

Components of a Provincial Digitization Initiative

Created by the BC Digitization Coalition

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The BC Digitization Coalition is an informal group working towards the creation of a digitization initiative in BC. The Coalition evolved from the committee which organized the 2008 BC Digitization Symposium, an event attended by stakeholders representing archives, historical societies, libraries, museums, and the K-12 educators. For more information on the Symposium, its Final Report, and the Coalition members, please see: <http://symposium.westbeyondthewest.ca/>

This document describes the components or “building blocks” we believe are necessary to create a functioning provincial digitization initiative. The document indicates a path forward that will:

- speak to the vision presented at the Symposium and in the Symposium Final Report,
- support the Coalition within the scope established by its Terms of Reference, and
- be inclusive of all partners and possible partners across BC, large and small, in any sector relevant to the creation and preservation of our common heritage in digital form.

The document is “living” and “organic”; the Coalition may revise it from time to time as new opportunities appear and new goals are set.

Components

The challenges of building a BC digitization initiative fall into three areas:

1. Encourage the creation of more online collections by libraries, archives, museums, historical societies, and other heritage organizations.
2. Ensure these collections are findable by end users through provincial and national search portals which harvest and aggregate metadata.
3. Improve coordination of digitization activities across sectors within the province.

For each challenge the Coalition has identified a strategy and specific steps or components which could be carried out either by the Coalition alone or acting with other partners.

Challenge: Encourage the creation of more online collections by libraries, archives, museums, historical societies, and other heritage organizations.

Strategy: Assist heritage organizations in BC to digitize their collections and make them available online, either with the free Digital Collection Builder (DCB) software or other tools.

Specific components:

1.1 General Digitization Support: Provide a staff resource to advise organizations on aspects of creating digital collections, and promote existing online resources.

1.2 DCB Training: Offer a program of training in the use of the DCB software.

1.3 DCB Hosting Service: Seek a host for a central instance of the DCB so that small organizations with limited resources can have their collections hosted at no or minimal cost.

1.4 DCB Software Development: Participate with other partners in the continued development of the software by adding desired features, bug fixes, etc.

1.5 Funding for Digitization: Promote funding sources which support digitization projects such as the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre's British Columbia History Digitization Program grants.

Challenge: Ensure digital collections are findable by end users through provincial and national search portals which harvest and aggregate metadata.

Strategy: Coordinate the harvesting of metadata from BC collections and its loading to both the provincial search portal *West Beyond the West* and to the national search portal, *Canadiana.org's Alouette*.

Specific components:

2.1 Provincial Search Portal: Further develop the features of the West Beyond the West portal.

2.2 Metadata Wrangling: Coordinate a process through which metadata is harvested, normalized, and loaded into the provincial and national portals.

2.3 Promote Metadata Best Practices: Gather and share information on best practices in metadata creation across all the sectors to raise data quality and facilitate harvesting.

Challenge: Improve coordination of digitization activities across sectors within the province.

Strategy: Build infrastructure and carry out activities to increase communication, coordination, and partnerships among participating organizations.

3.1 Communication and Promotion: Communicate to the community of heritage organizations about the initiative, its benefits, and methods of participating.

3.2 Coalition Infrastructure: Establish structures to better engage potential stakeholders including creator and user groups, the K-12 sector, etc.

3.3 Coalition Website Development: Create a website as the public face of the initiative, housing the search portal, community features, links to resources on digitization, blog news feeds and listservs, etc.

Future Plans

The BC Digitization Coalition will move forward with the strategies indicated in this document, developing action plans to build the components and seeking to partner with BC and national organizations working toward similar aims.