

Digital Stewardship Lifecycle



Prepare

Overview

The Prepare stage is the foundation of your digital stewardship work. It involves developing and aligning on your digital stewardship goals, policies, budget, resources, and project plans.

Learn more in the following course: **Digital Collections Stewardship 2: Preparing**

Work Needed

- Creating digital stewardship goals and getting buy-in from stakeholders.
- Aligning your goals with your tribal or organizational mission, strategic plans, or goals.
- Identifying policy and documentation needs.
- Identifying staffing, funding, and resource needs.
- Creating project plans and determining what you'll prioritize.
- Connecting with community members and building relationships.

Cultural Check

While preparing for digital stewardship and determining your goals, it's important to refer to the mission of your organization and the needs of your community. Identify unique community values and knowledge systems to build from. Consider partners in your community representing a variety of viewpoints who could help guide decision-making at this stage so your goals and priorities reflect your community needs.

Gather

Overview

The Gather state involves bringing items into your institution for the purpose of creating digital collections. These items can include digital files or physical items that you'll digitize. Items might be owned by your institution or loaned from external organizations or individuals. You might also digitize physical items or create new content through a variety of methods, including recording oral histories.

Learn more in the following courses: **Digital Collections Stewardship 3: Gathering** and **Digital Collections Stewardship 4: Digitizing**

Work Needed

- Documenting the types of items you'll include in your digital collections.
- Creating or updating a collection development policy.
- Seeking out collections or items from external institutions.
- Seeking out donations from the community.
- Partnering with community members to create new digital content.
- Digitizing physical items that you'd like to add to your digital collections.

Cultural Check

Much of the work in the Gather stage involves determining what content holds value to your community. Take time to examine what groups in your community are represented in your digital collections, and what groups aren't. How can you make sure your collections don't solely represent the "dominant" groups in your community? Make sure that you develop multiple ways to understand your community through relationships with a range of groups and individuals. Examples include conducting assessments, sharing opportunities for feedback, and developing advisory committees.

Enhance

Overview

After gathering and digitizing items for your digital collections, it's time to organize and describe them. This work helps ensure that your items and collections are discoverable and contain accurate descriptions and context.

Learn more in the following course: **Digital Stewardship 5: Enhancing**

Work Needed

- Naming and organizing files using a uniform file naming convention and directory structure.
- Describing collections and items by adding metadata and community context.

Cultural Check

Reflect on how you'll categorize and describe your materials in inclusive and culturally appropriate ways. You may need to consult others inside or outside your community and do research to determine the appropriate language and terminology to describe items accurately and respectfully.

You may also look at past description work in your institution and engage in reparative description. This includes creating enhanced descriptions and using crowdsourced input, recorded interviews, or transcribed information from community members to add rich, layered stories to your items.

Save

Overview

The Save stage involves storing and managing your digital files for long-term preservation and access.

Learn more in the following course: **Digital Stewardship 6: Saving**

Work Needed

- Creating a digital preservation plan or policy.
- Collaborating with others who can support technical and administrative needs around preservation.
- Backing up copies of your files on appropriate storage media.
- Setting up tools and processes to ensure file security and integrity.
- Planning for emergencies, including natural disasters.

Cultural Check

You'll likely have a variety of items in your digital collections with different origins and importance to your community. Reflect on how important preservation is for your different digital items, and how they can be preserved. Involve Elders and other culture bearers in these discussions. After consulting with your community, you may find you need to prioritize the preservation of files containing unique cultural or traditional information. Determine what preservation approaches work best for your community.

Share

Overview

The Share stage involves providing appropriate access to your digital collections. This might include sharing using an online digital platform, but you may also share in other ways, including exhibits and educational programs.

Learn more in the following course: **Digital Collections Stewardship 7: Sharing**

Work Needed

- Creating or updating your access and use policy.
- Determining levels of access that reflect culturally appropriate sharing in the community.
- Identifying any copyright or intellectual property considerations or concerns for the items in your collections.
- Selecting, implementing, and maintaining an online sharing platform and adding your files to this platform.

Cultural Check

Take time to decide what appropriate access to digital collections looks like in your community. How is knowledge gained, shared, and circulated, and how can you honor and reflect your community's cultural values when sharing your digital collections? You should also determine if any items have additional privacy restrictions that need to be implemented.