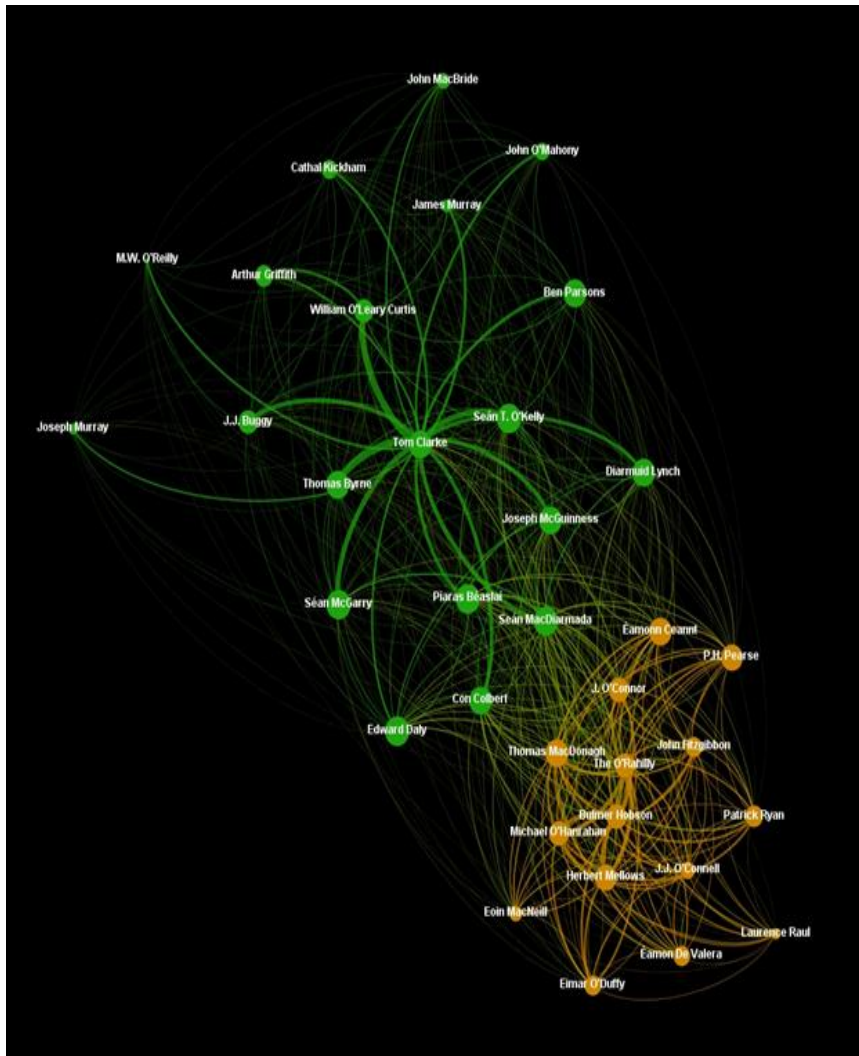
anquantarbuile.com

8:40 AM - 6 Sep 2017



Use of DMP Reports

- <http://www.anquantarbuile.com/social-network-of-the-1916-rising>





Departmental Records Data Sets

- Records catalogued to ISAD(G) standard & made available in our online catalogue on main website - Proprietary software – Adlib (Axiell Group).
- Very high quality of data captured by NA archivists – files checked to ensure accuracy of fields, accurate start & end date.
- Certain fields of information captured – file title, covering dates, scope & content (expanded description), start & end date.
- Listing in Excel uploaded to sql database – hosted by Axiell.
- Why use Open Data when already searchable online?
 - Repackaging of existing data sets to allow for more flexible searching.
 - Searching of records from an entire department since the foundation of the State.
 - Cross-departmental searching of particular policy issue.
 - Allows for searching by original reference number – part A, B, C etc.
 - Identification of transfer of functions – expansion of Civil Service from 1990s.
 - Creation of public bodies not subject to the NAA.
 - Transferring body not the same as the creating body – metadata captured.



Departmental Records Data Sets



The National Archives of Ireland

Change text



Home

About us

Visit us

Search the archives

Genealogy

Services

Research

Digital resources

National Archives of Ireland > Search the archives

English

Gaeilge

INTRODUCTION

SEARCH

RESULTS

DETAILS

SELECTION

SEARCH HISTORY

ENGLISH

Search

Simple search

Advanced search

Help

Word(s) from title



Trunc.

and



Word(s) from scope & content



Trunc.

and



Reference code



Trunc.

and



Archive creator



Trunc.

and



Year from Between from to



Trunc.

and



Year until Between from to



Trunc.

and



Sort by



Year from



Reference code



Title



Creator

SEARCH

CLEAR



Departmental Records Data Sets

Start Edit View Publish

Back Restart

First Previous Next Last

Edit New Copy Delete Save

History Derive

Quick search Search by form Advanced search

Pointer files Add Remove

Mark record Toggle marks Remove all marks View marked records Keep marked records

And Or Not

Sort Print label

Documentation

Reproductions

Condition | Conservation

Location

Notes and description control (ISAD)

Rapid Entry

Identity statement (ISAD)

Context (ISAD)

Content and structure (ISAD)

Conditions of access and use (ISAD)

Allied materials (ISAD)

2017/54/1 file

Labour Court recommendations and EAT [Employment Appeals Tribunal] decisions on maternity leave.

