Digitization and Data Preservation Centre

A Collaborative initiative of Carnegie Foundation & National Research Foundation

ICADLA - 1 Conference
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1 – 3 July 2009

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National Research Foundation
Project Proposal
Content Outline

- Project proposal background
- Key activities of the project
- Model
- Audit
  - Objectives, methodology and some outcomes
- Selection of material
- Time frames
Origin of Project

- Stakeholders identified the NRF as an important organisation in bringing resolution to the digitization/preservation issues in playing a central role as convener and facilitator of collaborative solutions.
Project proposal
Origin

- Origin of project – Stakeholder meeting January 2008
- Challenges, demands and requirements
  - historical aspects
  - know-how or knowledge and skills for digitization;
  - related quantities of human resources;
  - financial resources;
  - technology infrastructure (both software and hardware);
  - connectivity [related to the above];
  - standards for the management of the digital information resources;
  - policies on various aspects of digital knowledge, in particular intellectual property rights and ownership of content and so on
- Project proposal
  - National Initiative
  - Establishment of the ‘digitization and data preservation centre’ at the NRF
Key Activities of Project

- conduct national audit
- develop a digitization framework/manual and related policies
  - Managing digital collections: a South African framework (8 sections)
- setting-up/implementing a digitization centre
  - Infrastructure: system and portal
  - digitization equipment
  - conduct digitization activities
- training and digitization activities
Institutions ABC Current/Ongoing projects, E.g. DISA

NRF Portal

NRF Prototype centre

Infrastructure

Manual

Training

Institutions XYZ 'new' projects National Theme Capturing of material
Audit Objectives

- identify who and which institutions are involved in digitization projects;
- identify potential projects for digitization in South Africa;
- establish on the basis of frequency, priority areas/content for potential digitization projects – the preliminary list generated will be discussed with stakeholders;
- provide a list of current/ongoing projects [to facilitate reduction of unnecessary duplication];
- reaffirm [as appropriate] the merits of a digitization centre, its activities and potential governance structure;
Audit Objectives

- collect data and information for the establishment of a portal for digitization projects that will ensure accessibility;
- identify levels of expertise/skills availability across institutions in digitization;
- establish digitization needs, i.e. skills, expertise, knowledge, infrastructure requirements
- generate a national database (to be updated regularly) and hardcopy report of the audit for distribution to and access by key stakeholders.
Audit

Methodology
- Triangulation method
- Desktop research
- Survey / Questionnaire http://stardata.nrf.ac.za/carnegie/index.asp
- Visits to institutions

Outcomes of audit
- Audit workshop (18 March 2009)
- Audit report
- Database of digital collections (planned, on the way, completed)
Questionnaire

Part 1: Management and Governance
This Section deals with the management and governance of the organisation which houses the digitization projects. It needs to be completed only once for each organisation.

Part 2: Description of the collection(s) digitized or to be digitized
This section needs to be completed for every collection, whether digitized, being digitized, planned for digitization or warranting digitization but with no plan formulated.

- Part 2.1: Contact Details of Collection Champion(s)
  This section is for contact details of the person who is directly managing the digitisation process and can answer queries re technical aspects of the project as well as on short-term and sustainability funding.

- Part 2.2: Collection description
  This section contains descriptive details of the items in the collection. It needs to be completed for every collection.

- Part 2.3: Technical aspects
  This section deals with technical aspects of the digitization and preservation processes in place or envisaged. Please provide this information for every collection, by copying and pasting if the information is common to all collections.

- Part 2.4: Evaluation of the Collection
  This section deals with the quality of the collection (uniqueness, completeness, links to other collections etc) and the rationale for digitizing it (greater research access, deterioration of specimens, relevance to heritage or research priorities). It needs to be completed for every collection.

Part 3: Resources - Skills, Technology and Funding
This section details the available or required resources. If the same resources are applied to several projects, please copy this section for each collection.

Part 4: Sustainability of Preservation
This section describes measures in place, planned or needed for ongoing preservation of the digitized collection(s).

