THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Lessons learned:
How to have a successful digitization project

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Begin with the end in mind.

- Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

Prioritization: potential criteria for digitization

Does digitization of the item or collection fill an existing need?

q   Frequency of Access: Is the item or collection something that is frequently requested?

q   Uniqueness: Is the same material already available online elsewhere?

q   Obsolescence: Is the object's carrier in an obsolete format, e.g. audio reel?

q   Physical condition: Does digitization provide access while reducing wear to the physical objects? Are the objects in poor physical condition, e.g. disintegrating?
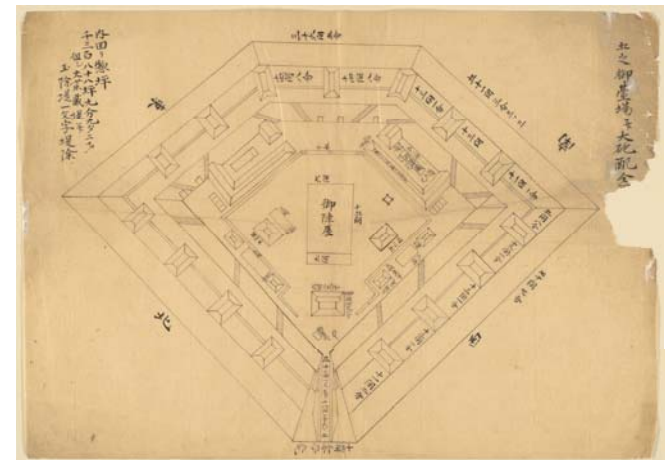
Inventory

Gather detailed information before you start. Surprises cost time and money in the long run.

❑ Create an inventory of items, preferably in a spreadsheet.

❑ Identify what you are digitizing: content, format, and size all influence digitization decisions.

❑ Record titles, dates, and other details that can be repurposed later as metadata.

❑ Have the works been accessioned and described elsewhere?

q Create consistent identifiers and filenaming practices that are unambiguous.

Identifier	Image Count	Dimensions (inches)	Gold leaf or gold ink	Bound
MS-MR-FRAG-321-131	2	3" X 4"		
MS-MR-FRAG-321-144	2	3" X 4"		
MS-MR-FRAG-322	2	5" X 7.25"	x	
MS-MR-FRAG-323-1	2	4.5" X 6"	x	
MS-MR-FRAG-323-2	2	4.5" X 6"	x	
MS-MR-FRAG-324-5	2	4.25" X 6.5"	x	
MS-MR-FRAG-324-8	2	4.5" X6.5"	x	
MS-MR-FRAG-325-1	2	4.75" X 6.5"	x	
MS-MR-FRAG-325-2	2	4.5" X 6.5"	x	
MS-MR-FRAG-325-3	2	4.5" X 6.5"	x	
MS-MR-FRAG-326	2	9.25" x 13"		
MS-MR-FRAG-328	4	6" X 9"		
MS-MR-FRAG-329-1	2	5.25" X 7.5"	x	x
MS-MR-FRAG-329-2	2	5.25" X 7.5"	x	x
MS-MR-FRAG-329-3	2	5.25" X 7.5"	x	x
MS-MR-FRAG-329-4	2	5.25" X 7.5"	x	x
MS-MR-FRAG-329-5	2	5.25" X 7.5"	x	x
MS-MR-FRAG-329-6	2	5.25" X 7.5"		x
MS-MR-FRAG-329-7	2	5.25" X 7.5"		x
MS-MR-FRAG-329-8	2	5.25" X 7.5"		x
MS-MR-FRAG-330-136	2	4.5" X 6.75"	x	
MS-MR-FRAG-330-156	2	4.5" X 6.75"	x	
MS-MR-FRAG-330-178	2	4.5" X 6.75"	x	
MS-MR-FRAG-332	2	6.5" X 10"	x	
MS-MR-FRAG-334	2	10" X 14.75"		
MS-MR-FRAG-336	2	5.75" X 7.5"	x	
MS-MR-FRAG-337	2	5.25 X 10.5"	x	
MS-MR-FRAG-338	2	7" X 8.5"		
MS-MR-FRAG-340	2	7.5" X 10.25"		

Assets

Identify production assets that you have, or need to acquire.

