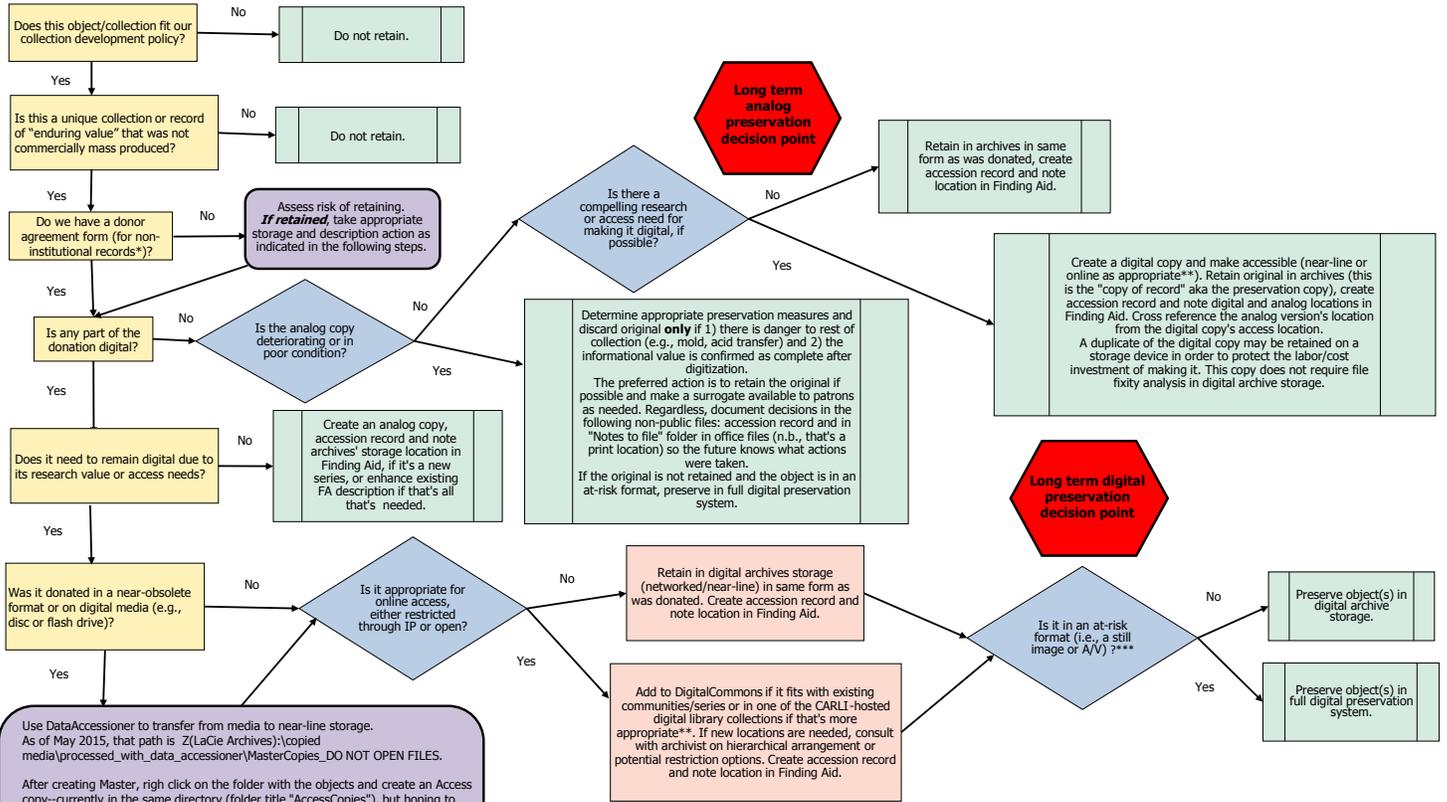


IWU Archives Flowchart: From Selection through Storage

(Glossary of terms available below)



* Note: It is not part of my process to secure donor forms or create accession entries for records that should come to the archives in the course of business (aka, items that would normally fall under a records retention-type of plan like reports, publications, event programs and media. I do create an accession record for collections that come in bulk when people retire or periodically clean out their offices. Knowing the "when and who" is sometimes helpful when more details are needed after a large group of material begins to be processed...sometimes years later!