Part 5: Lessons learnt in digitizing this (these) collection(s).
This section shares special insights obtained in hands-on digitization.
DEM DEMONSTRATION WEB SITE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

The National Research Foundation (NRF) with the funding from the Carnegie Foundation facilitates and coordinates digitisation initiatives at a national level. It is proposed that the NRF will host a national digitisation and digital data preservation centre with the following objectives:

- provide technical digitisation support and services to those institutions that are not able to wholly or partially do it themselves;
- provide or mobilise experts to conduct training and support for persons and institutions that would like to embark on a digitisation and digital preservation exercise;
- coordinate collaborative digitisation and digital data preservation initiatives among HEIs as well as NGOs, and other organisations that are keen to collaborate and or provide digitisation support to others.
- facilitate the sharing of knowledge.

An audit was conducted to establish the state of digitisation in the country, that is, to identify the digitisation projects currently taking place, including potential projects for digitisation in South Africa.

View Digitisation Projects

A C D J K N O R S T Z

Search database
Audit report
Selection of material

- Digital collections database
  - Functional digitizing
    - SABS - SA national standards to clients and users via the WWW
  - Digitizing for Academic Visibility
    - Transvaal museum's joint activity with the Univ of Toulouse to digitise the skull of Mrs Pless (brain structure)
  - Inaccessible Heritage Material
    - Freedom struggle collection being assembled via DISA, Rock art collection from the SA Roc Art Digital Archive; Hugh Tracy recordings of ethnic music in the International Library of African Music (ILAM) at Rhodes University

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Digitised</th>
<th>Digitising under Way</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>Not Planned</th>
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<td>55</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>185</td>
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<td>1 354 710</td>
<td>695 090</td>
<td>487 070</td>
<td>2 717 170</td>
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Audit report
Selection of material

• Prioritization of Digitization Projects
  – National Priorities (national strategic documents & white papers)
    • National Research and Development Strategy, 2002 – DACST
    • Innovation plan (DST, 2008) listed 5 grand challenges
    • Strategic Plan for 2008-2011, Dept of Arts and Culture
  – List of themes according to the Database
  – Suggestions of Participants at the Stakeholders’ Workshop
  – Desktop Research (matrix for collection Prioritization)
Audit report
Collection Prioritization

Think Tools© methodology

- **Perceived Value**: Clearly this is the most important and the most difficult to assess objectively, but positioning it within a priority theme should help.
- **Fragility**: the items are likely to fall apart, become illegible, self-combust etc.
- **Audience**: The items are of interest to far more people than can reasonably visit the archive in person; to which one might add the rider ‘and are part of the legitimate target group for this service’.
- **Reciprocity/Collaboration**: Web publication of the images may give the ‘owners’ access to partnerships in research that would otherwise be difficult.
- **Funds available or on offer**: Someone has the funds to train our people and/or pay for the work to be done by others. Provided that ownership and copyright are not compromised, this may be a mutually beneficial arrangement. (See 7)
- **Readiness for digitisation**: It makes a certain amount of sense to focus on this as a relatively minor criterion, but making collections ready for digitisation can absorb large portions of the budget.
Matrix: Collection Prioritization

Think Tools© methodology

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Selection of material
Way forward

• Audit report
• Formulation of a process for prioritization of collections
• Panel recommendations
Time frames

- **Period 1**
  - Audit (31 March 2009)
  - Managing digital collections: a South African framework (31 March and 31 August 2009)

- **Period 2**
  - Infrastructure (31 October and 31 December 2009)
  - Training, Implementation, Active Digitizing (2010)

- **Period 3**
  - Training, Active Digitizing (2011)

Sustainability
Closing thoughts

- The goal of the project is to encourage shared responsibility for digital content and to seek national solutions for:
- The continuing collection, selection, and organisation of the most historically significant cultural materials & important information resources, regardless of evolving formats,
- The long-term storage, preservation, and authenticity of those collections,
- Persistent, rights-protected access for the public to the digital heritage of the South African people.
Closing thoughts

- The stakeholders surfaced priorities for action on:
  - understanding better who the users are and will be,
  - Scope of collecting, that is, what is preserved by whom, for whom, and in what forms,
  - Developing sustainable economic models for preservation, and
  - Balancing the interests of preservation and access
Closing thoughts

- Action is needed now, not some time in the future; and that everyone from creators to custodians – must contribute to the solution and learn to operate fluently in a world of constant and unpredictable change.
Acknowledgements

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Enkosi, Thank you, Re a leboga, Siyabonga, Dankie