Digital Project Selection Criteria
Criteria for Evaluating Proposals to Produce, Curate, or Preserve Digital Content

Version 1.4, April 2, 2013

The Libraries welcomes proposals for projects involving the production, stewardship, and/or preservation of digital content. Consideration will be given to projects that relate to the scholarly activities of members of the University community and that can be made available to the widest possible audience. Projects should have a discrete digital product(s) of academic value or community significance.

The following criteria are intended to help reviewers, potential partners, and content managers evaluate the viability of proposed digital projects. Criteria in bold are required for approving a digital project proposal; normal items are for consideration. In addition, copyright and intellectual property considerations may affect our ability to preserve and provide access to digital content. The value of the anticipated product should justify the effort expended to develop it.

- For digitization projects: The condition of the materials will be considered. Digitization may serve either a preservation or access need and most projects address both of these aspects. Digitization may protect fragile items, but they must be able to withstand handling necessary for digitization.
- For born digital content: The format of project materials will not restrict consideration.

Approved by SMG: April 10, 2013
Selection Criteria for Digital Library Projects at Northwestern University Library

The mission of Northwestern University Library is "to provide information resources and services of the highest quality to sustain and enhance the University's teaching, research, professional, and performance programs." To fulfill this mission in the digital age, Northwestern's library relies increasingly on electronic resources: not only those acquired through purchase and subscription, but also those created through an ambitious and robust program of digitizing our own remarkable and often unique collections.

This program, managed by the Digital Collections Department but involving staff across the entire Library, seeks to take full advantage of advances in web-based data organization, display, and analysis technologies; of the increasing convergence of preservation and access agendas; and of the special expertise of our own staff, of other partners on campus, of Northwestern faculty, and of our relationships with other institutions, consortia we belong to, and corporate partners.

Although our digitization efforts will frequently address needs within our own community, increasingly we are also taking into account research and learning needs of a regional, national, and international community of students and scholars. We must also plan our digitization priorities to avoid duplication, in whole or in part, with existing and planned projects of other research institutions, consortia, and commercial publishers. Finally, we must take into account the limitations placed upon our planning agenda by the evolving legal environment governing copyright and intellectual property—even as we vigorously assert our rights on behalf of ourselves and our user communities.

The significant financial and staff resources required to mount and sustain digital library collections mean that a careful selection must be made from among many desirable proposals. What types of projects do we encourage library staff and Northwestern faculty to propose? How do the factors touched on above affect the desirability and feasibility of project proposals? Here are the chief criteria for selection applied by Northwestern University Library’s Digital Projects Committee when considering new proposals—roughly, but not necessarily, in rank order of importance.

Proposal Criteria

**Intellectual Value and Distinctiveness:** Northwestern University Library houses many distinctive collections in many different formats—text, still and moving image, audio, and all possible combinations of these formats. Proposals for digital library projects should make clear the intellectual and scholarly value of the materials involved and also set forth the value that will be added by making these resources available as a digital library collection.

**Existing Collection Development Priorities:** Projects that promise to advance goals for library collections will continue to be given the highest priority. These priorities can be curricular or research-oriented, be relevant to campus, local, regional, or worldwide constituencies.
Copyright: Copyright-free materials or materials for which Northwestern holds the copyright are clearly at an advantage for inclusion into our digitization program. Copyrighted material can sometimes be licensed for digital projects, but frequently at great expense or with unacceptable restrictions. Project proposals must address copyright concerns. Digital Collections staff and the Director of the Center for Scholarly Communication and Digital Curation can provide prospective proposers with initial advice on addressing these concerns.

Experts: Digital library projects can gain by incorporating the expertise of Northwestern faculty, library staff, or advanced students. At the same time, expertise can and often must be brought in from elsewhere. We may require the use of outside consultants, especially for large and complex projects.

Preservation and Access: Preservation-based digital reformatting projects for books, documents, audio, images, and other library materials can form the basis of exciting digital library projects. Digitizing collections can enhance access, both locally and universally, to rare, fragile, and endangered library collections. In this way, digitizing collections becomes an important tool to achieve both preservation and access goals.

Special Opportunity: A particular project may have greater appeal if it is matched with a special occasion (anniversary, university program, etc.) or if there is a special funding opportunity.

Summary

Even the best proposals can founder if certain formal requirements are not met. These begin with copyright concerns, but include careful checking for duplication of efforts being undertaken elsewhere. Workload within affected departments can also enhance or detract from the desirability of a project proposal. These and other possible operational issues should be addressed all along the proposal review process, preferably prior to approving and embarking on a project. Digital Collections staff will work with prospective proposers to identify and, if possible, remove possible roadblocks to project realization.

