

Investing in the Long-Term Viability of British Columbia's Digital Collections



A presentation to the Steering Committee
of the B.C. Digitization Coalition
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Image from <http://www.canada-maps.org/british-columbia-map.htm>

Reasons to digitize

- Analog item + digitization = access and preservation copies
- Digitized collections + Internet = widespread access -> Increased relevance

Digitization of memory objects in B.C.

- Many B.C. memory institutions undertaking digitization on some level
- Scope of work funded by B.C. History Digitization Program, 2006-2012:
 - # projects at libraries, museums, historical societies, archives, and other memory institutions in B.C. that have received BCHDP funding: 120
 - Amount of funding allocated by BCHDP: \$1,020,886
 - Amount of matching funds contributed by recipient institutions: \$1,562,162
 - Total amount spent: \$2,583,048 (average \$430,508)

“If you digitize it, they will come... And when they come back, will it still be there?”*



* Loose paraphrase of W.P. Kinsella

** Pony analogy drawn from the keynote address by Dr. Laura Millar, "Making Archives Digital: From Wishful Thinking to Alternate Realities," at the Annual Conference of the AABC, Vancouver, 24 April 2009.

Digital preservation challenges

- Digital files are subject to:
 - Obsolescence of hardware and software
 - Physical degradation
 - Fragility of media
 - Lack of market compliance with standards, e.g., ISO standard for physical composition of optical media (CDs, DVDs)
 - Loss or mismanagement
 - Mismanagement of file directories, physical media, software, etc.
 - Changes to the allocation of resources required to maintain useable and accessible digital files
- BCHDP applicants must demonstrate their preservation plan for digitized objects; rigour and capacity vary

Digital preservation infrastructure requirements

- What is required to create digital preservation infrastructure *
 - Organization: policy, standards, good practice, institutional commitment
 - Technology: technological platform, preservation planning
 - Resources: content, funding, personnel

* See Anne R. Kenney, Nancy McGovern, et al, *Digital Preservation Management: Implementing Strategies for Long-Term Preservation*, “Program Components – Introduction” (last revision 2010), at <http://www.dpworkshop.org/dpm-eng/program/index.html> (accessed 7 June 2012)

BCDC Terms of Reference*

- “The BC Digitization Coalition is a group working toward the creation of a provincial digitization strategy in British Columbia.”
- Our purpose:
 - Continue to implement key recommendations identified by BC Digitization Symposium participants
 - Advocate for collaboration and partnerships, especially around opportunities for funding to support ongoing digitization initiatives
 - Facilitate dialogue and discussion around digitization strategies in communities across the Province
 - Work with small and rural communities to support digitization efforts

* *West Beyond the West: The B.C. Digitization Coalition*, “Terms of Reference – Draft”, available at: <http://wbtw.ca/about-2-2/reports-and-documents/terms-of-reference-draft/>

What is the BCDC's role with respect to digital preservation?

- Clearinghouse
 - Disseminate or point to information on digital preservation best practices, tools, and services (we do this already on the BCDC website)
- Influencer
 - Advocate for funding
 - Seek to insert pro-preservation policy into digitization programming
- Sponsor/Convenor
 - Sponsor training opportunities, e.g., Digital Preservation Management Workshop, workshops developed by the AABC, DigCCurr Professional Institute
- Service Provider
 - Develop and provide an ISO-compliant trusted digital repository (TDR) for digitized materials*
 - Build, extend, join, or collaborate **
- Other

*In the case of a TDR, ISO compliance means compliance with ISO standards 14721, *Space data and information transfer systems -- Open archival information system -- Reference model*, and 16363, *Trusted Digital Repositories and Audit Checklist (TRAC)* .

**Four options for developing technological infrastructure, as presented in DPM Workshop, <http://www.dpworkshop.org/dpm-eng/program/techinf.html>

One possible first step: Conduct needs assessment

- Conduct a province-wide digital preservation needs assessment
 - Establish a working group to carry out or administer the assessment
 - Product: a report on the state of digital preservation in BC
 - BCDC could then identify areas in which it could participate in meeting some of the identified needs, roles it could play
- Share findings with the broader community
 - Other institutions and networks might identify areas in which they too could participate in meeting needs

Questions? Comments?

Thank you

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