



Selection for Digital Projects

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ALI Digital Library Workshop

October 2, 2003



Importance of Selection

- Selection for digitization different from selection for purchase.
 - Next slide will amplify this point!
- 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.

Choose wisely!



Misconception

- We call it “selection,” so why can’t we select materials for digitization the same way we “select” other library materials for purchase or licensing?
 - Technical considerations
 - Relatively few number of projects that can be completed
 - Long-term commitment to preservation



Selection for Digitization

- Copyright Status
- Intellectual Nature of the Source Materials
- Current and Potential Users
- Organization and Descriptive Metadata
- Relationship to Other Digital Collections
- Funding
- Other Factors



Copyright Status

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



Public Domain

(<http://www.unc.edu/~uncldg/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 - Unpublished works whose author died before 1932; otherwise, the term is life plus 70 years.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.



Intellectual Nature of Source

Significance of the materials

- 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?
- Will electronic access to these materials enhance their value to users?



Current and Potential Users

- Are users consulting the proposed source materials?
- Is current access so difficult that digitization will create a new audience?
- 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?



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?



Funding

- Need to know exactly what you want to prepare of a budget
- Small projects and pilot projects are the easiest to fund internally
- Large projects require outside funding or a collaborative effort
 - Grant opportunities may push the selection of one project over another



Other Factors (1/2)

- Size of the collection
 - Usually want to digitize the entire collection
- Preparation of the collection
 - Does it require conservation work?
- Format
 - We selected Hohenberger because we wanted experience with photographs
- Institutional priorities
 - Indiana-related
 - Indiana University expertise



Other Factors (2/2)

- Opportunity for staff to learn new skills
- Low overhead – the project is similar to previous projects so we can use established procedures and existing technologies
- Item-level information or metadata available
- Complements previous projects – creation of a critical mass
- Funding opportunity
 - Hoagy Carmichael Centennial (1999)
- Contextual materials
 - Does the primary collection have interesting contextual materials?



For more information...

- Brancolini, Kristine. "Selecting Research Collections for Digitization: Applying the Harvard Model." *Library Trends* 18.4 (Spring 2000): 783-798. Online through EBSCO Host.
- Hazen, Dan, Horrell, Jeffrey, and Merrill-Oldham, Jan. *Selecting Research Collections for Digitization*. Washington, D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR), August 1998.