Managing Digital Content over Time: Select

Brittany Dudek, Illinois Central College

Nicole Finzer, Northwestern University

Digital Preservation Outreach and Education (DPOE)

DPOE Modules

Identify - what digital content do you have?

Select - what portion of that content will be preserved?

Store - what issues are there for long term storage?

Protect - what steps are needed to protect your digital content?

Manage - what provisions are needed for long-term management?

Provide - what considerations are there for long-term access?

I have reviewed my potential digital content so now what?

- Libraries : Selection

- Archives : Appraisal

- Museums : Acquisition

Different terms have the same goal:

Determine what to preserve

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Why select content to preserve?

Making the case for selection

- Storage may be cheap, management is not

    … especially over time

- Sustaining the quality of content takes effort

- Continually changing discovery and dissemination services will be needed as hardware and software change

    … scale, scope, performance, sustainability

- Match content to the mission of your institution

Quality of content

Standards should be established by the library for accepting born digital content to ensure the long term integrity of these collections

Digital Preservation Outreach and Education (DPOE)
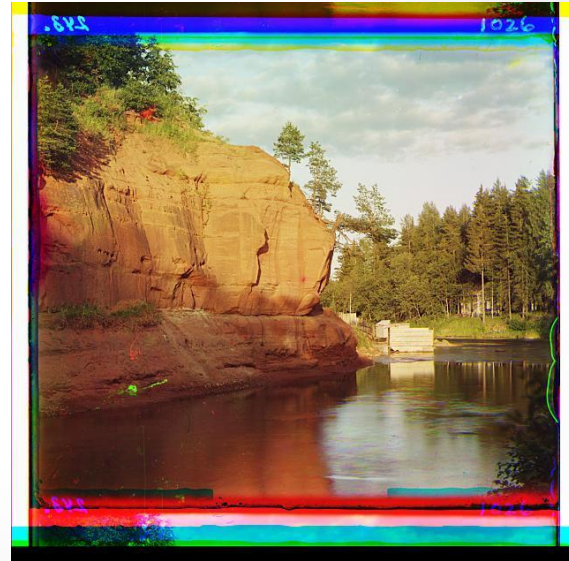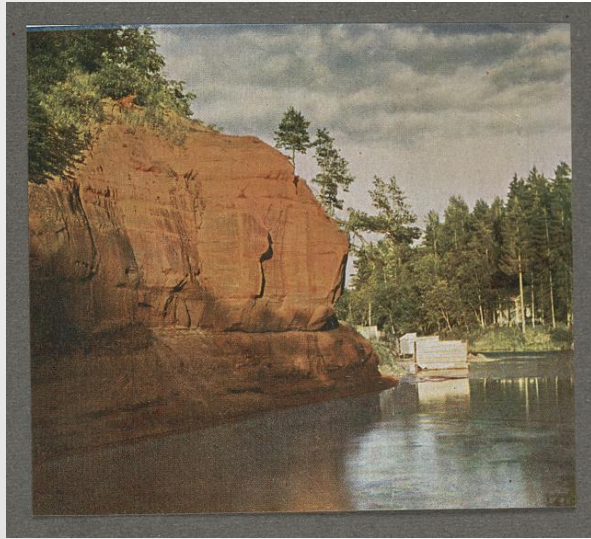
Discovery and dissemination services

- Scale, scope, performance, sustainability
- Content that is inaccessible is, at its heart, worthless to the collection
- Format, size, and long-term considerations are needed to determine if the objects are worth preserving

Matching mission to content

- To fulfill the mission, an institution must accept content relevant to the collection.

- Any content that does not match the mission will not enhance the collection.

- Having a clear set of policies about the content your organization will collect allows for a more focused and higher quality of the general collection.

Does the cost of selection outweigh the combined cost of creating and managing metadata, and undertaking preservation?

It's okay to say, "No."

Issues

- Selection is always biased and time-bound

  - not a one time instance but ongoing activity and related to all processes of managing information

  - criteria will change over time

- Why not keep it all?

  - determining value and audience

  - balancing maintenance costs

  - determining if we can preserve it for access over time

- Appraisal at different layers

  - Starting with components/characteristics of the object

Basic Steps

- **Review** your potential digital content

- **Define** and apply selection criteria

- **Document** selection decisions

- **Implement** your decisions

Practical Considerations

Stop if the answer is "no" ..

- Does the content have long term value?

- Does it fit the repository scope and mission of your organization?

- Is it feasible for you to preserve the content?

- Is it possible to make the content available?

- Is the content already preserved elsewhere?

- What is the agreement regarding preservation with the content provider?

- Does the institution have enough permissions to ensure long-term preservation and access?

Priorities

If you need to prioritize your review, consider:

- Most significant (producer, content)
- Most extensive
- Most requested
- Easiest (e.g., most familiar)
- Oldest (possible historical importance)
- Newest (possible immediate interest)
- Mandate (local, legislation, etc.)

Common Selection Criteria

- Acquisition or collection development policy
- Most significant to your organization
- Departmental and Institutional criteria

- Priorities, precedents, frequency of use
- Core record and content types
- Mandated to preserve

- Historical, evidential or research value

- Uniqueness

- Risk factors

- Formats going obsolete, poor current storage

How to Contact Content Creators

- Arrange a convenient time for them
- Prepare brief statement of outcomes
- Identify list of materials to review with them
- Send a reminder before the meeting
- Document the results and send them a copy
- Use a standard Memorandum of Use for as many creators as possible
- Try and get as much special information from the creators as possible to use as metadata for the collection

Project Management

- Treat selection as an ongoing structured project with goals, milestones, and due dates.

- Contact content creators (as needed)

    - Arrange a convenient time for them

    - Know how creators would like to be contacted

    - Agree on outcomes

    - Identify objects for selection process

    - Document the results and send them a copy

- Good communication with the content creator is key to project success

A Team Based Approach

- Bringing in multiple skill sets and areas of expertise to ensure the selected content meets criteria.
- Finding the right people in your institution to answer the content, technical, access and rights questions will make for a smoother selection process.
- This team may evolve as different areas of knowledge are needed for the objects under consideration.

Skills and Experience

- May benefit from a team-based approach

- Analytical skills

  - Review and understand content

  - Identify relationships and significance

  - -Make sound and consistent judgments

- Interpersonal skills

  - Communicate clearly and compellingly

- Technical Skills

  - Determine feasibility of preservation and access

Digital Preservation Outreach and Education (DPOE)

Documentation

- Supplement inventory from Identify

- Descriptions – more granular

  - Not item level, but enough to specify categories

- Extent

  - How much content is there/will there be?

- Use

  - When will content no longer be active?

- Rights

  - Who owns rights to preserve and disseminate?

An Ongoing Process

- Selection is not a one time task

    - Review priorities and criteria

- Be proactive

    - Work with creators and donors to weed before you receive

    - Explain process and reasoning

Outcomes

Possible products of selecting content:

- Expanded inventories of content to preserve
- Agreements with producers: e.g., retention schedules, acquisition lists, submission agreements

Objective:

- Gain control of possible content for planning
- Develop a sustainable program

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

A Team Based Approach

- Bringing in multiple skill sets and areas of expertise to ensure the selected content meets criteria.

- Finding the right people in your institution to answer the content, technical, access and rights questions will make for a smoother selection process.

- This team may evolve as different areas of knowledge are needed for the objects under consideration.

Digital Preservation Outreach and Education (DPOE)

Questions?