An **archive** is a collection of records, documents, or digital data that are preserved for long-term storage, historical reference, or legal purposes. Archives can exist in **physical** or **digital** formats and are used to maintain important information over time.

### **Types of Archives:** 1. **Physical Archives** – Collections of paper documents, books, photographs, or artifacts stored in libraries, museums, or record-keeping institutions. 2. **Digital Archives** – Electronic repositories storing digitized documents, research papers, multimedia files, or datasets. 3. **Institutional Archives** – Maintained by organizations to preserve records of historical, administrative, or research value. 4. **Web Archives** – Snapshots of websites and digital content for historical preservation (e.g., Internet Archive's Wayback Machine).

### **Key Functions of an Archive:** - **Preservation** – Ensures long-term storage and integrity of documents. - **Access & Retrieval** – Organizes and indexes records for future use. - **Legal & Compliance** – Stores records for regulatory and institutional requirements. - **Cultural & Historical Record** – Maintains history for research and reference.

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