Digitization Prioritization Guidelines

PURPOSE

The Digitization Prioritization Guidelines document is meant to provide clarity on what and how collections are selected for digitization. Digitization of our collections is a staff and resource intensive endeavor; careful selection in accordance to clearly defined criteria will help ensure that we are digitizing collections in a focused, strategic, and ethical manner.

In general, we prefer to digitize collections to which we can provide full access, i.e. users can download and print images, as well as collections that we can make useful beyond traditional means of access (i.e. provide OCRed text files for computational analysis).

The responsibility for determining prioritization will fall to the Digital Collections Committee with ultimate responsibility resting with the Head of Digital Production.

DIGITIZATION CATEGORIES

Digitization activities typically fall into one of three categories:

- **Digital Queue:** Digitization of entire collections or large portions of collections as part of the regular digital queue. Work is carried out in the Digital Production Lab by qualified staff and students, or may be outsourced. These projects are generally not subject to specific deadlines.

- **Externally Funded/Grant Projects:** See the section on Grants & External Funding below for additional information.

- **Patron requests, donor requests, and exhibition scanning:** These special request categories lay outside the scope of the digital queue and are covered in separate policies.

SELECTION WORKFLOW

Calls for proposals for new projects for the digital queue will happen as previously agreed upon projects in the queue wind down. Two months prior to the end of the existing queue, the Head of Digital Production will issue a call for proposals. Library departments can submit up to three proposals per project cycle. A project proposal form must be completed for each project and
submitted by the deadline. Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered until the next project cycle.

The Digital Collections Committee will meet to review the viability of the proposals, and determine priorities for the upcoming project cycle. Projects will be reviewed, ranked, and selected based on the criteria set forth in this document, plus the availability of resources and the needs of any pending grant projects. Once the digital queue is established, the digital team will meet with departments to review their accepted proposals in order to assess any issues regarding preservation, scanning, metadata, and workflows.

The Head of Digital Production will maintain the digital queue over the course of the project cycle, consulting with the digital team, curators, and the Digital Collections Committee as needed. Project updates will be posted to the intranet on a monthly basis.

**COPYRIGHT STATUS**

Materials will be digitized in accordance to the ARL “Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for Academic & Research Libraries.”\(^1\) It is the responsibility of the person proposing a project to determine the copyright status. Materials considered for digitization must fall into one of the following categories:

- Works in the public domain
- Works for which the University of Miami holds the copyright
- Works for which we have or have obtained permission to digitize
- Works for which the copyright holder is unknown or unreachable (as determined by due diligence)
- Works for which a fair use argument can be made for digitization

Projects with clearly defined rights that allow broad public access, such as the ability to print and download content, will be given priority over projects where access is more limited in scope, including projects that are only accessible within the library. Material under copyright that falls outside of the categories above may be considered only under special circumstances.

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

Projects must meet the following criteria to be considered for digitization:

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• Material has been processed and contains adequate information for metadata creation
• Copyright status has been clearly defined and material can be made broadly accessible
• No donor restrictions are in place
• Material contains no privacy issues
• Material can be digitized without damaging the original
• The Libraries has the capacity to complete the project in a timely and efficient manner, either in-house or via outsourcing

Projects must also support an articulated strategic direction of the library:

• Supports a demonstrated research or teaching need
• Supports University activities, initiatives, and events
• Facilitates partnerships and/or collaboration
• Promotes high use materials, or high demand is anticipated
• Project has external funding and fits within the library’s strategic direction

The following criteria also apply:

• Material is of cultural and historical significance
• Material is rare, unique, or of institutional importance
• Material supplements or completes existing digital collections
• Material supports subject strengths and/or areas of thematic focus
• Entire collections/series/boxes will be digitized
• Digitization aids in the preservation of highly used fragile items
• Digitization/reformatting decreases the risk for format obsolescence, including audio-visual and electronic records
• Digitization adds value to the original (e.g. linking or enhanced searching options)
• Digitization provides opportunities for sources of revenue
• Potential to reach a wide audience

**GRANTS & EXTERNAL FUNDING**

Proposals for external funding that involve digitization or oral histories must be planned in consultation with the Head of Digital Production to ensure that the Digital Production Lab has the capacity to manage the project and to determine how the project fits within the digital queue. Materials must also meet the selection criteria listed above. Outsourcing is encouraged for external and grant funded projects.
Externally funded projects are often subject to specific deadlines. Staffing and resources needed to successfully complete pending grant projects will be taken into consideration when planning the digital queue.

Even if the grant provides for dedicated staffing or for outsourcing to digitize content, we cannot guarantee that the content can be digitized and made available online without consultation with the Head of Digital Production during the grant planning phase.

**LIMITATIONS**

Materials will not be digitized if they are subject to any of the following limitations:

- The item cannot be shared without violating copyright law, unless there is a clearly demonstrated need for digitization (such as preservation).
- An exact or similar digital copy exists in a well-supported open access repository.
- The item does not comprise a complete work. (e.g., a single page from a book).
  Exceptions will be made for patron and donor requests and exhibit scans.