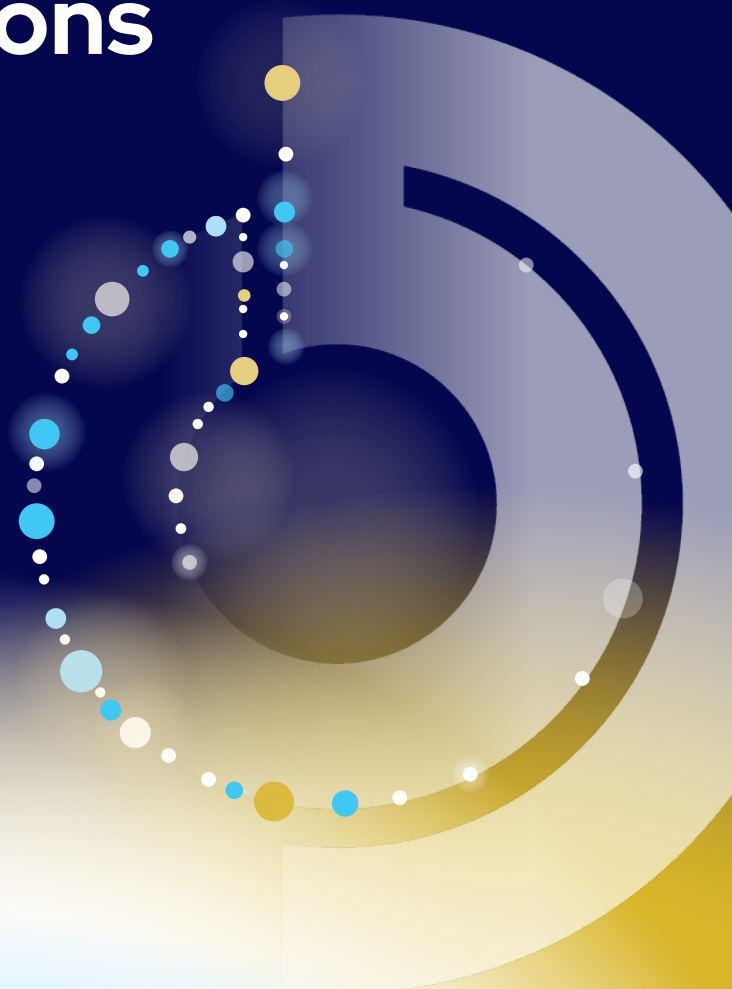




Building and Safeguarding Digital Collections

A Comprehensive Guide



Contents

Introduction	3
Tip #1: Create your digital collection according to an established policy	4
Tip #2: Describe your digital collection	6
Tip #3: Curate your digital collection	9
Tip #4: Make your collection available, usable, and accessible	11
Tip #5: Respect intellectual property rights	13
Tip #6: Establish goals and metrics to evaluate your digital collection	15
Tip #7: Ensure interoperability	17
Tip #8: Integrate workflows	19
Tip #9: Plan for long-term sustainability	21
Conclusion	23

Introduction

Every organization holds materials that tell its story. Documents, photographs, recordings, films. Some sit in carefully managed archives, but many more are in basements and lofts, on shelves, on legacy tapes, or in filing systems that no one has opened in years. They're assumed to be safe because nothing has gone wrong so far.

Unfortunately, history is full of examples of rich cultural and heritage collections lost to fire, flood, and conflict. In 2018, a fire at Brazil's National Museum destroyed 200 years of irreplaceable collections in a single night. At the Glasgow School of Art, a fire in 2014 destroyed irreplaceable works by Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Four years later, as restoration neared completion, a second fire gutted what remained. When the River Arno flooded Florence in 1966, millions of manuscripts, books, and artworks were damaged or destroyed. These are not edge cases but reminders that physical collections are always vulnerable, and that the time to protect them is before disaster strikes.

