

DIGITAL PROJECTS SELECTION CHECKLIST

As you begin discussing your potential project with a member of the Scholarly Resources Department, we ask that you review this document and place check marks next to the appropriate statements.

Rights

The Library prefers permission to distribute the digitized material to all users, but if necessary can limit access to a specific class.

- source materials are in public domain, or
- owned by Brown University, or
- copyright holder is willing to confer distribution rights, or
- co-creators of this project are Brown University members and are willing to transfer rights to the Brown University Library, or
- use of the material for my class can be justified under Fair Use Guidelines

Non-Duplication

The Library will not digitize an object for which a digital surrogate already exists and can be reasonably obtained.

- there is no identical or similar digital product that can reasonably meet the expressed needs

Please note: If the first two areas (Rights and Non-Duplication) cannot be checked, the proposed project probably cannot go forward. Please consult with your department's librarian if you not sure.

Value

Does the intellectual quality of the source material warrant the level of access made possible by providing digital access? Many factors contribute, but certainly they include intellectual content, historic, and physical value:

- project would have significance to other Brown University areas of excellence
- materials would compliment existing collection strengths
- rareness or uniqueness of source materials or content
- source materials or content have high artifactual or associational value
- important for the understanding of the relevant subject area
- broad or deep coverage of the relevant subject area
- potential for enduring value in digital form
- have potential to develop into larger grant opportunities
- have sufficient subject or discipline knowledge and expertise for project development

Enhancement of intellectual access

Will digital access enhance the intellectual value of the material and add significantly to its potential to enlighten?

- ___ enhancement of intellectual control through creation of new finding aids, links to bibliographic records, and development of indices and other tools
- ___ ability to search widely, manipulate images and text, and study disparate images in new contexts
- ___ improved quality of image, e.g., through improved legibility of faded or stained documents

Demand

Are scholars now consulting the proposed source materials? Are the materials being used as much as they might be? Or is current access to the proposed materials so difficult that digitization will create a new audience, more active scholarship, or new kinds of teaching?

To justify the effort and expense, there should be a reasonable expectation that the product will have immediate utility for members of the academic community and/or other appropriate audiences:

- ___ would provide support for current high priority activities or areas of interest
- ___ likely to be of long term use within the academic community
- ___ there is an active, current, good-sized audience for the materials
- ___ there is advocacy for the project from the University community
- ___ likely to generate new types of use or significantly increased use of existing resources

Collaborative across collections

Will the combination or aggregation of original sources greatly increase their value? Are related materials so widely dispersed that they cannot be studied in context?

- ___ part of a collection split among a number of institutions that could be united online as a virtual collection
- ___ contribution to development of a "critical mass" of digital materials in a subject area
- ___ flexible integration and synthesis of a variety of formats, or of related materials scattered among many locations
- ___ strengthen or enhance an existing resource

Preservation aspects

Is the long-term preservation of deteriorated materials a project goal? While digitization does not in itself constitute preservation, there are preservation aspects to be considered, both in terms of the original materials and in terms of the files which will be created.

Providing surrogates

- ___ significant reduction in handling of fragile materials
- ___ access to materials that cannot otherwise be easily used
- ___ protection of materials at high risk of theft or mutilation

Safe digitization

- ___ condition of originals allows them to be digitized safely
- ___ condition of originals requires conservation/rehousing for safe digitization; funding must be secured for this work
- ___ possibility of scanning photographic intermediaries instead of the originals

Intellectual access

Potential projects should be evaluated as to whether appropriate intellectual control can be provided for the original materials and the digital versions:

- degree to which the materials are organized/arranged in a way suited to online use
- cataloging, processing and related organizational work already accomplished or to be accomplished as part of the project
- staff and resources to support creation of appropriate metadata relating to document identification, technical capture information, provenance, and easy navigation within the information resource

Adapted from the University of Arizona's Digital Library Initiatives Group Digital Project Development Checklist
(<http://digital.library.arizona.edu/documents/development/checklist.rtf>)