Context

Creator [Department of Labour](#)

Admin. history/Biograph The modern Department of Labour was created by the Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Act, 1966. Originally, the department's functions were carried out by the Department of Industry and Commerce. Traditionally the Department of Labour civil servants also staffed other related public sector tribunals and agencies, such as the Labour Relations Commission, the Labour Court, the Health and Safety Authority, the Employment Appeals Tribunal and the Employment Equality Agency. In 1993 the minister for Labour became the Minister for Equality and Law Reform. In 1997 the functions of the Minister were passed to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform on the abolition of the office.

Archival history Transferred by Department of Justice and Equality, November 2017

Immediate source of acquisition or transfer (free text)

Accession number [2017/54](#)

Parent level unit of description

Part of [LAB/1](#) series

Department of Labour: Employment Equality files

Notes

Child level units of description

Parts

Notes



Business Records Data Sets

- Records made in the course of administering the National Collections.
- Accession report – published as appendix to the Director’s report.
 - Demonstrates high level of non-compliance with National Archives Act, 1986.
 - Identification of backlogs of records still held in Departments of State.
- Register of disposal authorisations issued by Director under Section 7.
 - What records are disposed of by Departments.

Disposal of Departmental Records without the permission of the Director of the National Archives is a breach of section 7 of the National Archives Act, 1986.
- Number of visitors to the Reading Room.
 - Level of productions.
 - Use of genealogy service.
 - Readers’ tickets issued.
 - Copy orders: plain / certified.
 - Research queries.
 - Most heavily used collections – used when prioritising projects for digitisation.



Potential issues

- **Data Protection:**
 - GDPR makes provision for the retention of records beyond the purpose for which the personal data was originally collected in a number of specific cases, including historical and scientific research and archiving purposes in the public interest for all records, regardless of whether they are State records or not.
 - Anonymisation/pseudonymisation of personal information published online – departmental records finding aids.
 - Exclusion of sensitive data from Adlib – closed records.
 - This is set out in Article 89 of GDPR (recitals 156-163) which allows member states to introduce derogations from rights referred to in Articles 15, 16, 18, 19, 20 and 21 for archiving purposes in the public interest in section 3.
 - The Data Protection Act, 2018 introduced derogations for archiving purposes in the public interest and historical and scientific research in section 42 and archiving of special categories of data in section 54.
 - Section 55 allows for the processing for archiving purposes in the public interest by a public authority of records relating to criminal convictions.



Potential issues

- **Copyright:**

- Data sets produced by the NA are subject to Government copyright – Director can authorise reuse, publication as Open Data.
- Does not apply to data sets produced by third parties unless specifically stated in a contract.
- Does not apply to original documents sourced from private collections or private letters found on government files – planning of digitisation projects.



Next steps

- **Next steps:**
 - Launch of new website early 2019.
 - Open Data policy in place.
 - Publication of first data sets 1st quarter 2019 – easy data sets first, gauge response, workload/input required.
 - Longer-term – development of a digital repository for the National Archives.
 - Fulfil statutory requirement to accession born digital records.
 - Remove dependency on third parties to host data – government servers, online catalogue hosted by private company.
 - Develop and expand Open Data strategy.
- **Future projects**
 - Digitisation of 1926 census for launch in April 2026.
 - Massive potential for linked data – collaboration with CSO.
 - Digitisation of Valuation Office archives – if funding becomes available
 - Pilot project 2014 proof of concept, use of linked data to map names to individual holdings – books, valuator's maps.
 - Massive potential to drive genealogy tourism to rural areas.
 - 19th century data demonstrating land redistribution pre & post famine.
 - Wider studies of social and economic 19th century history.



Future Developments

Public Service Records Management Plan

- 3 year project funded by DPER – Office of the Government Chief Information Officer – managed by National Archives.
- Attempt to standardise approach to records management across the Civil Service for both paper & digital records – reduce money spent on commercial storage, data storage.
- RFT issued & assessed – no capacity within NA to undertake a project of this scale. Awaiting funding to be put in place.
- Project to develop classification schemes, expanded retention and disposal schedules, compliance frameworks for digital records management, training, e-Archive.
- Steering group to oversee implementation across the Civil Service.



Future Developments

Archive Repository Project

- Purpose built archive on site of NA warehouse.
- Warehouse cleared December 2018.
- Site investigation early 2019.
- Building commenced 3Q 2019.
- New repository ready 2022, capacity for c.350,000 archival boxes.



Useful Sources for GDPR

Data Protection Guidance note on NA website:

http://www.nationalarchives.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/20180319GDPRNAA_GuidanceNote_3.pdf

European Archives Group – Guidelines for archiving personal data:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/about-european-commission/service-standards-and-principles/transparency/freedom-information/access-documents/information-and-document-management/archival-policy/european-archives-group/guidance-data-protection-archive-services_en

Guide to Archiving Personal Data: National Archives (UK)

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/guide-for-public-comment.pdf>

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/advice-and-guidance/managing-your-collection/archives-data-protection-law-uk/>

Upcoming:

ARA – Code of Conduct (2018)



Contact details

nmcdonnell@nationalarchives.ie

Tel: 01-4072349

Archives & Government Services

National Archives

Bishop Street

Dublin D08 DF85



@NARIreland



Thank you for your attention