- ❑ Staff
- ❑ Equipment
- ❑ Time
- ❑ Money
- ❑ File storage – On-site or off-site/cloud
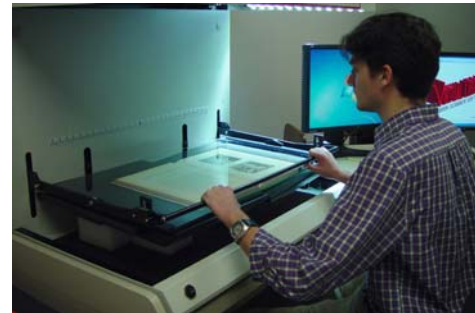
Condition

Survey the physical condition of the materials to be digitized. Are there factors that could be problematic?

- ❑ Brittle or torn paper
- ❑ Heavily folded maps or documents
- ❑ Tight book bindings
- ❑ Mold
- ❑ Foldouts, pocket maps, or other oversized/complex features
- ❑ ...and others! (even after all these years, we're still surprised by things we find)

Handling

Whether you do in house digitization or send objects to a vendor, consider the time and work for physically prepping collections for digitization.

- ❑ How fragile are the items?
- ❑ Do items need to be removed from housing, enclosures?
- q Do items need to be grouped by type: size, color/B&W, reflectivity, bound/unbound?
- ❑ Outsourced projects: packing & shipping time and cost; art insurance.
- ❑ Inventory: before shipping and on return from digitization studio (if in-house) or vendor (if outsourced).

Access & Rights

If the goal is to share digitized objects online, consider and research rights issues related to them.

- ❑ How does your institution define "acceptable risk"?

- ❑ Are they copyrighted?

- ❑ What was the purpose of the work and authorship/creator?

- ❑ Was there a formal publication process? Unpublished works have a longer copyright term.

- ❑ What level of rights review is necessary?

- ❑ Has the donor transferred rights?

- ❑ Privacy concerns: personal correspondence; diaries; contract negotiation documents.

Standards and specifications

Consult published standards when writing project specs; use classes and instructional guides to train staff

q   Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative (FADGI)
    http://www.digitizationguidelines.gov/guidelines/digitize-technical.html

q   LYRASIS https://www.lyrasis.org

q   NEDCC https://www.nedcc.org

q   CCAHA, https://ccaha.org

q   Free tutorial from Cornell University
    http://preservationtutorial.library.cornell.edu/technical/technicalA-02.html

In house digitization vs. outsourcing

Do it yourself digitization:

❑ Own the equipment or can purchase the equipment that will digitize the objects according to specifications while minimizing wear on the objects.

❑ Staff and/or volunteers that can be trained and conduct digitization.
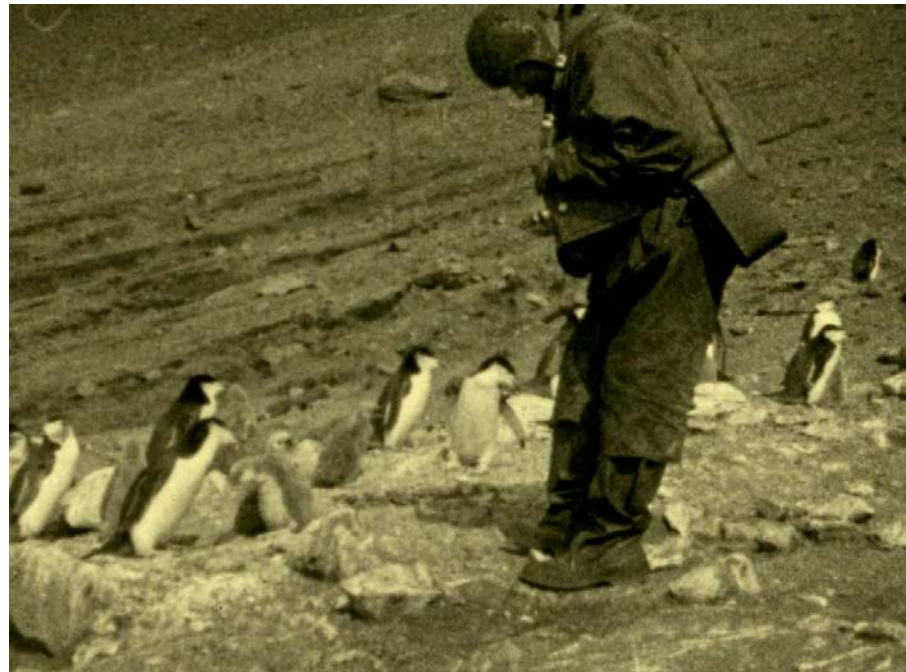
❑ Conduct quality review of all work. Errors happen!

