

ASSOCIATION OF MIDWEST MUSEUMS

TECH WORKSHOP 2

JUNE 22, 2021

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>>> Good afternoon, or good morning wherever you are. Welcome to the second Technical Workshop of the Managing Digitization Projects module which will cover How to Build a Digitization Project. This workshop is brought to you by the Digital Empowerment Project

A nationwide initiative organized by the six U.S. regional museum associations, dedicated to providing free, self-paced training resources for small museums.

What are your short-term and long-term goals and considerations? We are dedicated to providing free self-paced training resources for small museums.

This inaugural series of online trainings focusing on digital media and technology topics is made possible by funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

My name is Averie, I am Director of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums and I am your host for today's program. My pronouns are she/her, I am a white female with brown, wavy hair, red glasses, and am wearing a

Blue and white striped shirt today. I have decided to forgo the glasses.

I'm located in my home office, and behind me is a white wall, with a window. A small bookcase also sits behind me, which houses museum related texts, and various knick knacks that change throughout the year.

This technical workshop will address the why and who of collections digitization projects - why your digitization project matters and to whom; the importance of defining your digital collection project's purpose, audience, and interfaces; the role of digitization in your museum's access strategies and how communities will use your digital collection; how to use metadata for findability and to support public use/access.

In this era of virtual meetings, when digital spaces may substitute for our physical sense of place, it is important to reflect on the land we each occupy and honor the Indigenous people who have called it home. I am speaking to you from my home office, located in Erie, Pennsylvania the historical and ancestral homelands of Erie people, which later became part of the Seneca nation and the greater Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

Wherever we are each of us are located, let us acknowledge all Indigenous nations as living communities, their elders both past and present, as well as future generations.

We, the Digital Empowerment Project, recognize that our organizations and those of our members were founded within a colonizing society which perpetuated the exclusions and erasures of many Native peoples throughout the United States and beyond. We ask you to reflect on the place where you reside and work, and to respect the diversity of cultures and experiences that form the richness of our world and our profession.

Before we begin today's presentation, a few housekeeping notes.

I'd like to acknowledge today's American Sign Language (or ASL) interpreter who will be situated on the left side of your screen. Captioning for today's program is embedded in a box just below the video player on our website with controls to adjust your experience. The best way to continuously refine our craft is to listen to our attendees. So, we ask that you share your candid feedback with us. Following today's program, you will be sent a link to a satisfaction survey. Sharing your experience through this survey will only take a few minutes and will greatly improve our work.

During today's program, we will address as many of your questions as time allows, however, sometimes we are unable to answer all of those questions as others may arise when reflecting on the program.

So, we have set up an online community forum for raising questions, posting answers, and connecting with your fellow museum practitioners. If you are looking for help in between programs, please visit the forum on the Museum Learning Hub website, and click on Join in the upper right-hand corner to create an account to post your questions. A member of the community or one of our Student Technology Fellows will respond to you.

Lastly, please follow us on social media to stay in touch and to be notified of future programs. Links to our social media channels will be posted in the chat area.

And now, It is my pleasure to introduce today's presenter, Lindsey Richardson, owner at Museum Person.

Lindsey has more than 20 years of experience working with museum collections and all kinds of Museum settings, including history, art, university, municipal, historic house and children's museums. She has planned and implemented major projects including

digitization, cataloging, moving to other locations, accessions, inventory and housing, as was written grants to fund those projects.

She has consulted museums out strategic planning, collections and digital collections assessments, grant writing projects such as exhibits or object based programs.

She has anthropology degrees from Harvard and Oxford and has worked with museums on three continents. To learn more about her, please visit her website, museumperson.com. And now please join me in welcoming our presenter, Lindsey Richardson. Lindsey, take it away.

>> Hi, everyone. I'm so happy to be here and I thank you for the opportunity to talk with you guys about digitizing collections. I'm going to jump over to my slides right now. Here we go. That's me, and before we jump in, I wanted to tell you that for 12 years prior to my current role as a consultant, I worked as a curator of collections at the 6th Floor Museum in Daley Plaza in downtown Dallas.

For those of you who don't know, that the historic site of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. So the collections were varied they had a lot of different formats, and we digitized tons of them while I was there. They we're also digitizing before I got there, and there were lots and lots of digital object in the collections to be working with, creating, re-creating, so if you want to see any samples from that time, the website is jfk.org, and if you go to the collections page and poke around, there are a lot of different things to see. And I hope if you have any questions, please feel free to ask during the Q&A or you can contact me in the forum.

