

Selecting Collections for Digitization and Project Planning

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Outline

- Context
 - Selection Issues and Criteria
 - Sources of Funding
 - Planning Resources
 - Writing the Proposal
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Context

- Digitization projects for long term retention and network delivery
 - Some of the same issues apply if you are digitizing but not delivering online
 - Good digital materials and collections
 - Reusable
 - Persistent
 - Interoperable
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Importance of Selection

- ❑ All digitization projects are costly.
 - ❑ We all have limited time and financial resources.
 - ❑ All projects require a time commitment from permanent staff – even if we have external funding.
 - ❑ Selecting one project means that others must be rejected.
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Selection Factors

- Copyright Status
 - Significance of the Collection
 - Current and Potential Users
 - Organization and Descriptive Metadata
 - Relationship to Other Digital Collections
 - Formats and Languages
 - Funding
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Copyright Status

- What is the copyright status of the source materials?
 - Public domain
 - Controlled by your institution
 - Permission secured
 - Situation unknown or murky
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Public Domain

(<http://www.unc.edu/~unc1ng/public-d.htm>)

- ❑ Many works are no longer covered by copyright or never were covered by copyright.
 - ❑ Works in the public domain may be used without permission.
 - ❑ What's in the public domain?
 - All works published before January 1, 1923.
 - Works published between 1923 and 1964 and not renewed in the 28th year.
 - Works published without copyright notice before 1989.
 - Unpublished works whose author died before 1932; otherwise, the term is life plus 70 years.
 - ❑ Many people attempt to claim copyright simply because they own the work or have published it.
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Significance of the Collection

- ❑ Always start with significance, which may be measured in different ways. “The significance of the collection is a primary criterion for evaluation” (LC/Ameritech Competition). Why this collection?
 - ❑ Will experts attest to the importance of the collection?
 - ❑ How does it fit into current or potential research activities?
 - ❑ Does the intellectual quality of the source materials warrant the level of access made possible by digitizing?
 - ❑ Will digitization enhance the intellectual value of the material?
 - ❑ Are you primarily trying to preserve the collection or improve access?
 - ❑ Some evidence that digitizing anything increases use, but current use is still an important indicator.
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Current and potential users

- Are users consulting the proposed source materials?
- Is current access so difficult that digitization will create a new audience?
- Will electronic access to these materials enhance their value to users?
- Does the physical condition of the originals limit their use?
- Are related materials widely dispersed?
- Are there librarians or archivists who might collaborate on the project?
- Will digitization meet the needs of local users?

Organization and Metadata

- ❑ Has the collection been organized and processed?
 - ❑ Is there a finding aid – either paper or online?
 - How complete is the finding aid?
 - Does it include all of the information needed for discovery?
 - How easy will it be to adapt this finding aid to provide online access to the collection?
 - ❑ If the answer is no to either question, project planning and project costs will increase.
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Relationship to Other Digital Collections

- If published material, has it already been digitized? All? Parts of the collection?
 - Would cooperative digitization effort improve this project? Could you find partners?
 - How does this collection fit in with other digital collections? Will the whole be greater than the sum of the parts?
 - Are there complementary collections in other institutions? Would one of these institutions be interested in partnering?
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Formats and Language

- Some formats are more established and mainstream for digitization than others.
 - Text, photographs, visual materials
 - Audio
 - Video
 - Creation of searchable text requires additional time and skills; non-Western languages present challenges.
 - Do you or potential partners have the expertise to deal with these formats?
Sustain access to them over time?
Preserve them?
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Sources of Funding

Grants

- Federal
- State
- Foundation

University

- Primarily small projects or pilot projects
- NEH Endowment

Partnerships

Grants

- ❑ Specific digitization grant programs, such as IMLS (www.ims.gov)
 - ❑ Programs in other agencies that will consider digitization projects, such as the National Endowment for the Humanities (www.neh.gov)
 - ❑ Some money to the state from the federal government through LSTA
 - ❑ Mellon Foundation is particularly interested in digitization projects
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Grant Challenges

- Proposal require large time commitment to prepare
 - Don't do it for a project that isn't really important to you – just because money is available
 - Take the time to look at the specific grant criteria and evaluate objectively your chances of success
 - Federal grants require 33%-50% match, depending upon the program and the amount of the request
 - Many proposals submitted twice
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Partnerships