At the same time, the world around those collections is changing. Standards for how materials are managed, described, and made accessible are rising. AI and machine learning are creating new possibilities for what digital collections can do, but only if they are structured, well-described, and held in formats that modern systems can work with.

At Ovation Data, we've spent over 45 years helping organizations recover, digitize, structure, and preserve their most important collections. We've recovered satellite telemetry from NASA's 1969 Mars Mariner 7 mission, stored on 7-track tape, and digitized more than 25,000 pieces of irreplaceable media for a major league ball club. We've preserved the oral histories of World War II prisoners of war for the National Park Service in Andersonville USA, and handled fragile documents connected to Napoleon III at Camden Place in Chislehurst, UK. Most recently, we used AI to describe more than 40,000 previously unlabeled photographs for a heritage site in the United States as it prepared to celebrate a milestone anniversary.

What we've learned, working with more than 2,500 clients and 275 media formats, is that the organizations that get the most from their collections are the ones that approach them with intention. A clear policy, good metadata, sound curation practices, and a long-term plan are all essential.

This guide distills that experience into nine practical tips. Whether you're just beginning to think about building a digital collection, or you're looking to bring order to materials that have grown without a clear plan, these tips offer a guide for getting it right. They're grounded in established professional standards and shaped by what we see working in practice, every day, across heritage organizations, cultural institutions, corporate archives, and beyond.

Tip #1: Create your digital collection according to an established policy



Why Policy Matters

One of the most common patterns we see is organizations that start digitizing before they've decided what they're digitizing, why, or for whom. The enthusiasm is understandable. The material is fascinating, and the urge to "just get started" is strong. But without a clear policy, projects quickly lose focus, resources are spent on low-priority items, metadata is inconsistent, and it becomes difficult to explain to stakeholders what the collection is for or how it will be sustained.

Before bringing out the scanner, take time to consider digital collections at the organizational level. Create and document digitization and digital preservation policies that provide a clear framework for decision-making, resource allocation, and long-term planning.

Key Questions to Answer

Mission alignment: How will the digital collection support your organization's mission and strategic goals? Ensure that the collection aligns with core objectives such as improved access, expanded research, or greater engagement with partners, donors, and other stakeholders.

Scope: What are you committing to digitize, manage, and preserve? Define the types of materials and the time periods or themes they cover. Be realistic about what you can sustain. A well-managed collection of your most important materials is more valuable than an incomplete attempt to digitize everything.

Audience: Who are you doing this for? Identify your primary and secondary audiences. These might include researchers, students, the public, internal staff, alumni, and donors. Different audiences need different things from a collection, and understanding this early will shape decisions about access, metadata, and the platform you should use.

Steps to Develop a Policy



- 1. Form a committee:** Include representatives from different departments to encompass diverse perspectives. The people who will use the collection should have a voice in shaping it.
- 2. Research best practices:** Evaluate digitization and digital preservation policies from similar institutions. Resources such as the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) Toolkit and guidance from organizations such as the National Archives and Records Administration (US) and National Archives (UK) provide a solid starting point. And many state-level heritage data aggregators in the US also offer useful resources e.g. Recollection Wisconsin's Digital Readiness Toolkit.
- 3. Draft and review:** Prepare the policy and gather feedback from stakeholders. Don't aim for perfection on the first pass. A working policy that can be refined is far better than no policy at all.
- 4. Approve and implement:** Formalize the policy and integrate it into your operations. Make sure it's a living document that's reviewed and updated as your collection and organization evolve.

Without this solid foundation, digitization and digital preservation programs can become unwieldy and misaligned with your institutional goals.

Tip #2: Describe your digital collection



The Role of Metadata

If your digital collection is a library, metadata is the catalog. It's the information that describes what's in the collection, what each item is, where it came from, and how it can be used. Without it, users are left browsing through files with no way to search, filter, or understand what they're looking at. With it, a collection of thousands of items becomes navigable in seconds.