Digital Projects Subcommittee, Northwestern University Library, ver. November 1, 2009

Revised: October 31, 2012 (JBP)
Revised: November 28, 2012 (JBP)
Digital Project Development Process

Submitting a Digital Project Proposal

The UW Digital Collections Center welcomes project proposals from UW administration, faculty, staff, and students! Please review the information below prior to submitting your proposal.

In general, you should consider the following criteria *before* submitting a digital project proposal:

1. Who is the audience for this digital project?
2. How will users interact with this material?
3. Is the material already digitized and available online?
4. Do you have permission to digitize and publish online this material?
5. What impact will digitization have on your daily work?

What makes a good digital project? Consider the following criteria and guidelines for selecting project materials. Projects that meet these criteria are most likely to be approved.

1. support instruction or research needs
2. do not circulate, e.g. rare books, materials from Special Collections
3. enhance an existing digital collection
4. are unique, e.g. not previously digitized nor available online in any format
5. high use, regularly requested by UW faculty or students
6. are distinctive and have potential for academic use and general education interest (K-12)

Although some of our projects are grant-funded, it is not necessary to secure outside funding to complete a project with the UWDCC. There is funding provided by UW System and the UW General Library System for digital projects.

Process

1. Submit your project proposal using our simple Web form "Submitting A Digital Project Proposal."
   a. The form is located at: http://uwdcc.library.wisc.edu/forms/submitProposal.shtml
   b. For information about our project development process, visit: http://uwdcc.library.wisc.edu/projectDev/index.shtml

2. The UWDCC Project Assessment and Development (PAD) group will review your proposal and, most likely, for additional information.
   a. UWDCC staff will meet with you to assess your project materials and further
discuss the project development process.

- UWDCC staff will complete project documentation necessary to move forward your project, including a cost estimate and project brief that details project deliverables.

3. The UWDCC staff will present your project proposal to one of two committees which govern our work: The UW Madison Digital Steering Committee (UW-Madison based projects) or the UW Digital Collections Advisory Committee (UW-System based projects).

4. The Committee(s) will respond to the proposal.
   - It will accept the proposal in concept.
   - Or, it will decline the proposal and may suggest other alternatives for funding.

5. If approved, the Committee(s) will ask you to work with UWDCC staff to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that fully describes the project and its deliverables.

6. When completed, the UWDC will review and approve the MOU. When approved, it will be sent to the Chairperson of CUWL for final approval by CUWL as a whole or its Executive Committee.

7. When notified of acceptance, you will start work with the UWDC Center on the project.

Questions? Please feel free to contact the UWDCC at digitalcontent@library.wisc.edu.
University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center
Digital Project Development Process

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Introduction
The University of Wisconsin libraries support the creation of digital resources in a distributed environment. In order to provide adequate resources for these efforts, we follow a well-honed project development process to identify, quantify and review requirements for projects intended for inclusion in our digital collections.

The UWDCC digital project development process consists of a series of steps, culminating in a brief Memorandum of Understanding between content providers and the UWDCC which outlines the project scope, timeline, and deliverables. These steps are outlined below. For more information about this project development process, contact the UWDCC at digitalcontent@library.wisc.edu.

Definitions
Content Provider: The person responsible for selecting materials, developing a project idea, providing contextual and other information related to project development and management.

The University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center (UWDCC): This group is responsible for helping the Content Provider develop project ideas, guide the project proposal through the approval process, manage the digital reformatting and metadata creation, manage the digitized materials over the long term, and make these materials available through online content management systems. The UWDCC works with digital project owners on campus and throughout the UW System and is responsible for the reformatting of materials and for the metadata and encoding required to access materials in a digital environment. UWDCC staff also serves as a liaison between the project owner and the Library Technology Group (LTG), which handles the technical aspects of making projects available online.

Library Technology Group (LTG): The LTG develops the architecture underpinning the indexing, delivery, and discovery of the UWDC resources, including the indexing and search
functions, and their interfaces.

The University of Wisconsin Digital Collections (UWDC): The Council of Wisconsin libraries and UW System's Office of Learning & Information Technology established the UWDC in 2001 to provide quality digital resources from its academic libraries to UW faculty, staff and students, citizens of the state, and scholars at large.