Here we go. How to plan a digitization project. I found this picture on the Library of Congress website, and it made me laugh. In part because to me it is a perfect embodiment of how sometimes when you are behind the scenes of the museum and things are weird and you're looking around at thinking it's kind of surreal here, there is a special flavor of crazy sometimes behind the scenes at a museum.

This just seemed like such a perfect representation of that. And I dropped a little you are here flag in case you just wanted to remember that feeling. But I want to assure you that I have every confidence that this man created a beautiful diorama that was used for decades, and I have every confidence that confidence that you have planning digitization project and you also create order out of chaos.

There are a couple of starting points I want to make before I go to the next slide. First of all, I'm starting from the point of view that you know what you're digitizing, why you are digitizing and who it's for. Those are steps that Dr. John's address in her presentation last week. If you don't know, that's fine for just put a pin in it. We can come back to it. You can ask questions about that process, making those kind of decisions, in the Q & A. But for the purposes of this presentation, I'm starting from the idea that you know what to digitize and you just need help figure out logistics. Two other things. This may come as a surprise to some of you, but most of you will recognize this truth, which is digitization does not end with the creation of digital objects. That is more or less the starting point because you have to do so much work to ingest digital objects into preservation environment, into an environment where you can make them safely accessible to your audience and all different platforms and formats. There is a lot of work that goes into that. So a digitization project doesn't start and end with the creation of digital objects. It starts and keeps going.

So we are going to talk about all those other things you have to do.

This is the first time I will say this, but you will hear it many times in this presentation. You need to write down your plan. Write down even your rough draft, write down your notes. It does not have to be pretty. But it is actually very important for you to write this down, not just for you and the people who come after you as a staff at your institution, it's a really good way to document a moment in the institution's history, where things stand. It's also a good way for you to be able to communicate with other people in your institution and beyond about the process of digitization. Sometimes digitization projects include a bit of education. Outside your department. So writing things down can help you be prepared for those moments.

So let's get started. If we were in a lecture hall together, I would start by asking you questions. I would say things like, has anyone here ever digitize an object? And some of you might raise your hand. I would say, have any of you here ever used your phone to take a picture of an object or something and maybe even more of you would raise your hands. I would ask if any of you have planned a digitization project before. I would ask if any of you have maybe folded digitization into another kind of project like cataloging or rehousing. Have you done those things together? Because often they are interlaced.

I would be doing that in part to start this presentation by talking to you about how important it is to collect data. And asking you to raise your hands would be a great way for me to collect data about you. And that is a demonstration of the kind of data collecting that you need to do to start this process.

To get us started off, I have an aspirational quote. This is J.R.R. Tolkien. It says not to leave a live dragon out of your calculations, if you live near one. This is so true. I don't know how many of you have been behind the scenes working on your project, everything is going along and just great, and out of the blue, there is a Dragon that lays waste to the whole countryside with his fiery breath and you have to start over. Because you didn't know he was there.

So that's why we collect data so we can see where the dragons are and we can hopefully prevent that sort of upset. So let's jump in.

The first candidate he you need to collect, and again, write all this down, the first kind of data you need to collect is physical data. You have sat around tables, talked about with the curators, you had identified you are going to work on the set of items to be digitized. Now, you need to go visit that set of items in storage. You need to have a look at them from the view of someone who is going to be digitizing those objects. So even if you have seen that, even if you have physically led items on the eyes on these objects in the past year or two, you probably didn't look at it from the point of view of someone who was going to digitize each item in the collection.

So now you need to go visit, spend some time with this collection, the plumbing kind of data you want to collect at this point, you want an accurate count of each media format. So if you have a photographic collection, you want to know how many negative strips you have, and how many images are on the strips here are they all 35-millimeter or do have some that 220 millimeter? Or five by four. You need to think about what your different settings and procedures will be for different kinds of media format with your collection items to be digitized.

You also need to check them for any weird problems. This is another dragon flushing technique. You need to know if any of layer negatives have begun to deteriorate at different rates so that some of the image there is pulling away from some of the base layer and you get that windowpane kind of effect. That's going to get in your way. It may

be very difficult to digitize those materials certainly without treatment or outside expertise.

It may only affect three images, but they may be really important images. You need to know because you have physically gone through and looked at everything.

One of the other things you can find in a situation like that is that something is wrong with the storage situation. The collection, as far as you know, has been in folders in a box. Everything is fine, you pull out, and you realize that the enclosures that they are in are still the original envelopes from ages ago.

So now you know that you have to build into the process of handling this collection, perhaps also the process of rehousing this collection. And that's important information to know that you're collecting from the physical investigation of the collection because that is going to affect how you build your timeline.

