Why (not) Digitize?

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Hosted by ALCTS, the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services
Agenda

• Access and (re)Use – Why make digital objects?
• Levels of decision-making:
  • Institutional
  • Collection
  • Item
• Rights
• Tools & Examples
Selection – Our Best Preservation Strategy

“In the age of Google, non-digital content does not exist, and digital content with no impact is unlikely to survive.”

(Paul Conway, “Preservation in the Age of Google”)

University of Wisconsin Digital Collections
Access & (re)Use
Why Digitize?

Easier access for your users
Better accessibility for currently underserved users

“Future Librarians in the early Spring sun.” University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Library and Information Studies
Why Digitize?

Reach new user communities – farther away, interest based rather than geographic

California State Railroad Museum Library
Why Digitize?

To contribute to larger fuller stories through collaborative collections

Wisconsin Historical Society
Why Digitize?

Provide raw content for users to play with, calculate on, remix, re-use, reinterpret, and on and on...

FreePort [No. 001]: Charles Sandison
On view October 2, 2010 to April 24, 2011
Located in the: East India Marine Hall
Why Digitize?

To support preservation of fragile originals – or save content from obsolete media
Institutional Decisions
Mission

Does digitizing support and enhance your...

- Purpose?
- Users & Audience?
- Collections?
Collection Development

Work from your overall collection development policy

Create a policy specifically for digital collections:
- Relevant to mission and goals
- Appropriate to skills and infrastructure
- Review it regularly
Cost

Equipment
Staff
Training
More equipment
More training...

Banking
East Carolina University
Capabilities

What can you reformat with current:
◦ Technology
◦ Staff expertise

How much can you do?
How quickly?

Women factory workers at the Green River Ordnance Plant in Dixon, IL during WWII
NIU Regional History Center and University Archives
Collection Decisions
A Good Digital Collection...

1. ...is created according to an **explicit collection development policy**
2. ...is described so that a user can discover characteristics of the collection... and any information significant for determining the collection’s authenticity, integrity, and interpretation
3. ...is curated, which is to say, its resources are actively managed during their entire lifecycle
4. ...is **broadly available and avoids unnecessary impediments to use**
5. ...respects intellectual property rights
6. ...has **mechanisms to supply usage data and other data that allows standardized measures of usefulness to be recorded**
7. ...is interoperable
8. ...integrates into the users own workflow
9. ...is **sustainable over time**

Value

- What value does it hold to your users?
  - Evidential
  - Artifactual
  - Research
  - Intrinsic

Purpose

Plays to research or teaching strengths
Helps solicit new acquisitions
Uncovers hidden collections
Helps reach new users
Fits a funder’s priorities

Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies
Audience

What will the value of digitization be

- To your current users?
- To your potential users?

Advertisement for International Harvester Refrigerators
Wisconsin Historical Society
Contextual Value

Which object or collection:

- Could it enhance existing digital collections – from your institution or another?

Civil War Soldier
Wisconsin Historical Society
Digital Preservation REQUIRES metadata –

Do have enough?

- What you have, where it is, what format, what condition, what value, and what rights?

Can digitization spur new description efforts that are necessary?

Cover of International Harvester World, 1948
Wisconsin Historical Society
Item Decisions
Format
Format
Condition

Poor condition
- Slower
- Trickier
- More likely to damage further

Digitization can help!
(but it’s more expensive)

Car abandoned on Seekonk riverbank
National Archives
Potential Enhancement?
Privacy

Personal Identifying Information
Medical Information
Embarrassing photos or news accounts

DeKalb Ag Collection
NIU Regional History Center and University Archives
Rights & Permissions
Adopt “Well-intentioned Practice”

OCLC guidelines:

Select collections wisely

Use archival approaches to make decisions

Provide take-down policy statements & disclaimers to users of online collections

Work proactively with donors

Guidelines not a substitute for legal counsel

Source: [www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/activities/rights/practice.pdf](www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/activities/rights/practice.pdf)
Types of Works:

- Literary
- Musical
- Dramatic
- Pantomimes & Choreographic
- Pictorial, Graphic, & Sculptural
- Sound Recordings
- Motion Picture & Other AV
- Architectural
Develop rights statements for users

- Clear & concise
- Select from a few established categories
  - Use, reuse, commercial, etc.
- Default rights statements should be avoided
Helpful Tools & Examples
Sample Policies

Three women gather around a desk
UNT Libraries

http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/content/university-california-selection-criteria-digitization-pag
Decision Tree Interactive Assessment

Interactive Assessment: Selection of Digital Materials for Long-term Retention

Selection 1

Does the content of this resource fall within the institutional remit/collection development policy?

- Yes
- No

Selection 2

HELP

Copyright

How You Can Use It

Share it with your boss, your general counsel, your colleagues, and patrons so they know the good news.

Use it to guide project planning.

Replace old guidelines as a go-to resource for basic information.

Access the full code and other resources at www.arl.org/fairuse

Thank You!

Questions?

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