Digitization Policy for the Library and Collections Program of the Utah Division of State History

Introduction

Technology has become an integral part of the success of cultural institutions. The Utah Division of State History (UDSH) and the Library and Collections (L&C) program have a commitment to digitization efforts. Digitization provides a means to fulfill mandated responsibilities, specifically with regard to stimulating research of Utah's history, and preserving and maintaining a specialized library UCA §9-8-203[1]. Just as the L&C program has a collecting policy for physical items the same concepts of discretion and judgment apply to the creation of digital collections.

With the fulfillment of mandate as a guiding factor and the goal of a successful future as a cultural institution dedicated to relevant and quality digital collections, this policy defines how L&C conducts digitization.

This policy only applies to the L&C program of the UDSH.

Objective

Digitization supports the mission of UDSH to "preserve and share the past with the present and future." The availability of digital collections removes the physical and financial barriers of travel and access and gives customers an unlimited opportunity of researching. Digitization further allows for the proper care of the State's collections as it is used as a means of accessing the original content without handling the original itself. The original can then be properly preserved. Digitization also provides an opportunity to showcase unique or valuable collections on an international level. Therefore, L&C digitizes collections with three main goals:

- Aid in the preservation of fragile or at-risk collections
- Enrich access to collection material
- Highlight unique collections

Selection Process

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[1] UCA §9-8-203. Division duties.
(1)   The division shall:
(a)   stimulate research, study, and activity in the field of Utah history and related history;
(b)   maintain a specialized history library;
(c)   mark and preserve historic sites, areas, and remains;
(d)   collect, preserve, and administer historical records relating to the history of Utah;
(e)   administer, collect, preserve, document, interpret, develop, and exhibit historical artifacts, documentary materials, and other objects relating to the history of Utah for educational and cultural purposes;
(f)   edit and publish historical records;
(g)   cooperate with local, state, and federal agencies and schools and museums to provide coordinated and organized activities for the collection, documentation, preservation, interpretation, and exhibition of historical artifacts related to the state;

Based on its goals, L&C pursues digitization for efficient and justifiable reasons. In selecting and prioritizing a collection for digitization, L&C evaluates a collection based on the following criteria:

Preservation Needs
- Material is in a state of deterioration
- Material is handled often by staff and patrons and digitization will help preserve its condition
- Material is fragile

Access
- Material is used often and digitization is likely to provide enhanced usability
- Material is in need of physical reprocessing and organization and/or an electronic finding aid needs to be created
- Material is in public domain or UDSH maintains copyright

Uniqueness
- Material is unique to UDSH
- Material context covers unique or widely unknown events, peoples, and/or places

Demand
- Digitization of material will generate broader use of UDSH resources
- Digitization of material is time sensitive
- Digitization of material has come at the request of a stakeholder (legislator, Department of Heritage and Arts, UDSH, donor)

Feasibility
- Material is already comprehensively organized, making metadata creation easier to produce
- Sufficient staff time and resources available for digitization
- Current partnerships and/or contracts can be used in digitization

A collection will be evaluated based on the above criteria and given a score between 1 and 10, with 10 being the highest. The scores are then weighted as follows:

- Preservation needs   30%
- Access   20%
- Uniqueness   15%
- Demand   15%
- Feasibility   20%

Example:

Criteria	Rating	Percentage	Weight
Preservation Needs	8	30%	2.4
Access	6	20%	1.2
Uniqueness	8	15%	1.2
Demand	4	15%	0.6
Feasibility	7	20%	1.4
TOTAL Weighted Score			**6.8**

Collections are presented as possible digitization candidates and added to the project management tool, Smartsheet, for discussion and exploration. The digitization committee made up of L&C staff reviews digitization ideas, conducts digital evaluations, and scores collections. Based on the evaluation, weighted score, and discussion with the digitization committee, a collection is selected for digitization from the Smartsheet project list.

L&C reserves the right to select collections for digitization based on the needs and values of a collection, not always solely on the scoring value.

See Appendix A.