So next you need to think about metadata. If this project is entirely your own, it is just something you are doing with your collections for your website and your audience, then you get to determine how the metadata is going to work out. You identify the fields in your database. You identify the format that you want them to be in because this is how we do dates, this is how we did dates we don't really know what they are, this is how we do credit lines, this is how I want my discussion fields and headlines, left, right, up and down, whatever.

You determine which fields are to be populated for every item. It needs to be consistent across the whole digitization project. This is also the time, however, to think about if you are going to be working with partners. If you are going to collaborate, find out what their metadata requirements will be. If you're going to share with an aggregate site, like the Portal to Texas History, one of those sites that tends to be kind of state rider region wide or culture wide, where you can share something from your collection to reach a broader audience, all that takes is that your database is able to speak to their database. And usually that is done by way of an Excel spreadsheet or something like that but what you have to know in advance is what fields they expect from you and how they format their dates. And if they require some kind of metadata that you wouldn't normally populate for every item in your collection because is not important to you as an institution, but it is important to them as an aggregate site so you need to know in

advance and build that in because it is much easier to build that into your original timeline that is to go back after the fact and try to squeeze in and still meet the original deadline.

So this is the part where people are like oh, you're kidding me. But I'm serious. You have to collect timed data. And what that means is, by this point you have looked at the physical object, you have figured out what you want done in your database, you have probably figured out some of the storage implications or things are going to be stored, how they need to be attached to your database, all that sort of stuff. You need to begin to sketch out a preliminary outline of your procedures. Like how are you or your staff, interns, volunteers, actually going to get this done for each object? Once you have that sketched out, time yourself doing it. Start timer, go to storage. Get the objects. Scan or photograph them. Create the files, name the files, store the files, copy the files, attached them to the database, feeling every metadata field, put them in their new housing or old housing, put them back on the shelf, and time them. You do that several times. Because it will help you refine your procedures.

You need to know if your procedures are the right ones. Maybe you have too many fields for this particular deadline. Or maybe not enough. You haven't got enough figured out there or maybe you're like oh, I didn't put enough time or attention to the rehousing. Build that in.

Do this enough times that you can average out how long it takes you to go through the steps you are expecting your staff to or other people in your department or just yourself. What you want to do is be able to answer the question, on this project, how many items can we digitize per hour. And in this case, that the digitize is not just create the digital object, it is also ingest the digital object. So from start to finish, shelf to digital and back to shelf, what time rate per hour can you come up with?

If you come up with 10 per hour after you have done it several times an average altogether, proceeded 5 and then you did 15 and now you're at 10, when you have 10 items per hour as your rate, you can extrapolate how long it's going to take you. It's going to take you to hundred hours to get this collection done. However, I will say either at this point or a little later, you need to pad that number with a contingency of at least 25%. So if you'd said 200 hours, bump it up to 250. Or say average items, I said 10 per

hour, take that down to 7.5. This gives you a little padding because again, the dragon can be nearby.

So this is all data that you collect because it's in your purview as a collections person planning this kind of project. Now, we are going to step out one more ring. You are still collecting, you're collating data. This is important but now you're going to talk to some other people. So just as a reminder, I always put why at the top there so you have your Northstar, this is the mission statement. Other things you are going to need to figure out and you need to talk to other people and partners to get this information all in one place. Who owns the copyright to the stuff? Is it you, is it public domain, you need to figure that out because it has a direct effect on how you can use these items.

Who are your internal users? It usually marketing, education, exhibits, we need to know who they are and how they expect to get the stuff and use it. Again, this interacts with the copyright question. Some people are planning on using them in a certain way, and the way your agreement was worked out, that may not be possible. You need to educate them about their expectations and what legally you can do.

External users. Same thing of how are you providing access to the staff? What are they going to do with it? Where are you going to store this stuff? If you are digitizing thousands of items and you are going to high resolution for images or lots on part of hours of audiovisual recordings, those files are going to be -- and most of us don't have, just real rooms full of servers lying around, so you're going to talk to IT. Where are we going to store the stuff quickly also need to have a conversation about bandwidth. If you're moving gigantic video files around, I know from experience that if you don't have enough bandwidth, as soon as you start to move that in your collections, you can slow down every computer in the museum, and you might want to have a conversation about bandwidth of your plenitude create and move big files.

And also digital standards. A lot of this would be stuff you want to talk about with your IT people are your colleagues or your partners, but what format they are using for difficult to files, what naming conventions, resolution, all this kind of stuff that you should write down one central place.

