GLAM · PEAK

1. PLAN

A number of decisions need to be made before embarking on a collection digitisation project in your organisation.

WHO IS THIS TOOLKIT FOR?

This toolkit has been created for volunteers and staff in small- to medium-size organisations who are undertaking the task of digitising collections and providing digital access to their collections via the internet. The collections may include art works, paper-based materials (works on paper, archives, newspapers), photographs, objects, born digital material, scientific material, flora and fauna, and anything else held in our collections.

This toolkit is for anyone who:

- is experienced with collections digitisation and looking for more information
- has digitised and shared image and photographic collections online, but now wants to know about digitising the objects in their collection
- has their collection documented in an electronic database, but has not digitised images of their collection, and wants to know how to take the next step
- has a largely uncatalogued collection and wants to take the first step in cataloguing and digitising their collection and sharing it online
- has the entire collection catalogued digitally and wants to share the collection online and provide digital access to the community.

WHY ARE ORGANISATIONS DIGITISING THEIR COLLECTIONS AND SHARING THEM ONLINE?

Digitisation is the process of changing an item from existing in analogue format to also existing in a digital format. The scan, digital photo or audio/visual file created from the item, becomes the digitised version of the actual item, which can be stored and shared electronically.

Providing digital access and making collections available to the wider community means that deeper engagement with our collections is not just in the hands of GLAM sector staff and volunteers, but is expanded to the wider community. It is part of our role to ensure collections are cared for and shared with the community in ways that meet their needs. This includes being able to observe them and engage with them in the online environment.

Digital access opens our collections to those who may not be physically able to visit our organisations and collections across Australia, whether for financial, health or mobility reasons, or any other inhibitors.

Benefits include:

- increased public access to collections
- better understanding of our collections and what is held in them
- connecting with communities from across the world

- creating opportunities for collaboration
- telling a more comprehensive story of our communities and collections
- ensuring the future sustainability of our collections.

A significant example of collections digitisation and digital access was the digitisation and sharing online of the many thousands of records connected to the First World War. Many national and state cultural institutions from across Australia committed to ensuring that those records were digitised and that digital access was provided to the public by the centenary of the First World War. Not everyone wishing to view family records is able to visit national institutions in Canberra to see them. With the records digitised and shared online they can be viewed from anywhere in the world.

A digitised collection provides greater opportunities for sharing the story of our communities and our collections with the world. Digitised images, objects and audio/visual material help bring a story to life. Online 'mini exhibitions' can be created that give visitors a taste of what your organisation has to offer. Some innovative examples are:

- Carnarmah Historical Society and Museum – carnamah.com.au/virtual-museum
- Our Rivers Our History – oroh.com.au
- Wollongong Heritage & Stories – wollongongheritageandstories.com

GETTING STARTED

DECIDE ON YOUR APPROACH

Hold a meeting with your volunteers, committee members, board or staff to discuss collection digitisation and digital access and what these things mean. It is very important that all of those involved understand what the process means and are 'on board' with the project. There is little point undertaking a collection digitisation project within a community group if you are the only one who believes in the project and you are trying to do all the work by yourself.

Your organisation may decide to just 'dip your toe in the water' when it comes to collection digitisation. This could involve only digitising and sharing a handful of key significant items from the collection, to see how it goes.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

There is no one-size-fits-all with collections digitisation and sharing, so look around at what others are doing and see where you can get help to set you on your path.

- Look at what other GLAM organisations are doing, not just the organisations like yours. Useful information can also come from organisations outside your state.
- Do web searches on topics you are dealing with, such as 'How to photograph a painting' or 'How to photograph an object'. There are also many video clips on these types of topics that can help you.

- If a collection management system is required, ask around to see who is using which systems, and what they like and don't like about the system they are using. If there is an organisation close by, pay a visit to see how their system is working and if it would work for you. Be sure to get advice on a range of options, rather than going with the first thing you see. Some collections management systems allow the option of sharing collection straight to the internet and, even though it is not mandatory, it is worth exploring this option.
- Contact your state or national GLAM support agency for advice and support.

