



STRATEGIC DIGITIZATION GOALS

PART 3: DIGITIZATION POLICY

WORKSHEET

This worksheet will help you create a *Digitization Policy* that communicates how digitization benefits your institution, how you decide which digitization projects to undertake, and your commitment to sustain and make accessible the collections created through your digitization program. A well-formed digitization policy will help others understand the value of your digitization program and will help you avoid projects that are unsustainable or of little value to your institution or the communities you serve. Your *Digitization Policy* should emphasize accountability, sustainability, and continuity across digitization projects and departments.

This worksheet is the next step after **Strategic Digitization Goals Part 1: Digitization Purpose Statement** and **Part 2: Digitization Selection Criteria Worksheet**. A *Digitization Policy* builds on these important foundational steps to formalize and communicate the digitization practices in your institution. The suggested sections in this worksheet are recommendations, and you can reorder and combine as needed to create a useful document for your institution.

1. Begin with a Digitization Purpose Statement

Show how your *Digitization Policy* fits your overall mission and framework by referencing your institution's *Digitization Purpose Statement* at the beginning of the document. If you do not have a *Digitization Purpose Statement* in place, start by creating one. A Digitization Purpose Statement clearly and succinctly states your department's strategic directions and objectives for digitization. For example, a statement could read: "To identify and digitize a variety of materials to be added to our larger database for use by tribal community members to increase cultural awareness, history, and traditional knowledge."

2. Explain the selection criteria for digitization

If you have not done so already, create guidelines that will help you prioritize digitization in your department or for your institution as a whole. This section of the *Digitization Policy* ensures that your projects will be appropriate, sustainable, and on target with the

goals of your digitization program. Selection criteria typically address:

- **Estimated time and cost**
Resources the project will require like staff time, cost of equipment, or vendor costs for outsourcing.
- **Demand and potential use of the collection**
Requests for digitization or use statistics for the physical collection, plans for how a digitized collection will be used, potential audiences for the digitized collection.
- **Technology needs**
Necessary equipment and software to carry out digitization, metadata creation, and editing.
- **Legal issues**
Whether the project will encounter legal challenges specifically addressing: copyright, intellectual property rights, or privacy issues.
- **Cultural issues**
Whether the project will engage with community concerns or cultural protocols such as sacred or protected materials, restrictions, family wishes, etc.
- **Ethical issues**
Whether the project will encounter ethical issues such as bias, threats to physical and intellectual integrity of materials, privacy, access restrictions, etc.
- **Size/scope of collection**
How many items are in the collection, what formats.
- **Physical condition**
If any materials will need special care or preparation prior to digitization, or if digitizing will risk damaging either the material or equipment.

If you created *Digitization Selection Criteria* as a separate document, you could reference that document or form, or repeat the text.

3. Define your department's general digitization goals (the "Why" of digitization)

Based on your department's needs and objectives, state your goals for digitization. These goals will grow from your digitization purpose statement or mission, but can be more specific.

Some example goals include: providing access to research collections for tribal members who live in distant locations or preserving cultural heritage recorded on deteriorating media. Listing these goals will articulate the purpose of digitization to an audience who may not be familiar with the concept.

4. Explain your department's methods of digitization (the "How" of digitization)

Explain how digitization projects work in your institution, including whether the work will be done all in-house, through partnerships, via a vendor, or a combination of these.

Discuss the types of digitization that you do, lay out how each type gets carried out.

Some examples include:

- **Ongoing**

Digitizing collections or selections from your institution's holdings on a regular basis. This would be another place to reference your Digitization Selection Criteria.

- **On-demand or by request**

Digitizing materials on request from community members. This type of digitization might be from your institution's collections, or from people's personal collections. Specify what you are willing to carry out, and the process for making and approving requests.

- **Grant projects or monetary donations**

Sometimes temporary funding will allow for additional staff or resources to complete digitization projects. Explain how these work, if different from standard practices.

5. Define the scope of your Digitization Policy (the "What" of digitization)

This section should address which formats of materials your institution will digitize. If there are formats which you will not digitize, this is also an appropriate section to explain limitations of your digitization program.