So now you are ready to take this data to a higher level. And this is where it's good to have this data because you can use it to educate people about the process and about all those different obligations and responsibilities that may be involved.

This is where sometimes you sometimes have to have a conversation where you have to know what is at the museum values most? Is there a deadline that cannot be moved? Then that is the deciding factor on how you get from here to there.

Is it that it needs to be cheap? This is actually a little tricky thing to manage because as Dr. Jones pointed out last week when she gave us that tool, the cost calculator, but cheap is not always what you think. Often times what it means is you don't have cash for an initial outlay. So if it's going to cost \$10,000 to digitize all of these items at one go and bring the back and you're going to work on the rest of the process then, especially if it came up without being expected, there is often not a budget line item for that \$10,000. So the initial cash outlay, that lump sum payment is what a museum sometimes wants to avoid picked they would rather feed into existing staff and projects.

But that's where that calculator comes in. It may be worth doing the math at some point to figure out if you count the staff hours, the supervisory and training staff hours and review of records created by those, plus all of the technological infrastructure, the servers, the firewall, the back-and-forth between cloud storage, the webmaster's work putting these online and troubleshooting issues, all that stuff is built into the museum's existing budget. Is being spent specifically on digital collections. And if you tease that outcome you can get over time, perhaps a greater expense than just what would have been a cash outlay for a vendor's assistance.

Speaking of vendors, how do you decide if you're going to do it in-house or if you're going to use a vendor? There are a lot of different things to consider. Most people really stick to how much it costs and where they are going to get the money for it and what kind of deadlines they can or cannot influence.

All these other things that are on here are things, of course, that would affect whether or not you use a vendor especially the need for outside expertise.

So if you have any kind of audiovisual recording, particularly on magnetic tape, you're almost certainly going to need to use an outside vendor, because library tapes are fragile. The machines required to take that analog recording and created again as a

digital surrogate, they are very specialized. And you really want someone with expertise handling your magnetic tapes because those that don't have expertise can just pop in the machine and press play, and the machine can scrape off the recording. You are left with blank tape.

So you want people who know they what they are doing handle your audiovisual recordings.

Almost anything that can fit on a scanner or in front of a camera, you can do it yourself. You may have to tweak and practice, but you can do it.

It's a bit of back-and-forth it so I will put together some examples people figure out in his case whether the museum question might want to do this in-house or want to use a vendor.

So in this example, a local history museum receives a donation from a famous photographer famous well-known photographer, it's a really small donations. It's 36 images on 35-millimeter black and white negative strips taken 40 years ago with an old camera, and it's well-known format. It was taken 40 years ago of one of the area's traditional celebrations. It's very high-profile because the photographer is famous. But the museum does have an Epson scanner.

So what do you think? It's a small number of items. So in no matter what the museum decides this is going to be a short timeline project unless there is a very high proportional of hidden dragons that no one is aware of. This can be done with a desktop scanner, depend on the use. If there is someone out there who wants to turn one of these images into a five-story rap for the building next to the museum, you're going to need help getting that kind of resolution. But if it's going on your website, it's going to be used in your exhibits and programs, you are almost capable of producing a very decent scan on your desktop scanner.

I will say that one of the questions that immediately comes to mind is what happened to the rights? To the photographer retain them or donate them? Does the museum get a perpetual use license or are they going have to negotiate every use for every image from here on out. That is a series of questions that still needs to be asked and answered.

It seems like they could handle most of this thing in-house.

Example B, and art museum wants to digitize their unique collection of approximately 300 VHS tapes to Medicare annual art fair and juried art prizes from the 1980s to the early 2000s. I hope that is setting off a few bells in the back of your mind.

Because 300 VHS tapes, that's a lot of fragile material that has a rapidly approaching expiration date. We don't know exactly what the date is, but any kind of magnetic tape recording, especially VHS is particularly fragile and destined to deteriorate in the near future rather than the far. So you want to digitize these carefully. So they will need expertise and special equipment. They are going to need to think about the fact that 300 VHS tapes, it's going to produce terabytes of storage. It's almost 100% to be a project for outside expertise of course other things we talk about after things get digitized still has to be done in-house.

Last example. This is a history museum that receive the photographic archive associated rights of a small local newspaper that has since gone out of business. So it's about 5000 images that are almost all in 35 millimeters negative streets, although there are a few hundred black and white prints. This archive is already well-established as a source of images work local media, schools, universities, and commercial customers, but the last time the images were scanned was the early 2000s. So those JPEGs are going to cut it anymore. The museum does have a scanner. And they also already have a backlog of requests from people who want a license agreement to use particular images in this collection.

