Handbook for Digital Projects

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The global information infrastructure is transforming with the growth in full-text digital resources and fast communication facilities. This is so because institutions, agencies and departments in everywhere are busy capturing, processing, storing and disseminating information in the digital form. It is well established that fast access to desired information can lead to rapid development. While there are controls on this growing information resource, it has global implications and applications and therefore digitization is not a local affair as long as we understand that we can contribute to global information resources and also access its resources for any purpose.

The following principles which are based on the recommendations given in the Handbook for Digital Projects need to be kept in mind:

a. **Mission Statement** is the document to be digitized falling within the purview of the project? If not, don’t digitize.

b. **Scope of Collections Statement:** If a complete collection is digitized, confirm that the document to be digitized falls within the repository scope of the collection.

c. **De-selection Requests from the Supporters of the Project:** If the supporter of the Project recommends that the document should be digitized and they are challenged by equally important sources not to digitize, the document should not be digitized.

d. **Donor’s Restrictions:** If the donor of the document to be digitized puts substantial or non-negotiable restrictions which prevents the users to use document according to the policy defined by the institution digitizing the document then don’t digitize the document. If the document is important and not available elsewhere try to re-negotiate the terms with the donor.

e. **Copyrights:** Don’t digitize any document unless you are sure that it is in the public domain or you have obtained copyrights or licenses or permissions.

f. **Privacy Rights:** if a document contains images/pictures of living persons obtain permissions from them before digitizing the text.

g. Publicity Rights: if the document includes images or recordings of famous persons such as motion picture or recording stars, scientists, artists or authors obtain premising from the persons or their estates before digitizing the text.

h. **IT Regulations:** Don’t digitize the document which is not permitted under the law or the information Technology Act.
i. **Sensitivity**: if the document contains sensitive information on subjects such as defense, religion, etc. or is unbalanced in its point of view, the Selection Committee should get the advice of experts before taking a decision on digitization.

j. **Evidential Value**: if the document contains material that is evidential in nature or supports events with legal and historical proofs and/or interests a key audience as it has substantial information, then the document should be digitized.

k. **Authenticity**: if the document is authentic and original in contribution it should be digitized.

l. **Visual Accuracy**: if the print/appearance of the document supports the creation of an accurate and sharp digital version then digitize it. If not, find alternate methods for doing so.

m. **Documentation**: if the document does not have appropriate captions and the budget does not permit to appoint staff to create them, then defer the digitization of that particular document.

n. **Contextualization**: if a document essentially needs substantial and expensive research inputs in terms of contextual support such as hypertext support for certain portions resulting from that document in relation with other documents simultaneously, etc., it may be necessary to reconstruct the archaeological support in the Encoded Archival Description (EAD) format or another suitable format. If it is not possible to do so, it would not be advisable to digitize such a document.

o. **Added Value**: if the document has become available for the first time, it fulfills the necessary conditions laid out for the selection of a document, it is considered necessary to make it available to a larger audience, then if funds permit, digitize the document in order to:
   i. make the unique document available to a larger audience.
   ii. create linkages to the document through HTML, SGML, XML. Coding.
   iii. Make it part of the virtual collections on the same subject using different techniques, format and bringing together physically separated documents either on the Web or in CD form.
   iv. Add new indexes and searching aids.

p. **Audience**: if the digital version and the printed version reached the same audience, yet considering that the document is important to the Indian heritage or is an Indian contribution, the digitization of the document should be considered.

q. **Supplementary Selection Criteria**: If the audience creates its own selection criteria, such recommendations should be taken into the evaluation process.

r. **Technology**: if the audience cannot afford the expensive equipment for using the digital version, then avoid digitization. However, the technology should be such that every internet user can access the document easily.

s. **Condition**: if the condition of the document to be digitized is very poor and it is likely that in the digitization process the document will get damaged, then do not digitize it.

t. **Control**: Make sure that rare materials are kept under security during the process of digitization and are returned to the owner in the original condition.
u. **Duplication of Effort:** if the document has been digitized elsewhere, locate the source, and find the quality of the digital version. If we can get a copy get a copy for general use, and then it is not worth digitizing the document.

v. **Accessibility:** if the original document is inaccessible but it is available in microfilm or microfiche form widely, it may not be ideal to digitize the document at this stage.

w. **Cumulation:** If the document is relevant as part of a collection only, then the digitization of it alone must be seriously questioned by the Selection Committee and other reasons obtained for its selection before taking a decision for digitization of the document.

References:

1. Retrieved from http://www.dli.ernet.in/handie/2015/1