



## Workflow for Planning a Digitization Project

Before beginning this process you should establish a **Digitization Purpose Statement** for your institution or department that will guide your questions and answers. Next, there are two main sets of planning questions to ask: **should we digitize and can we digitize?**

### Should We Digitize?

#### Goals and Policies

Defining your overall project goals and decision-making strategy. Does the project fit within your broader mission and organizational goals?

### Step One

#### **Define your project scope**

- What are the boundaries of the project?
  - Who will decide what falls within the scope of your project?
- Are there grant-funded mandates you must adhere to?
- What is the total amount of material to be digitized?
- How will you describe and provide access to the items?
- How does the project fit within the mission/scope of the Tribe/department/institution?
  - Does it directly support research or instruction?
  - Is there a preservation need?
  - Does it support the tribal community's goals?
    - Have there been any community needs assessments done to define goals/needs in relation to digitization?
  - Are there educational goals?

## Step Two

### **Define the timeline for the project**

- How long will the project take?
  - Generally, one-third of time will be spent on planning and administrative tasks, one-third on digital capture, and one-third on metadata.
- What deadlines do you need to follow?
- What milestones will you set to keep the project on target?

## Step Three

### **Define your expected outcomes**

- What are the desired results from this project?
  - Are there specific targets for numbers of materials digitized or metadata created?
  - Will the materials be added to an existing collection to enrich it?
  - Are there outcomes related to access, outreach, and communication with the tribe, the public, or other groups?
- How will you measure your outcomes?
  - Do you have assessment materials?
    - Create evaluation forms for project activities
    - Use statistics from reference requests and internet traffic

## Step Four

### **Define expected benefits**

- What do you hope to gain from the project?
  - For example, increasing the scope of your collections, language materials for k-12 students, oral histories from elders, documentation of tribal histories, etc.
- Are there both quantitative and qualitative benefits?
  - For example, a set number of documents scanned (quantitative) and increased tribal knowledge about a certain subject (qualitative)

## Step Five

### **Define the materials to be digitized**

- What types of materials are involved?
  - How many of each type
    - Photos, documents, audio formats, video, film, etc.
  - What formats do you have to digitize?
    - For example, 12 cassette tapes, 16 reel-to-reels and 85 VHS tapes
- Define material specific concerns for the digitization process—these are not preservation concerns, these are time/workflow issues.
  - For example: are documents two sided?
  - Do you have oversized materials?
  - Do your tapes have two sides (side A, side B)

## Step Six

### **Establish permissions and access parameters for the digitized materials**

- Do you have the rights to digitize and share all the materials or information included in the project?
- Consider legal, social, and cultural questions
  - Are there copyright concerns with the materials? If you don't know, do you have legal counsel to guide you?
  - Are there individual or community privacy concerns? If you are not sure, do you have a tribal committee, elders' council or other governing body to discuss the issues with?
  - Are there cultural concerns? Are any of the materials sacred? Do they belong to specific families?
    - What are the levels of access associated with the materials? For example, are some recordings for elders only? Are some documents for Tribal Council members only?
- Do you have a departmental access policy to guide the project?

## Step Seven

### **Decide on the method of digitization for the project**

- Will you perform the work in-house or use contractors? Or a mixture?
  - Take into account costs, time, and the capabilities of your organization. Outsourcing digitization work can be the better option in some situations. For example, if the digitization of a set of U-matic tapes will only happen once, or just a few times, and the cost of equipment is more than the cost of outsourcing, this may be a situation where outsourcing is preferable.

- Is the method technologically feasible?
  - Do you have the right equipment?
  - Do you have the storage space?
- Do you have funding, infrastructure (including space), and staffing to carry out the specific tasks related to the project plan?

## **Can We Digitize?**

### **Technology and Workflows**

Questions to ask and things you want in place before starting a digitization project.

## Step One

### ***Defining your equipment needs***

- List any digitization equipment you will need for the project
  - Does any equipment need repairs now? If not, do you have a list of vendors if you do need repairs later?
- Assess what is available already and what needs to be purchased
  - List associated costs

## Step Two

### ***Examining your physical space***

Depending on the type of project, a separate space for digitization is helpful.

- List space needs
  - Space for a computer (or multiple computers) for capture and editing
  - Space for digitization equipment
  - Space to lay out and store physical materials if needed
  - Do you need a quiet space for audio editing work?

## Step Three

### **Define your digital storage needs**

Do you have enough storage space to save high quality archival master files and access copies for all material included in the project.

- Ideally, storage will be part of a digital preservation plan for the project.
  - The **3-2-1 Rule** is a good baseline: three copies, saved on two different media formats, at least one copy backed up off site. For example, three copies created, save one on local computer, one to an external hard drive, and one to cloud storage (which is the off-site copy saved in case of a disaster.)

## Step Four

### **Define a file naming convention for the project**

A naming convention is a meaningful system of naming digitized files, descriptive and easy to understand, consistent across project. A naming convention should be unique to each institution.

- Define resources needed to create and or use an existing naming convention
  - Does it fit within your overall collection naming conventions?

## Step Five

### **Define how access will be provided during and after digitization**

Providing appropriate access to digital collections requires technology, policies, and documents to support access to different user groups.

- What policies and documents will you need to support and define access?
- Do you have a set of procedures and guidelines for staff as they work?
  - Can they access the files on their own? Is it appropriate for them to discuss the materials they are digitizing with others?
  - Create written protocols describing how to request access
    - Are there levels or types of access associated with the collections?
- What technology will you need to provide the desired level of access during and after digitization?
  - Does your content management system allow differing levels of access?
  - Do you have a dedicated workstation to provide on-site access or a "dropbox" for sharing large media files for staff?

- Are there digital or paper forms that allow users to request access, copies, and/or permission to re-use digital materials?
  - Is there Information on your institution's webpage about who to contact to access the digital collection?

## Step Six

### **Define the staff needed to ensure the project is completed**

- What staff resources are available?
  - Permanent staff, temporary workers, students, volunteers, contract workers
- Who will be overseeing and carrying out the work of digitization, metadata creation, and quality checks?
- Will any staff need training?

## Step Seven

### **Establish a digitization log or tracking sheet(s) for documentation purposes**

- It is important to document what is being digitized. Typically, you want to track:
  - What is digitized
  - By whom
  - When
  - What files were created
  - Where the files are stored

## Step Eight

### **Gather and define written procedures**

- A project manual or workflow is a good starting point. Typically this includes:
  - All the necessary steps in the project's workflow
    - Steps for each stage of digitization and each material type
  - Easy-to-understand explanations of each stage of the project and each process involved
    - List of who to go to with more questions
  - Guidelines for troubleshooting
  - A list of staff contacts