NORTHEAST
DOCUMENT
CONSERVATION
CENTER

Planning for Digital Preservation:
A Self-Assessment Tool
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This tool is designed to help staff of museums, libraries, archives, and other cultural organizations begin to think about long-term sustainability of their digital collections. It complements the Digital Preservation Readiness Assessment developed by the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC). Although conducting a digital assessment at your own institution can be difficult, the following questions can help the staff of cultural organizations initiate a self-assessment.

The following topics are covered in this tool:
- Mission and goals
- Policies and procedures
- Staffing
- Finances
- Digital content
- Technology
- Access and metadata
- Digital preservation
- Rights management

Mission, Vision, Goals, and Objectives
- Have you incorporated digital resources and access to these resources into your mission and vision statements?
- Are digital initiatives incorporated into your organization's strategic plan? Is the preservation of digital resources incorporated into your strategic plan?
- Have you developed specific goals pertaining to the digital initiative? Have you developed specific goals and objectives that relate to digital preservation?

Policies and Procedures
- Have you created policies in the following areas for your digital program? Have you implemented these policies?
    - Collection management/development
    - Copyright, may be incorporated into Collection Management
    - Disaster or Emergency Planning
    - Exhibits
    - Preservation Plan

- o Public Use

- Does your digital program include best practices or procedures for any of the following **OR** are you in the process of developing best practices or procedures for the following?
    - o Selection
    - o Metadata creation
    - o Content creation (scanning, digital capture, etc.)
    - o Quality control
    - o Digital Preservation
    - o Licensing
    - o Public Use
    - o Website Management
- Do you outsource any aspects of the digital initiative? If so, which ones? To whom?

Staffing
- Do you have staff specifically assigned to the digital collection initiative? Is staff from other parts of your organization involved in the digital collection initiative? What are the roles of the different individuals?
- What technology staff is involved in your project? Are they part of your organization, your parent organization, or another organization? What are their responsibilities in the digital initiative?
- What staff is involved in digital preservation activities, both within your organization and parent organization? Is technology staff involved in digital preservation? Is preservation staff involved? What roles do they play?
- What training do you provide staff involved in the digital initiative? What staff attends this training?
- What training in digital preservation does staff attend?
- Do you participate in a digital collaborative? What role does the collaborative play, what role do members of the collaborative play?

Finances
- What are the primary sources of funding for your digital initiative?
    - o Grants
    - o Organization's budget
    - o Fees from products created through digitization
    - o Donors
    - o Other
- What percentage of funding comes from each source now and what percentage do you see coming from each source in the future?
- What is your current budget for your digital initiative, including staffing? What do you anticipate that budget to be in 5 years?
- What is or what do you anticipate being the primary source of funding for digital preservation?
    - o Grants
    - o Organization's budget
    - o Fees from products created through digitization
    - o Donors
    - o Other

- How do you plan to fund your digital preservation activities?
  - Grants
  - Organization's budget
  - Fees from products created through digitization
  - Donors
  - Other

Digital Content

- Have you undertaken a risk assessment[1] of your digital collection? Do you plan to undertake a risk assessment[2]?
- What types of materials have you converted to digital format? (e.g., books, documents, sound recordings)
- What type of materials are you collecting in digital format? These materials are considered born digital.(e.g. books, documents, sound recordings)
- What digital formats are you currently managing?   What do you plan to manage in the future? (e.g. TIFF, JPEG, PDF)
- Are you outsourcing the creation of digital content, creating content in-house, or both? Do you have a quality control program? Is it both at the vendor and in-house?
- How long do you plan to actively manage these resources? Less than ten years, more than eleven years?

Access and Metadata

- How do you provide access to your digital collections? What systems do you use?
- Who may access your collections?
- What percentage of your digital collection is available online?
- What type of metadata are you creating? Descriptive, structural, administrative, all three?
- What metadata schema(s) are you currently using? What schema(s) do you plan to use in the future?
- What digital asset management system and/or repository system is your organization using or planning to use?

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[1] **RISK ASSESSMENT / ANALYSIS:**   A risk assessment is simply a means of structuring the process of analyzing risk. *Risk Management of Digital Information.* Washington DC, Council on Library and Information Resources (June, 2000). Retrieved November 30, 2007.

[2] The risk assessment information can be used to determine what to digitize or to determine what materials will be at risk for your digital preservation strategy.

[5] *Trustworthy Repositories Audit & Certification: Criteria and Checklist.* Chicago, IL. Center for Research Libraries, March, 2007.
http://www.crl.edu/content.asp?l1=l3&l2=58&l3=162&l4=91

Technology

- What technologies are you using to create digital content? Digital camera, Scanner, Digital Audio Workstation? Other? What brand of equipment are you using? How old is the equipment? Who is responsible for maintaining the equipment?
- Do you have set replacement cycles on capture workstations? If yes, what time period? Do you have set replacement cycles on servers? If yes, what time period? Do you have set replacement cycles on storage devices (e.g. SAN, NAS, tape library, etc.)? If yes, what time period?
- When do you upgrade software? Is all the software upgraded at the same time?

Digital Preservation

- Which digital preservation strategies has your institution implemented? Bit preservation? Migration? Refreshing data? Emulation? Maintenance of legacy equipment? Data backup? Locally developed digital preservation solution?
- Have you implemented a digital repository into your program, and, if yes, is it a commercial , open source, or homegrown solution?
- Are you outsourcing your digital preservation activities to another organization? Which activities in particular (repository, storage, etc.) are being outsourced? If yes, to whom? What responsibilities does this organization have?
- What content are you placing in the repository?
- Has the repository been through a self-audit using the Center for Research Libraries/OCLC *Trustworthy Repositories Audit & Certification (TRAC)?*[5]
- Do you or your vendor have a digital preservation plan? Has your vendor been through an audit or a self-audit based on the CRL/OCLC TRAC?
- If you are locally managing your preservation activities, what media are you using for storage? CD/DVD, removable media (disks, zip disks), online magnetic media (hard drives), tape? What frequency do you refresh your CD/DVD?
- If you back-up your files, where are they stored? At what frequency do you back-up your files?

Rights Management

- Has copyright or licensing concerns deterred you from creating and preserving a digital collection? When acquiring digital content do you acquire digital preservation rights (Do you have the right to modify the digital object to preserve it?)