

A5: DIGITIZATION PRINCIPLES

A number of general principles have been identified to help provide a solid foundation for all digitization projects:

- Collaborate across the organization and with external partners, where possible;
- Digitize at the highest resolution appropriate to the nature of the source material;
- Digitize at an appropriate level of quality to avoid re-digitizing and re-handling of the originals in the future;
- Digitize an original or first generation (i.e. negative rather than print) of the source material to achieve the best quality reproduction possible;
- Create and store a master file that can be used to produce surrogate files in accordance with the requirements of current and future users;
- Ensure originals are maintained, as digital copies are not substitutes for originals, although some original analogue media may not remain viable in which case the digital master will become the best available copy and should be treated as the “original”;
- For master files, use lossless file formats whenever practical;
- Use components that are not specifically dependent on proprietary products and formats;
- Use file formats and compression techniques that conform to existing cultural heritage standards;
- Create backup copies of all files on servers and have an off-site backup strategy;
- Create meaningful metadata for files and collections;
- Store digital files in an appropriate electronic document management environment (e.g. external hard drives, servers, etc.)
- Monitor data as necessary (e.g. data integrity, checksums, etc.)
- Document a migration strategy for transferring data across generations of technology;
- Plan for future technological developments.