So this is exciting. Things to think about. What is the museum's ultimate goal in terms of timeline here? If they want to jumpstart on getting this all taken care of very quickly, send the 5,000 images, get them digitize, bring them back and start processing them in the museum collections department, get them ingested into collections and start answering those license agreement requests and making things available online and in other formats.

The museum is capable of doing the whole collection in-house. They have a scanner, you just have to do set the settings into the quality review and they are going to be capable of creating usable scans of these items.

It's kind of great that the museum has a prior such a large collection that has proven itself has an existing revenue stream that could continue for the museum, so that might

actually help offset some of the costs in the decision to use a vendor. This could be either way. Either way you're going to prioritize digitizing the one that has or -- ones that have already been requested and get those completed as quickly possible.

So you have thought through all your particular circumstances, and what you have decided is you are going to do it. You're going to do it in-house. Your project. I'm not going to go through every single item on this list, but I will say that again, like on everything, please write it all down. Write down your decisions, right on your procedures. If this project is on for a couple of years, write a report every year. And at the end, collected little bit more data so you can brag on yourself. This final project summary is where you talk about how many hours were spent and how many records are created and all my records report online and how many visitors. How many times have you educators use these things in programs? How many times have they appeared in exhibits? How many times have they been requested by outside users? How have they been used publications, maybe? Something like that. Has marketing used it? Put that in there. If there any snafu or, if any dragons showed up, put that in there to because this needs we document it and built up for next time.

One of the nice things, I'm not going to all the advantages, but one of the nice things about doing digitization in-house is that you have the analog right here. And then you create a digital image of it and then you create a record and then you dock the data. So the links between the analog and digital surrogate are really strong.

Those let's get separated by time when you use a vendor and you often have to pay much closer attention to make sure that your digitized item is being correctly related to its original analog. That can sometimes add a little layer of time and anxiety to vendor projects.

Sometimes this can be a slow process, sometimes parties can arise and persist further down and then you have to push it back up again.

It can involve a steep learning curve, but I believe anybody with enough practice and timing can do in-house digital photography and scanning on a flatbed scanner to a decent quality for use.

It may take a little pushing if you need a little more volume, but that just tweaking your lighting situation and figuring out how to make the most of what resources you have in-house already.

So we're going to flip the script and say you decided to use a vendor.

This is an excellent way to marshal your resources to follow dock solve a problem. If you have things you cannot digitize in-house, it may involve using a vendor, and you have reached the point where you get to use that vendor, is a huge relief to go ahead and get those things digitized. I will say that you do have to document your decisions and all those things in writing and require status updates from someone at the vendor's end of things. You need to answer a lot of questions if they should be able to tell you anything about what is going to happen with the security of your items. You can call up and say, my boss and I are at your address, how are you going to ensure the physical safety of my stuff? They should be able to walk you through their procedures. They should answer discussion for a lot of people and they should know the answers, and if they can't, you should maybe consider a different vendor.

How are we going to get the stuff back? Are you going to send a hard drive or an FTP site? Answer that in advance. One thing you might not know if you have never worked with a vendor, is that you have a very specific amount of time. So, a very well-defined window at the end of the project in which to review the items that they have created for you.

If you need to negotiate a longer window in your contract, that when you sign the contract, before you send anything to them, this window has been identified pick so they create all the files for you and they send them to you and you have that window time and only that window of time to review everything and make sure it is what you wanted. I have worked on projects where I got back some images and was a little bit horrified to see that the technician had not been paying close attention. Some of my images were perfect, some of them were off by about 15%, so there was missing visual data. They were fuzzy, they were blurry, you can focus on them not because the original was blurry, that because the digital focus wasn't there.

I also received audiovisual files where there has been an overlay in the digital environment and some other clip from some other recording completely unrelated to my

original has been kind of spliced into mine. You have to review, because you don't know what you might find.

If you find it in the window, you send it back and say do it again, it's not right.

If you find outside that window, the contract has ended. And you don't have much recourse in terms of getting them to address this problem. You may be able to make something happen, your director may be able to make the thing happen, but generally speaking, you need to work within the confines of the contract because he knew at the beginning how much of a window you would have. So that is something to keep in mind, especially for really big projects.

There are a lot of advantages to using a vendor. There can be some disadvantages.

Like I was mentioning before, the link between originals and files, you need to pay special attention to make sure everything is exactly matched.