*** Note: As of May 2015, any text-based format is considered stable. At this point pdfs are, too, but we need to understand the graphic design creation process in pdfs. Communications uses ISSUU to display these in campus units' webpages. Some of these come to the archives in print but not all. Question: Are they created with a process that might be better for migration, and/or can they be converted to PDF/A so formatting might be preserved?

** Note on access point decisions between CARLI-hosted CONTENTdm (CDM) collections vs. our institutional repository DigitalCommons@IWU (DC). CDM makes selected legacy collections available online primarily to support the archives' research needs. This content includes things like historical newspapers and other publications of the university that were specifically digitized to take advantage of keyword-in-context search results. CDM allows large pdfs to be uploaded and then displays them as individual pages for that object thus decreasing download times for patrons. Other digitized print and visual media drawn from the archives' holdings have the benefit of promoting IWU history with content that is known to meet patron interests because it's been requested before. This content includes printed photos that have been scanned at the request of a researcher or in support of some large-scale campus initiative. Sometimes text files are included due to their ability to provide support for other content. Archival collections in DC relate to organization/unit governance and/or other output of campus groups. One solely-historical interest collection built in DC is the Oral History collection. This content was placed in DC since the platform was better suited to the serving of streaming audio with a co-located transcript. The native audio files for this collection are in the near-line digital archive storage location, but are identified as "at risk" and will be moved into a full preservation system when available. One example of a non-traditional (at least, for IWU) archival collection in DC is the collection of interviews from local public radio station WGLT. The archivist believes these have enduring value and, like oral histories, are related more to future interests in "campus life and culture" than as evidence of organizational growth and change. Some of these files need more curation, and all should move into a full preservation system with other A/V objects in the future. Selection has not yet taken place from the growing collection of video recordings being created during student research presentations.

Digital Preservation Terminology relevant to this flowchart

Digital Preservation: set of processes, activities and management of digital information over time to ensure long-term accessibility. Because of the relatively short lifecycle of digital information, preservation is an ongoing process.

Enduring Value: Tate Archives & Special Collections in The Ames Library has defined enduring value (aka, archival value) as unique materials concerning IWU history and/or materials such as those described in the archives' collection policy.

Digital Archive: a managed collection of primary source historical records in the highest resolution digital format available. Digital Archives are managed by archivists just as physical archives are; their storage options include local backup up locations, networked drives with fixity checks (see Digital Archive Storage), and full preservation systems.

Digital Library: a library in which collections are stored in digital formats (as opposed to print, microform, or other media) and are accessible by computers. The digital content may be stored locally, or accessed remotely via computer networks. A digital library is a type of information retrieval system.

Digital Archive Storage: includes maintaining onsite and offsite backup copies, fixity-checking, and periodic refreshment by copying files to new storage media. The intent of this preservation level is to ensure that the integrity of the original file is assessed periodically so that later dissemination is possible and that the object is an authentic representation of the original.

Full Preservation: includes bit-level preservation of the originally submitted files, as well as services intended to ensure that the content of the files will remain usable into the indefinite future. These services vary according to the file type but may include the creation of normalized forms of the file and/or the reformating of obsolete formats to reasonably comparable successor formats. It is not guaranteed, however, that normalized or migrated versions of any file will be identical in functionality or in look and feel to the original file. Note also that if a complex or compound digital object (aka a logical object) is comprised of individual files in both supported and unsupported formats, there is no guarantee that the object will remain usable as intended by the creator. A judgment call on how to save some objects may be needed and absent any currently known ways of "normalizing," or access to digital preservation systems that are capable of doing so, preserving content will win over reformating choices of creators in most cases. The obvious exception is where artistic/graphic design elements are integral to the reason for keeping the object. In those cases, bit-level assessments may be all that is possible.

The concept of a digital preservation flowchart and the terminology used here originated in a draft document by Tawnya Keller and Lisa Chaufy, University of Utah, dated 9/20/2012 and available at http://campusguides.lib.utah.edu/ld.php?content_id=5929084. Keller attributes her idea to Chris Erickson at Brigham Young University. The author secured Keller's permission to re-use the original flowchart for DigitalPOWRR workshops on small scale digital preservation strategies.

The original flowchart was extensively revised by Meg Miner, Illinois Wesleyan University, in May 2015, for the purpose of illustrating the decisionmaking process used when accessioning content into the University's Archives and in determining storage locations and access points. Contact archives@iwu.edu with questions or comments.

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