- ❑ Some projects are too large or too complex to do without partners.
 - ❑ Sometimes one unit simply does not have the expertise or the resources to complete the project alone.
 - ❑ In all cases, work from written proposals and agreements.
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Partnerships – no external funding

- *Wright American Fiction* funded through the CIC
 - Very time-consuming to develop and manage
 - Risky for long-term projects that require a commitment over multiple years
 - Requires a dedicated and flexible project manager
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Partnerships – external funding

- ❑ Some grants require partners, many prefer partners.
 - ❑ Don't go looking for partners just to qualify for the grant.
 - ❑ Logistics easier with internal partners than external partners, but grants usually consider external partners only.
 - ❑ Partners may be needed to meet cost share requirement.
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Planning – Moving from What to How

- ❑ Start with a skeletal plan before identifying funding sources, then customize.
 - ❑ Iterative, non-linear process
 - ❑ Be prepared to radically change a project.
 - ❑ Be prepared to abandon a project.
 - ❑ Keep the number of partners to a minimum – delineate responsibilities for planning.
 - ❑ Cannot prepare a budget without knowing exactly what you are going to do.
 - Plan → Budget → Revise plan → Revise Budget
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Resources for Planning/Proposals

- ❑ Examples of successful proposals on [Digital Library Program web site](#)
Also accessible via project sites:
[Charles W. Cushman Collection proposal](#)
 - ❑ Examples on IMLS web site
<http://www.ims.gov/grants/index.htm>
 - ❑ National Leadership Grant (NLG) Tutorial
http://e-services.ims.gov/project_planning/
 - ❑ [LC/Ameritech Competition](#), National Digital Library (1996-1999) – Most complete description of specifics
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Proposal Outline

- Two major sections
 - The collection description and its significance
 - The management plan
 - What are you going to do? Who's going to do it? What are their qualifications? Related experience?
 - Technical details go in this section or appendices
 - Digitization grants will have more specific selection criteria that determine sections of the grant
 - Always limits on length, usually 10 pages
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Collection and Use Information

- ❑ Significance of the collection
 - ❑ Audience and users – We always include user studies and introduce usability testing here
 - ❑ Relationship to other digital collections
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Management Plan

- Preparation and preservation of the collection
 - Digital conversion methodology
 - In-house conversion vs. outsourcing
 - Intellectual access (cataloging and metadata)
 - Network delivery and access
 - Technical infrastructure
 - Web access – We always include usability testing in this section
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Sustainability

- What will happen when the grant ends?
How will you sustain this resource? Two parts:
 - Technical
 - Administrative
 - Important to address both.
 - Existing technical infrastructure and institutional commitment to permanence
 - Existing administrative infrastructure that will provide an organizational home for upgrades and migration
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Specific Criteria

- These will vary depending upon the funding agency
 - National Leadership Grants
 - National impact
 - Adaptability
 - Dissemination – resource and project findings
 - Evaluation – preferably outcome-based – but also evaluation of web interface and functionality
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Additional Elements

- ❑ Budget
 - ❑ Budget narrative
 - ❑ “Specifications for Projects Involving Digitization” (next slide)
 - ❑ Plan of Work – Schedule of Completion
 - ❑ Two-page resumes for key personnel
 - ❑ Letters of support
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Specifications for Digitization

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- ❑ Types of materials to be digitized
 - ❑ Copyright issues
 - ❑ Equipment, with specifications, that will be used
 - ❑ Types of file formats for master, access, and thumbnail images; formats for other media including sampling rates, if applicable
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Specifications for Digitization

[2/3]

- ❑ Delivery medium and digital access management system
 - ❑ Quality control plan
 - ❑ Estimate cost per image (scanning, quality control, indexing)
 - ❑ Metadata standards to be used
 - ❑ Preservation and maintenance of digital files after grant
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Specifications for Digitization

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- ❑ Plans for the creation of cataloging records
 - ❑ Plans for submitting records to national registries
 - ❑ URLs for any previously-digitized collections
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Contact Information

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If you want to consult with DLP staff about a digitization project – or any other digital library project – do not hesitate to contact me.