SEE WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING

Take a look around your area for those who may have already undertaken a digitisation project and provided digital access to their collection. Or look for similar organisations to yours that have done it. Consider:

- What advice, tips or pointers can they give to get you started on collection digitisation and sharing?
- Are there websites with good advice they can direct you to?
- Is there someone at your local council you can ask for advice or assistance with digitisation?
- Is there someone local with equipment such as scanners and cameras that you can borrow whilst you get started with digitisation?
- Is there someone at a local gallery, library, archive (such as a university archive) or museum that you can contact to seek advice and direction on collection digitisation?
- It may be worthwhile to look beyond your own sector and see who outside could help. Is there a local education facility that has students that could help? These could be computer or photography students who need to develop a project.
- Consider applying for grant project funding to undertake collections digitisation projects with other local organisations. Discuss how you can work together, to digitise your collections. Also consider getting your local council involved in the project.
- Collaborating with other organisations can bring great benefits as you pool your resources, funds and expertise leading to a shared result. Below are links to virtual museum websites where the creators have worked together as a collaboration to develop virtual museums using their digitised collections. For example:
  - o Our Rivers Our History <oroh.com.au> was created with a group of museums in collaboration with their local arts officer and local tourism staff on the mid-north coast of NSW
  - o Wollongong Heritage and Stories <wollongongheritageandstories.com> was created using objects from 12 GLAM organisations on the south coast of NSW
  - o Carnamah Museum in Western Australia has been working with its digitised collection to share stories online <carnamah.com.au/virtual-museum>.

Once you have gathered all of the information you need, you will be ready to make a digital access plan.

USEFUL CONTACTS

STATE AND FEDERAL SUPPORT AGENCIES FOR THE GLAM SECTOR

Arts NT – dtc.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/arts-nt

Arts South Australia – arts.sa.gov.au

Arts Tasmania Roving Curator Program – arts.tas.gov.au/funding/programs/roving_curator_program

Australian Library and Information Association – alia.org.au

Australian Society of Archivists – archivists.org.au

History NT – dtc.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/history-nt

History SA – history.sa.gov.au

Museums Galleries Australia – museumsaustralia.org.au

Museums Australia Victoria – mavic.asn.au

Museums and Galleries of NSW – mgnsw.org.au

Museums and Galleries Queensland – magsq.com.au

Public Galleries Association of Victoria – pgav.org.au

Regional Galleries Queensland – rgaq.org.au

WA Museum Development Program – museum.wa.gov.au/research/development-service

STATE AND NATIONAL CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

National organisations

Federation of Australian Historical Societies – history.org.au

Museum of Australian Democracy – moadoph.gov.au

National Archives of Australia – naa.gov.au

National Film and Sound Archives – nfsa.gov.au

National Gallery of Australia – nga.gov.au

National Library of Australia – nla.gov.au

National Museum of Australia – nma.gov.au

National Portrait Gallery – portrait.gov.au

National Trust of Australia – nationaltrust.org.au

NETS (National Exhibitions Touring Support) Australia – netsaustralia.org.au

Oral History Australia – oralhistoryaustralia.org.au

Public Libraries Australia – pla.org.au

Royal Australian Historical Society – rahs.org.au

TOOLKIT
www.digitalcollections.org.au

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra Museum and Gallery – cmag.com.au

New South Wales

Art Gallery of NSW – artgallery.nsw.gov.au

Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences – maas.museum

State Library of NSW – sl.nsw.gov.au

State Records NSW – records.nsw.gov.au and archivesoutside.records.nsw.gov.au

Northern Territory

Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory – magnt.net.au

Northern Territory Archives Service – artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/northern-territory-archives-service

Northern Territory Library – artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/northern-territory-library

Queensland

State Library of Queensland – slq.qld.gov.au

Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art – qagoma.qld.gov.au

Queensland State Archives – archives.qld.gov.au

Queensland Museum – qm.qld.gov.au

South Australia

Art Gallery of South Australia – artgallery.sa.gov.au

South Australian Museum – samuseum.sa.gov.au

State Library of South Australia – slsa.sa.gov.au

State Records of South Australia – archives.sa.gov.au

Tasmania

LINC Tasmania – linc.tas.gov.au

Tasmanian Archives and Heritage – search.archives.tas.gov.au

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery – tmag.tas.gov.au

Victoria

Museums Victoria – museumvictoria.com.au

National Gallery of Victoria – ngv.vic.gov.au

Public Records Office Victoria – prov.vic.gov.au

State Library Victoria – slv.vic.gov.au

Western Australia

Art Gallery of Western Australia – artgallery.wa.gov.au

Art On The Move – artonthemove.com.au

State Library of Western Australia – slwa.wa.gov.au

State Records Office of Western Australia – sro.wa.gov.au

Western Australian Museum – museum.wa.gov.au