PLANNING YOUR
DIGITISATION PROJECT

Digitisation is a rewarding yet complex process. There are multiple requirements including time, equipment, skills, and in some circumstances, funding. Because of this it is important to undertake planning before commencing a digitisation project. Planning phases include *gathering information*, *making decisions*, and *preparation and documentation*.

PHASE ONE: GATHERING INFORMATION

1

IDENTIFY THE SCOPE OF YOUR PROJECT

Firstly, answer the question, what will you be digitising? Possible answers include upcoming exhibition content, recently acquired items, or collection items about which you receive frequent enquiries. The answer will determine the scale and duration of your project and assist you to determine whether any items will require preparation or conservation prior to digitisation.

2

IDENTIFY THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU

'Resources' refers to much more than the *equipment* you have on hand. You should also consider resources in terms of *time* (How many staff or volunteers will be working on the project? How much time can they dedicate to it?); *skills* (What experience does your team possess? Is training available to address any specific skill sets you are missing?); *space* (Do you have a workspace dedicated to this project? Where is your workspace located in relation to your collection storage?); and *finances* (Is there a budget assigned to your project? Will you need to apply for funding?).

3

IDENTIFY ANY RISKS

Use the Victorian Collections information sheet *Assessing Risk in Your Collection* to assess the risks associated with the collection items you intend to digitise, and identify mitigation strategies. Mitigations could relate to specific collection items (for example using supports for fragile items), or to the project as a whole (for example determining a digitisation workspace that minimises risk to collection items).

4

IDENTIFY ANY RESTRICTIONS

Use the Victorian Collections information sheets *Legal Restrictions in Your Collection* and *Online Collections Copyright Traffic Light* to determine whether the collection items you intend to digitise are suitable for online publication. You may need to undertake further research to determine the legal, intellectual property and cultural restrictions that apply to these items.

5

IDENTIFY ANY NECESSARY PREPARATION

Based on the condition and location of the items you intend to digitise, determine whether any items need any specific preparation prior to digitisation. Examples could include having items treated by a qualified conservator based on risks you have identified, or ensuring you are aware of the locations of all items and able to safely and efficiently access them.

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PHASE TWO: MAKING DECISIONS

6 **DIGITISATION METHOD**

Based on the size, materials and condition of the items you intend to digitise, and any identified risks, determine a suitable digitisation method. Scanning will be most suitable if the items are flat, 2D documents, at A3 size or smaller. Photography will be most suitable if the items are 3D objects, 2D items that are too large to fit in a scanner, or 2D items that risk being damaged by the scanning process.

7 **FILE FORMAT AND RESOLUTION**

Based on the type of collection items you are digitising, determine the file formats and resolutions you will capture. In order to prevent digital corruption, the following lossless file formats are recommended: PDF/A (for text and documents) and TIFF at a resolution of 600 PPI (for images).

PHASE THREE: PREPARATION & DOCUMENTATION

8 **SOURCE AND COLLECT YOUR EQUIPMENT**

Based on the decisions you have made above, and the equipment you already have on hand, assemble the necessary equipment.

9 **DOCUMENT YOUR PLANNING**

Collate all the information and decision making from the previous steps into one centralised document: a Digitisation Project Plan. The Plan should take a long-term view, and should include your project scope, risk assessment, any relevant restrictions, and guidelines as to the methods and file requirements you have selected. Ensure all members of the project team have access to the Plan.

GLOSSARY

File format: a standardised way that data is encoded for storage in a computer file. Common file formats include Image files (.TIFF), Adobe Acrobat files (.PDF), Word documents (.DOC) and multimedia files (.WAV).

Resolution: the amount of detail that the camera or scanner is set to capture. Resolution is measured in pixels, or Pixels Per Inch (PPI). The higher the PPI, the more image information is captured, giving the photo more overall detail, sharpness and colour accuracy.

Lossless refers to file formats where the data quality remains the same as a file is compressed.

READ NEXT

Information sheet: Assessing Risk in Your Collection
Information sheet: Legal Restrictions in Your Collection
Information sheet: Online Collections Copyright Traffic

MORE LIKE THIS

Information sheet: Catalogue Photography Workflow

FURTHER RESOURCES

A Guide To Digitisation, SHARE Museums East UK
http://sharemuseumseast.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/digitisation-FINAL-FULL.pdf

AMaGA Victoria   **MUSEUMS** VICTORIA   **CREATIVE VICTORIA**