DIGITAL COLLECTIONS POLICY

HOUSTON COLE LIBRARY, JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY, FEBRUARY 2020

MANDATE

The mission of the Houston Cole Library is to provide information services and bibliographic resources to support the scholarly and informational needs of the University community. To this end, the Library pursues the acquisition and creation of digital assets and collections, and the curation of these assets throughout their lifecycle, preserving them so that access can be maintained. Digital preservation can be defined as a group of activities "necessary to ensure the enduring usability, authenticity, discoverability and accessibility of content over the very long term."(1) Policy is necessary to provide a structure of governance for this endeavor.

OBJECTIVE

The Library seeks to acquire, create metadata for, provide access to, and preserve the assets within its digital collections. This policy's purpose is to facilitate the Library's objective of effective management and curation of its digital assets and collections.

RELATED POLICY FRAMEWORK

The *Digital Collections Policy* is one component of the Library's policy framework, and should be considered in the context of other existing Library policies, including the *Collection Management and Development Policy*, the *Houston Cole Library Policy and Procedures Manual*, and the Library's *Institutional Repository Policy*.

SCOPE

The Library considers both born-digital materials and materials digitized from analog originals to be within the scope of its digital collections. Assets for inclusion in the Library's digital collections may include materials from University departments and units, and materials acquired from community and other outside sources, including commercial sources. No file formats are restricted, and the Library seeks to support as wide a variety of formats as possible. The Library will consider assets on a case-by-case basis, and may choose not to prioritize certain formats or asset types. See **Selection Criteria** for information on the selection and prioritization of assets.

PRINCIPLES

The Library's digital curation activities are in accordance with the following principles:

- Serve the Library's designated user groups by creating, maintaining, and enabling access to digital content over time.
- Exercise fiscal responsibility, incorporating new technologies for digital content creation and preservation in the most cost-effective manner.

- Develop staff and institutional knowledge and expertise through a commitment to training and continuing education for Library staff involved in digital content management.
- Within the constraints of human and financial resources, adhere to relevant standards and best practices to the fullest extent possible, especially the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) Reference Model.
- Foster collaboration and partnership, both internal and external to Jacksonville State University, to further creation of and access to digital content of value to stakeholders.
- Respect the intellectual property rights of content producers.

CHALLENGES

The Library acknowledges that Institutions with responsibility for digital content experience the following challenges that complicate effective management and curation:

- Exponential growth of digital information and multiplicity of formats.
- Differences in awareness and understanding of digital asset management and preservation among the variety of content producers.
- Sustainability of digital collections requires continuing and increasing financial and human resource support, incurring greater expense as collections scale.
- Necessity of continual development of staff expertise to keep pace with changing technologies involved in digital collection management.
- Necessity of continual collaboration and effective communication amongst a variety of departments across campus and external to the University.
- Intellectual property rights and privacy issues are complicated to manage and can place constraints on accessibility.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Creation and curation of the Library's digital assets requires collaboration and participation across a variety of positions within the Library, University, and community. Stakeholders ([2]) and their responsibilities include:

- *Producers* – Producers of content for the Library's digital collections may include Library personnel; university faculty, staff, alumni, and students; community collaborators; publishers, and others. Producers are responsible for complying with all established policies and procedures for deposit of their content with the Library.
- *Managers* – Content managers are designated Library personnel responsible for serving as stewards of digital assets, including selection, submission assistance, metadata creation, access, and ongoing curation. These managers are made up of a digital projects team that includes Technical Services Assistants and the Digital Assets and Special Collections Librarian. Supplementary support is provided by the Systems Administrator, Senior Catalog Librarian, and Serials/Acquisitions Librarian. Additionally, Public Services librarians may aid in liaising with constituencies external to the Library to solicit content for the Library's digital collections,

especially its institutional repository. (See the *Institutional Repository Policy* for more information.)

- **Administrators** – The Head of Technical Services oversees the digital projects team, the Head of Public Services oversees Public Services cooperation for the Library's institutional repository, and ultimate responsibility for the Library's digital collections lies with the Dean of Library Services. It is the crucial responsibility of Library administration to provide managerial, technological, financial, and human resources to adequately support digital collections. The Digital Assets and Special Collections Librarian will serve as liaison to Library administration, providing all relevant information necessary for oversight and support of digital collections.
- **Collaborators** – Collaborators may include individuals, groups, organizations, or institutions external to Jacksonville State University who wish to submit content or support the Library's digital projects.
- **Consumers** – Any individual, group, or service that uses the Library's digital collections.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The *Digital Collections Policy* subscribes to the principles of selection set forth in the Library's *Collection Management and Development Policy*, which states that the item or collection is "relevant to the curriculum, improves the overall Library collection, aids in the research needs of the University's faculty and staff, and/or enhances the Library's access to information."(3) The preservation of cultural heritage and engagement with the community being recognized as also within the scope of the Library's activities, assets that further these goals are also prioritized.

In order to ensure the most responsible allocation of Library resources, the Library evaluates born-digital and analog materials under consideration for digitization on the following criteria:

- **Appropriateness** – Assets collected or selected for digitization from analog must fall within the scope of the Library's collection development focus.
- **Perceived Value** – Given the resource expenditure associated with curation of digital collections, potential assets will be those which are unique or whose intrinsic value justifies acquisition and preservation. Assets that reflect institutional history, possess the potential for faculty support and integration into coursework, those that support scholarly research at the University and dissemination of same, and those that address the research needs of the community and support community engagement will be prioritized for selection.
- **Preservation and Use** – In the case of analog materials under consideration for digitization, those materials which have high perceived value and are in fragile condition should be prioritized for digitization. Creating digital surrogates enhances access while protecting and preserving the original analog materials from use-related deterioration. High-demand analog materials that are inaccessible due to factors such as closed stacks or off-site storage, or difficult to use formats, may be prioritized for digitization in order to enhance access. The Library will take into consideration the preparation necessary when prioritizing fragile materials for digitization.

ACCESS AND WITHDRAWAL

The Library acquires digital content in order to preserve these resources so that they will remain accessible over the long term. Limitations may be placed on access to certain digital collections due to legal, donor, intellectual property, privacy, or other restrictions. Upon request, the Library may consider removing digital assets it has previously made publicly accessible in the case of potential privacy or rights violations; such requests must be submitted in writing to the Digital Assets and Special Collections Librarian. The ultimate authority for removal of public access lies with the Dean of Library Services.

The Library endeavors to provide the widest access to its digital collections to all possible users, and is committed to free and open access to the digital assets it manages, to the greatest extent possible.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Library's primary objective with its digital collections is to provide public access; digital assets must be preserved in order to meet this goal. In collaboration with the University's Department of Information Technology, the Library will endeavor to preserve its digital content through:

- Secure storage and back-up for all digital assets
- Regular auditing and fixity checks
- Migration to successive format when format obsolescence threatens accessibility

REFERENCES

1. JISC, Digital Preservation Coalition, Digital Archives Department of the University of London Computer Centre, Portico, 2009.
2. Adapted from the Open Archival Information Model, http://www.oais.info/
3. *Houston Cole Library Collection Management and Development Policy*, http://www.jsu.edu/library/pdfs/policies/cmd.pdf

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