Getting Started
Review the following steps to better understand our project process and instigate a potential digital project.

Phase 1: Pre-Production
1. Contact the UWDCC
   Use our Web form (http://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/forms/submitProposal.shtml) to suggest a project idea. UWDCC will respond to your inquiry within 2 business days.

2. Project Questionnaire
   Once we’ve received your project idea, we may set up a meeting to discuss your idea and assess the materials you intend to digitize. At this meeting, we will complete a Project Questionnaire. This form will provide the UWDCC with basic information necessary to begin developing a project workflow and timeline. UWDCC staff will assist you in completing this form, if necessary. If a meeting is not required, we will ask you to fill out this form and submit it to us via email.

3. Technical Assessment
   If the project information presented through the Project Questionnaire is sufficient to proceed, you will be asked to work with UWDCC staff to complete a more detailed Technical Assessment of your project materials, in order to discern staff and hardware resources necessary to complete the project. This detailed information will help inform content delivery options, capture methods, encoding and metadata description levels, maintenance, budgeting and other project criteria.

4. Committee(s) Review
   Once the Technical Assessment is finished, UWDCC staff will complete a Project Brief. The Project Brief contains a cost estimate and information gathered through your Project Questionnaire and Technical Assessments. The Project Brief is then forwarded to the appropriate steering committees and will be used to review and approve your project.

5. Memo of Understanding (MOU)
   If your project is approved by the steering committees, the Project Briefs, Technical Assessment and Cost Estimate forms will be used to derive a Memorandum of
Understanding (MOU) that details project participants and explicitly states their respective responsibilities for project management, content selection, reformatting, description, delivery, and maintenance of the deliverables outlined in your proposal. Once the terms of this memo have been agreed upon, signed, and returned to UWDCC, your project will be assigned a priority code and production phases will be scheduled. At this point, your project will be queued for production.

**Note:** Not all projects require an MOU.

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**Phase 2: Production**

1. **Materials Transfer and Inventory**
   
   UWDCC staff will coordinate transfer of project materials to the UWDCC office, located at 431 Memorial Library. Materials will be inventoried and stored according to criteria documented in the *Technical Assessment*.

2. **Reformatting, Description, Indexing and/or Infrastructure Development**
   
   Project staff will begin your project. This production work may include the reformatting of materials, creating appropriate metadata records, indexing the project files and/or developing any additional delivery or Web infrastructure agreed to in the MOU.

3. **Quality Control and Testing**
   
   UWDCC staff and the content provider(s) collaborate to ensure the integrity of the project content and delivery systems. Typically, corrections are needed — once all corrections have been made the project can be moved into production.

4. **Final Review**
   
   The content provider will be asked to complete a final review of their digitized resource, prior to public release.

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**Phase 3: Post-Production and Promotion Phases**

Once all deliverables documented in the MOU have been met, your project will be moved into production, at which point it is available online to the general public. Procedures for moving projects into production are as follows:

1. UWDCC staff will add the project to the UWDC collections web site, located at [http://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections.html](http://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections.html).

2. UW Madison’s Central Technical Services will catalog the collection in Madison’s local OPAC, called MadCat, and WorldCat. **Note:** Each UW campus should develop its own procedures for adding new projects to their local web sites and OPACs.

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University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center
431 Memorial Library / Madison, Wisconsin 53706
digitalcontent@library.wisc.edu / 608.265.3059
[http://uwdc.library.wisc.edu](http://uwdc.library.wisc.edu)
3. Once the new resource is available in production, content providers are encouraged to promote the resource to appropriate audiences and are responsible for any additional outreach activities.

Additional Information
1. Project ideas must have the support of a library director (or designee) to be considered. The UWDCSC/DSC weighs various criteria in determining which projects to fund and/or develop.
2. It is important to understand at the outset that any digital project will require a significant allocation of staff and infrastructural resources. Thus, not every project proposal will be approved.
3. For approved projects, the UWDCC will work to ensure projects are completed in an efficient and timely manner. The UWDCSC/DSC applies professional standards related to reformatting, description, and delivery models whenever possible. Use of professionally endorsed library/archives standards (e.g. Dublin Core metadata) renders a digital project compatible with other collections included in the library’s digital collections.
4. The UWDCC offers delivery options and models for creating, describing and delivering both text-based (e.g. books, journals, correspondence, etc.) and multimedia (e.g. images, audio, video, etc.) materials via the Internet. Review these options for a better understanding of our content management systems and how your project materials may fit within our current infrastructure.