Vendor digitization:

❑ Require specialized equipment for the digitization, e.g. motion pictures.

❑ Special shipping considerations.

❑ Be an informed consumer. Some vendors will recommend lower specs to quote cheaper jobs.

❑ Conduct quality review of all work. Errors happen! If the vendor makes a mistake, notify them right away.

Digitization – Moving Images & Sound

❑ Best Copy

❑ Not restoration

❑ Description on item or container may not match the item

 ❑ Will not know if the description matches until the item is digitized

❑ **Do not** deaccession the original AV item once it has been digitized

 ❑ Unless it's a possible health or safety issue (ex: nitrate)

"Wilkins Hearst Antarctic Expedition", Sir George Hubert Wilkins Papers, SPEC.PA.56.0006, Byrd Polar and Climate Research Center Archival Program, Ohio State University

Digitization – Moving Images & Sound

❑ CD/DVDs are great for access, not digital preservation

❑ Digitized moving images takes up a significant amount of storage space

❑ If pursuing in-house digitization: obtain broadcast/production quality playback equipment if possible

    ❖ Ebay, estate sales, other depts at your institution are your friends

Captain America, Larry Ivie Papers, SPEC.CGA.LIV, Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum, Ohio State University

Digital preservation for the long-term

❑ Back-up your data to more than one device and location, e.g. local storage system and cloud-based storage.

❑ Strategize to protect content via future file format migrations and storage-related migration. If possible, use checksums to verify the integrity of content.

❑ During the project, update the inventory spreadsheet with related metadata and digitization process. This can be useful to save with files.

Resources

- Anna E. Bulow and Jess Ahmon, *Preparing Collections for Digitization*, London: Facet Publishing, 2011.

- Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative (FADGI), http://www.digitizationguidelines.gov/

- Library of Congress, Sustainability of Digital Formats, https://www.loc.gov/preservation/digital/formats/index.shtml

- Library of Congress, National Digital Stewardship Alliance (NDSA), Levels of Digital Preservation, https://ndsa.org/activities/levels-of-digital-preservation/

Resources - A/V

- AMIA Github https://github.com/amiaopensource

- Anthony Cocciolo, *Moving Image and Sound Collections for Archivists*, Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2017.

- Chris Lacinak. Chapter 3: Planning, Preparing, and Implementing Reformatting Projects. Fundamentals of AV Preservation. NEDCC https://www.nedcc.org/fundamentals-of-av-preservation-textbook/chapter-3-reformatting

- Amy Rudersdorf. Chapter 4: Managing Digital Audiovisual Collections. Fundamentals of AV Preservation. NEDCC https://www.nedcc.org/fundamentals-of-av-preservation-textbook/chapter-4-introduction

Resources – A/V

- ARSC Guide to Audio Preservation http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub164/
- IASA-TC 06 Guidelines for the Preservation of Video Recordings https://www.iasa-web.org/tc06/guidelines-preservation-video-recordings
- IASA-TC 04 Guidelines on the Production and Preservation of Digital Audio Objects https://www.iasa-web.org/tc04/audio-preservation

Thank you!

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