Sometimes that short-term control, when you are using a vendor, to jumpstart the digitization project, you're going to get high quality results in a fast turn around because that's what you're paying for usually.

So we went through a ton of stuff quickly. I just want to make sure that we talk about the recipe, you can really boil it down. I went through some of the details, but you can boil it down. It's pretty easy to memorize recipe for success. For first of all, you've got to create data. Ballpark figures are just not going to cut it. You really need to collect data. That is going to help you in a lot of other ways. It's really useful. The first time I did that, the first time I sat down and timed myself and realize how long it took me to process an object from start to finish, I was suddenly struck by how incredibly useful that was to know. Because I could extrapolate from it.

So I might have that rate, and hourly rate of how long it takes to process this kind of item in this kind of process. And it really doesn't take a lot of time trials to then try again, but different items and different procedures. And all of a sudden, you've got a formula that you try and you know what your hourly rate is per but you have to do it enough that you're not making things up. That you're collecting significant data, not just the kind of number -- that we are not allowed to count on.

The other thing is about this process is it helps the museum identifies priorities.

Knowing what is important for this project, this is the reason why this is served. Boiling

that down having in place is incredibly useful. And the third point, documenting it so that everybody is on the same page is also useful.

So several months or years down the line when someone says I thought all this was going to be done by April 2022, you can say well, we were all at that meeting and we signed off on the fact that it was going to be done in June of 2022. You are also part of that. It's really good to have documentation.

It's also good for educating people on why it takes so long. Some people will be like, just get digitized. You got the stuff last week. Why isn't it available? So having procedures documented so you can show someone it's actually 75 steps from start to finish or whatever it is. To get this item into a collections environment so that we can preserve it and provide access to it. That is immensely valuable for you and your department to be able to talk to people outside your department who may not know.

It is also good to have all of these things that I've been talking about, collecting your data, the prioritize your priorities you are going to establish with others department, documentation you can share news and other kinds of settings. All of this to some extent implies and so I'm going to make it explicit here, institutional commitment. Digital collections are little bit like the proverbial box of puppies where people are like here, they are free. And free puppies. That's awesome. You're probably going to pay for the digitization of objects, but once you have those, you are not done. That is a commitment. You have to make a storage copy. You have to make an access copy. You have to make a copy somewhere that is attached to your database. And you got to talk about it in your database in such a way that you can find it again later.

And then if you need to, you can track some of those processes back to the original project so that if you need to solve a mystery, you can.

Sometimes you have to solve a mystery with these. That commitment, let's talk about that more on the next slide. I created a slide, want to warn you about this, I created a slide about all the things I didn't have time to talk about, so don't feel overwhelmed.

So write it down. Write it all down. Institutional commitment. You need to identify the decision-makers who are going to be working with your digital collections. Most of us in collections to not think, I'm going to ask the IT manager to join us to talk about

collections preservation for our analog collections. That seems inappropriate. That's not where their expertise is best used. But the IT person or someone from IT sector needs to be part of your conversation about digital collections. Because they are the ones that are managing a lot of the processes that affect the long-term preservation and the public access that you're hoping these objects will be able to grant.

So you need people identified as decision-makers and they will probably be interdepartmental, and they need to meet semi-regularly.

Eventually you're going to want a preservation policy. You're also eventually going to want to hunt down for the line items in various department budgets are, that are related to digital collections. You don't have to do any of that right up front just because you are having a digital project, but the longer you are a steward of digital collections, the likelier you are to be a steward of evermore digital collections.

And eventually will find yourself with terabytes of stories, thousands of records and files, and you need to be able to track of who is accessing the them, who is using them, when they are aging out, all kinds of a date up here you are going to need help. So having a preservation policy and having a budget can help with that.

Rights and reproduction. We only touched on this very briefly. I have put the materials in the supplemental materials and resources for this unit. All of that will be available when the entire module is complete. So in July you can look back at all of the resources for this module and you will find some stuff that I put in there that can help you find more information about how reproductions may intersect with your digital collections.

I'm not going to go into technological infrastructure other than to say that Elizabeth is going to talk about some really great stuff next week and I, for one, am looking forward to what she has to say because that was always the part that was changing. I feel it changes a lot and it has on who you're talking to, so I am looking forward to Elizabeth telling us about that.

Digital collections are not permanent collections, although they may be a permanent feature of preservation and access strategies for permanent collections.

They are not permanent because they don't last forever. They age out. So anytime you digitize things, you want such a high standard and to such professional quality that you

don't have to digitize them again anytime soon although you are doing it with the sure knowledge that at some point you are going to have to digitize everything all over again. But you are doing it so that people will be using it so that people who follow in your footsteps on the have to imagine such a thing.