For example, a list of accepted formats (photographs, documents, journals, bound volumes, open reel audio tape, cassette tape), a statement that your institution will digitize all photographs and paper, but that audiovisual materials will be digitized on a case-by-case basis, or that the only video formats you currently accept are VHS and MiniDV. An example of a format that is not digitized might be: "We no longer digitize reel-to-reel film of any gauge." Another example might be a statement that staff and funding are limited, so digitization priorities are decided upon based on available personnel and funding.

6. Define technology, technical specifications, and standards for digitization

List the types of technology and equipment you use to digitize, depending on how much information will be beneficial for your audience. Define technical specifications and quality standards you will use in digitization. Standards are available for everything from

image quality to metadata fields, choosing standards to follow will make your work consistent across projects.

7. Define the roles and responsibilities of people involved in the work of digitization in your institution or department

List the roles or activities needed to sustain your digitization program and define who in your institution will fill these roles. List roles or positions, not specific names, to make sure your policy does not become outdated. Be sure to consider responsibilities like:

- **Project planning**
Selecting for digitization, evaluating Digitization Selection Criteria, assigning duties to staff.
- **Project management**
Tracking project, training staff, performing quality control checks on files and metadata, creating reports about project progress.
- **Digitization work**
Operating hardware and software to create digital files, creating multiple copies (master copy, access copy), managing files.
- **Metadata creation**
Managing and creating metadata about collection or items, collecting metadata from the community.
- **Providing access to collections**
Uploading files and metadata to Content Management System or website, advertising online collection.
- **Digital preservation**
Backing up copies of files, performing fixity checks on files, communicating with IT department.

8. Explain access and use for digitized materials

Define your institution's plans and procedures for access and use for all types of digitized materials. Some examples of issues that should be covered include:

- **Procedures for access to digitized files in person and online**
Steps for getting access to files in person, delivery of files via email or dropbox services, online platform(s) that people can access themselves.
- **Quality of access copies**
The level of quality users have access to view and download, with explanations as needed.
- **Copyright statement**
Create a copyright or rights statement that will be shared with users. This

statement should address the materials to which your institution holds copyright. This statement should also address materials which users are responsible for researching and contacting the copyright holder for use or publication of materials. If desired, this section can also more fully explain the concepts of copyright, fair use, intellectual property, etc.

- **Restrictions and access levels**

If needed, explain the ways materials are restricted (temporarily or permanently) and outline different levels of access that are present in your community. For example, “Digitized audio files that should only be heard by female elders will be digitized and stored under a password protected folder that is only accessible by appropriate staff,” or “while photographic materials in the collections are being digitized, the Culture Committee will review each box prior to digitization to ensure that materials of a culturally sacred nature are identified and flagged to not digitize.”

If you have this type of information covered in a separate Access and Use Policy for your institution, you could simply reference this document in this section.

9. Other Helpful Sections

- **Definitions of Key Terms**

Explain any terms that your reader may not be familiar with. For example, words like “digitization,” “access copy,” “archives,” “scanner,” “server,” “preservation,” “jpeg,” etc. may need to be defined depending on your audience.

- **Contact Information**

List who to contact with questions about this policy. Again, this should be the role of the person to contact (director, archivist, librarian, etc.) and office email or phone if possible.

- **Revision statement/date**

Explain the process for revising the policy, and list the date that the policy will next be reviewed and revised.

10. Digitization Procedures Information

The topics in this section can be more thoroughly covered in other documents like digitization procedures or digitization manuals. If they are *not*, you can use your policy to outline these digitization project steps.

- **Standards and Best Practices**

Name the standards and quality measures you will be following as you digitize. This is another place to list technology and equipment used for digitization.

- **File Naming and Folder Structure**
Define the folder structure and file naming convention that digital collections follow.
- **Metadata**
Explain what metadata scheme you use and how metadata is created. Think about collection level/item-level and rules for entering metadata. A Data Dictionary will be a good supplemental document to this section.
- **Digitization Log/Tracking Sheet**
Explain how you will track the work done in digitization projects. This can include documenting when work is completed, by whom, what equipment was used, where the file is stored, any issues discovered, and any other important information.
- **Quality Control**
Explain how quality control will take place in digitization projects at all stages. List the roles of people who will be responsible for quality control checks.