Collection Management

When a collection is selected for digitization, a digital control file is created. A copy of the Digitization Evaluation form is maintained in the digital control file, as well as other relevant documents, such as DHA Strike Force Panther Candidate Worksheet and partner task order. Additionally, project management and monitoring of the collection digitization process is documented in Smartsheet.

Digitization Process

L&C works with DHA and institutional partners to outsource work on digitization projects. The specific guidelines of scanning, metadata, preparation, and transferring are decided based on the collection needs and established in a task order or other contracting vehicle signed by the participating institutions. All specifications are documented in the digital control file. Once responsibilities have been assigned, some general guidelines apply:

1. A collection is prepared for digitization. This includes barcoding envelopes for unique identification and rehousing negatives or photographs into archival sleeves.
2. Metadata entries are created under the direction of the L&C Digital Librarian. Metadata can be outsourced to digitization partners. Metadata is created using Dublin Core metadata standards. Metadata must conform to the Mountain West Digital Library Dublin Core Application Profile. While other fields can be included in a collection metadata template, required fields are:
    a. Title
    b. Date
    c. Description
    d. Identifier
    e. Subject
    f. Rights
    g. Format
    h. Type
3. Quality control measures are applied to ensure metadata is completed accurately. Metadata is reviewed by the L&C Digital Librarian during digital processing. Specific quality control guidelines are established on the collection level.
4. Scanning is usually outsourced to digitization partners who work within the specifications established by L&C. Images are scanned to task order or other contracting vehicle specifications. Specifications such as resolution and bit depth are established on

the collection level based on the needs of the collection and current accepted guidelines and standards. L&C may also scan smaller collections in-house following collection specifications.
5. Digital images are saved using a unique identifier barcode number.
6. No photoshopping tools are to be used to enhance or alter any scanned images beyond standard cropping, de-speckling, unsharp mask, and manual histogram adjustments to contrast with the overall goal being to create a presentable digital image as close to the original source as possible.
7. Quality control measures are applied to ensure digital images accurately represent the original source. Quality control is coordinated with the L&C Digital Librarian and the digitization partner with specific guidelines established on the collection level.

Workflow

L&C follows a workflow for its digitization efforts. A digitization workflow is applied to both legacy collections and newly accessed items or collections. Additionally, each digitization project has its own workflow for individual project tasks and responsibilities.

Preservation

Digitization does not replace the value or integrity of the original source, nor negate L&C stewardship over the original source. However, digitization does serve collection preservation needs. L&C uses digitization as a means of making collections continually available to a broader public while ensuring the original collections are properly preserved for later use. Because of the fragile state of some of the collections, digitization production (e.g., handling, metadata, scanning) is determined according to the preservation needs along with the historical value of the originals. Specifics are determined on the collection level; however, the above general guidelines regarding scanning and metadata apply. All preservation measures are to be documented in both the digital control file and the collection control file.

Because of the reality of digital obsolescence, L&C is also concerned about digital preservation. As part of DHA's agreement with the University of Utah Marriott Library, archival files of all the Utah Division of State History digital images are and integrated into its digital preservation plan. Separate files are used for any customer or staff access so as not to degrade the integrity of the original digital image.

Review

This policy will be reviewed by L&C every two years.

Appendix A.

Digitization Evaluation Form

Evaluation Criteria	Notes	Score 0-3
Preservation Needs (30%) ● Material is in a state of deterioration ● Material is handled often by staff and patrons and digitization will help preserve its condition ● Material is fragile		
Access (20%) ● Material is used often and digitization is likely to provide enhanced usability ● Material is already comprehensively organized, making metadata creation easier to produce ● Material is in public domain or UDSH maintains copyright		
Uniqueness (15%) ● Material is unique to your institution ● Material context covers unique or widely unknown events, peoples, and/or places		
Demand (15%) ● Digitization of material will generate broader use of your institution's resources ● Digitization of material is time sensitive ● Digitization of material has come at the request of a stakeholder (donors, community partners)		
Feasibility (20%) ● Material can be easily gathered and organized for digitization ● Sufficient staff time and resources available for digitization ● Current partnerships and/or contracts can be used in digitization		