I hope this has helped. I really look forward to talking to you about this. I will say all of the images used were public domain unless otherwise credited, and this is how you find me. So if anything I said struck a chord and you need to follow up with me, please look at my website, museum person .com, or email me at the address on the slide.

And here's all the information on how to follow the museum Learning Hub. And that's that. I want to make sure I left plenty of time for questions.

>> Thank you for a great presentation. I think your examples and scenarios I hope are helpful for folks and weather to lay out and do these things in house or do them with a vendor. We do have a couple of questions from our group. So let's get started with them. You talk about your dragon at the beginning. What are the unexpected pitfalls you should take into account when building a digital project?

>> Yes. Okay. So some of the things that have come up when I've been working on a project in the past, everyone agrees this is the priority, we are going to get this done. And then you are about two months in and the whole institution takes a left turn to pursue something else. So then you're kind of left with, okay, what do we do with this project? Oftentimes what happens with digitization is it gets built into something else. So if you are cataloguing collections, digitization is often built-in because capturing an image becomes part of the preservation process. So anything that can happen to a cataloguing project inhabited digitizing. You can have high turnover of your staff. Your volunteers or interns. This is another reason to write down training procedures and step-by-step procedures because if you consult have to train your people, that slows things down.

But if you sit down with them once and walk it through and give them a document and save practice, they have it there. They don't need you to hold their hands every time. I think that's probably just a couple of the things other than the things I talked about in the presentation. I think that's a couple of things.

>> I think one of our key takeaways is write everything down and document everything.

>> Yes. I didn't tell you the scary story I have about that, but if you want me to, I will.

>> We can always say that for the end if we have time. Next question we have is how should I go about imaging fragile or oversized collections like maps and blueprints if I do it in-house?

>> One of the ways that we approach that at a couple of museums where I worked in the past, is we used an overhead approach. So you can manage that a couple of ways. It depends on how oversized the item is. If it's absolutely massive, then rolled out on the floor, get on a really big ladder and stand with your camera and take pictures.

If it's slightly less massive, you can roll it out on a floor or a table or a low platform and you can use a tripod that extends over it. You can hold the camera out, and if it's a little bit smaller than that but still too big for a scanner bed, you can use an overhead document camera which has a set up like this where the camera is facing downward and anything you spread out below like a double fold newspaper photographing both pages, that can be captured that way. In all those cases you're going to have to tweak the lighting because when it's really, really big you have to light evenly all the way around. So you may have to experiment a little bit with that either way.

>> Next question is kind of a big one. I'm sure one that many of us have. How do you build a team that you trust with a project like this? And how do you balance revision while still giving others creative agency?

>> That is an excellent question. I have found over the years and on big collections projects that one of the most successful approaches is to have a weekly team meeting. And to have very specific definitions of what each person is doing on the team. So if you have a couple of people, that are going to spend 100% of their time, maybe they are grant funded or volunteers or interns, but 100% other time is being spent on this digitization project it give them ownership of the procedures. Not that they can just run away and change at all, but at your weekly meeting, they raise a question and say you know what, you have that we need to do these steps. But we are finding those repetitive with these other steps. Do you mind if we arrange those together and instead do this? And you say yes, then it's their job to update the procedures document and to refine those procedures and keep you posted on how it's working.

I do find that that weekly meeting is essential, not only to troubleshooting, but to letting people have their own independence within the confines of a project. Because it gives you a weekly opportunity to solve problems for them, too had problems off. Like it they said we were working on this collection and I see this coming out. I'm a little worried about blah, blah, blah. You have a week or two in which to deal with blah, blah, blah before they get there. But also if you get to celebrate their competence. So if they own, is a huge milestone, maybe dated 50% of the project, you get to celebrate at your weekly meeting. And that tends to be really good for morale.

>> That is a great reminder to continue to boost morale by talking about those achievements at those weekly meetings. That's great advice.

We have two more questions and I want to remind our viewers that if you do have questions, please put them in the chat area. Also if you're on Facebook or YouTube, we will capture those as well. So be sure to keep asking those questions. Next question we have is what possible ways can digitized collections we used to engage visitors? What other digital tools might be other?

>> You have a lot of options. I know many museums out there toward the possibility of developing a site-specific app, particular historic sites are museums for which the outdoors is also part of their site. You can develop an app. You can use your collections is the sort of point of entry. I know one museum that has done that with Daley Plaza. Daley Plaza is their own landmark that is administered by their own people. The museum has its material, it's interpreted material, but wanted visitors to be able to go out into the plaza and connect what they are seeing to the historic materials in the museum collections.

