Digital Materials Discussion Activity
Digital Stewardship Curriculum

Talk to colleagues about what you would do in this situation. For each question, think about policies and forms you would use and what practical steps would you take.

You discover that the person who previously had your job had a folder on the computer labeled "Digitized Photos" with 150 scans of photos that you recognize from collections in your storage area. They are from many different collections, with seemingly random file names.

- How would you determine what level of quality the files are? How would you decide if they are up to your standards?

- Where would you look for metadata about the files? What would you do if you found nothing?

- How would you decide how to organize the files?

- How would you handle other considerations like privacy, copyright, or cultural sensitivity?

- If you were able to travel back in time and advise this person on digitization projects, what would you say? What would you have done differently?

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A donor who is an important member of your community comes in with a box of materials about her life and work. This includes physical documents, notebooks, letters, photographs, several floppy disks, a flash drive, and an external hard drive. The paper and photo materials are very well organized, and the donor even wrote an inventory of them with some usable descriptive metadata. The digital materials (floppy disks, flash drive, hard drive) are more of a mystery and less organized - but she said they are mostly text documents, audio interviews, and digital photos.

- What information would you want to get from the donor about the digital files on these different types of storage media? How would you document this information?

- Are there any reasons you would not take some of the digital files?

- How would you open, examine, and copy the files?
    - Do you have a computer or laptop that is not connected to the office network that can keep files quarantined while you make sure there are no viruses?

- If you were able to successfully get an archival copy of the digital files, what would you do with the original storage media?

- What would some first steps be in processing the digital files after you accepted them?
    - Copying, converting, renaming, dealing with duplicate files?

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Your department has been in charge of storing Tribal Council's meeting minutes in paper form for the last 10 years. The Tribal Chairperson contacted you about two things:

      1. The Council would like to start sending you electronic files instead of paper files for the meeting minutes.

      2. When the Chairperson's term ends in 2 years, they would like to "donate their email" to the archive.

The Chairperson is contacting you with plenty of time to do necessary planning and budgeting for starting these two new areas - you plan to have Digital Records Planning Meetings over the next year..

- What kind of information would you want to explain to the Chairperson about archives management, digital files or digital preservation?

- What questions would you want to bring up at the first Digital Records Planning Meeting about the meeting minutes?

- What are some methods or tools that you would suggest for transferring the meeting minutes documents from the Tribal Council to the archives?

- What questions would you want to bring up at the first Digital Records Planning Meeting about the Chairperson's emails?

- What methods or tools might you use to collect and process email?