You don't always have to be high-tech. You can certainly use collections in programs, you can use them in distance learning, you can use them in interpreted materials, we use them in a touch screen interactive at one point, but I've also been a museums where we use them on a handout that we give people so they could access the information about collections by paper there is no reason to see that low-tech of its effective.

It depends on your goals and what you're trying to achieve, what your timeline and your budget is.

>> Next question is somebody is curious about the idea of shared digitization projects. Do the rights remain with a single institution or is it just the metadata that is shared out?

>> That is going to depend on the relationship between the two entities. I can speak to the expense I had, at that time we shared material with the Portal to Texas History which is an aggregate site that talks about all of Texas history, not just the Kennedy assassination. It talks about all kinds of things. The Portals to Texas History had an agreement where we could share materials with them that the museum owned the rights or that were public domain. If there were other situations, not entirely sure that they could work it out.

Because they need to be able to share them and push them out and usually the only safe ways to do that are because you are dealing with the rights owner or its public domain and there is no rights on.

So you kind of have to work it out with your partner in that sense. But in most cases, I would think if there is any kind of sticky situation with the right ownership, it may not be the right candidate to share on one of those aggregate sites.

>> Just in your last few slides here, you talked a little bit about the fact that digital isn't necessarily synonymous with forever. So you talk about how you're going to have to do this process again. Is there a recommended timeline for when people should consider redoing some of their digitized collections and how do we keep people or keep teams at museums thinking about that process?

>> Yes. In terms of determining if your digital objects are still good enough, you yourself can answer that to some extent. Every time you share with an exhibit designer and educator, did they send it back and go do you have something sharper? To the get that soda pained look on their face? If they do come you probably need to address the quality of what you got. And if you don't find it good enough to work with, if you're kind of like, I can't even figure out what this problem is because looking at this image I'm going to have to get the object, then maybe, sometimes just a limitation of photography, but sometimes that might be a notation of a not quite sharp enough image.

And if you know it's been around 7-10 years, technology has probably changed. Some things are going to the added some things aren't. But people usually tell you they are

trying to access something and they are saying this is not good enough. They're usually not try about that.

Another way of keeping up with that is professional development. There is a lot of great training available out there. Two really good sources are the Northeast Document Conservation Center, which is based in Boston. And every year almost every year, I think they have a professional development workshop that is specifically about dealing with digital collections in a lot of different formats and you can usually learn what the latest trends are true them.

You can also do online stuff through them and through another source of information for people in the profession are dealing with digital collections. Sparkles are fantastic resources to share. Thank you. Since we are at time, I want to ask you, Lindsey, if you have any final words of wisdom for us as we leave today, talking about digital projects.

>> I think that digital projects can be overwhelming if you haven't done them before. But a lot of people who think of themselves as never having done them before have really dealt with digital objects in other contexts and just need to think it through. So one of the things I did was provided as a resource kind of a checklist running for the process that I described today so if you want access to that, it will be in the supplemental resources when this module is completely available in July.

Don't be intimidated by it. You can do this. You have already done parts of it without even knowing it. And I think that digitizing collections is here to stay. It's a permanent part of our presentation and access strategies. It's one of those that is always changing because technology is always changing. So it's kind of fun to keep up with it.

>> Absolutely. Thank you so much for walking us through the entire process, getting started with your digitization project. So to wrap things up,

Thank you all for attending the first technical workshop of our Managing Digitization Projects module, and thank you to today's instructor.

After each module, all four videos will be available on our website, as well as a complete toolkit of resources provided by our presenters. If you would like the pre-broadcast toolkit, those are only sent out to those that register through Eventbrite. So, signup for next week's webinar, and the toolkit will be emailed to you ahead of time.

remember you can always review past bone hours under the learn tab on our website and then past webinars.

Please remember to:

1. Visit the forum on our website to ask questions
2. Follow us on social media to stay aware of future programs. Links provided in the chat.
3. Complete the post event satisfaction survey

As we mentioned, your feedback is very important to us and it will take just a few minutes to complete.

4. And join us next week for Technical Workshop 3: Imaging Standards and Logistics in Digitization Projects on Tuesday June 29, 2021, 11:00am PT, 2:00pm ET
5. Presenter: Elizabeth Chiang, George Eastman Museum.

In Rochester, New York. Thank you all again for joining us on the museum Learning Hub. Have a great rest of your day and we look forward to seeing you next week. Thank you.