In practice, metadata is simply structured information about each item and the collection as a whole. Think of it as the equivalent of a label on a filing cabinet, a caption on a photograph, or the fields in a well-organized spreadsheet, things like title, date, creator, format, subject, and rights status. The difference is that in a digital collection, this information is stored in a way that makes it searchable and machine-readable.

Where Does Metadata Live?

That depends on your setup. In a digital asset management system, archival management system, or Ovation Showcase, metadata is stored in a database and displayed alongside each item, allowing users to search, browse, and filter without opening individual files. In simpler setups, it might live in a structured spreadsheet, or in the file properties embedded within each digital object (the information you see when you right-click a file and select "Properties" or "Get Info"). What matters most is that it exists, is consistent, and accessible to both people and systems.

What to Capture at the Collection Level

Collection-level metadata is considered essential to help users understand the scope of what you hold but also provides governance and intellectual control. Aim to provide:

Description: A clear title and detailed account of the collection's scope and extent, so users understand what they can expect to find.

Contact information: The name and contact details of the collection holding organization and those responsible for its ongoing stewardship, so users can make inquiries.

Provenance and custodial history: An account of how and when the collection came to the organization and any transfers of custody before it was acquired.

Rights, access and use: The collection's copyright status, rights holder details, any restrictions or access requirements and any licensing or reuse conditions. Make it clear if any of this information is incomplete or uncertain.

Transparency and user trust: Any relevant contextual notes for collections with personally identifiable information or culturally sensitive, offensive or traumatic content.

Technical details: A summary of the digital formats used and any preservation actions (file normalization, storage environments).

Data governance and management: The collection's persistent identifier (if using), version or update notes and details of any related collections/data sets.

What to Capture at the Item Level

Item-level metadata is what makes individual objects findable and interpretable and supports the long-term management and authenticity of the collection. For each item, aim to record:

- **Unique identifier:** Local identifier or persistent ID.
- **Title, item type and description:** Brief description of the item (photography, sound recording, document etc.) and what it documents.
- **Creator information:** Details about who created the original material.
- **Date information:** Dates of creation, digitization, and any significant updates.
- **Keywords and tags:** Use controlled vocabularies to enhance searchability. Consistent tagging is what allows users and AI systems to find what they need across large collections.
- **Rights and access:** Any item-level deviations from collection level status should be recorded explicitly.
- **Technical details:** File formats, resolution, and any preservation information relevant to the digital object.

The more consistent and complete your metadata, the more useful the collection will be, both for human users today and for AI systems that rely on well-structured descriptions to deliver results.

AI and Metadata: What's Now Possible

One of the biggest barriers to building good metadata has always been scale. Describing thousands of items individually is a task that many organizations simply don't have the resources to complete by hand. AI is changing that.

At one heritage site in the USA, Ovation Data used its private AI to label more than 40,000 previously undescribed digital photographs, making them instantly searchable through the Ovation Showcase platform. What would have taken a team of archivists months or years to complete was accomplished rapidly using a combination of AI and human oversight.

At the Andersonville National Historic Site, Ovation embedded searchable keywords directly into the digitized files of oral histories from World War II prisoners of war, so that researchers could find specific recordings without listening through the entire collection.

Whether metadata is created manually, generated by AI, or produced through a combination of both, the principle is the same - your collection is only as useful as the information that describes it. AI can help accelerate the process, but human judgement remains essential to review, refine, and ensure the metadata reflects the correct context. Investing in good metadata is one of the highest-value steps you can take.

Not sure where to start with metadata?

Ovation Data's specialists can help you develop a metadata strategy that aligns with your collection, resources, and goals.

Get in touch at digitalheritage@ovationdata.com

Tip #3: Curate your digital collection



Lifecycle Management

Creating a digital collection is exciting, but it's crucial to plan for its entire lifecycle. It will require ongoing management to remain relevant and useful, and the reality is that many organizations come to this process not with a blank slate, but with collections that have already grown without a clear plan.

When Ovation Data began working with a major league ball club, the club's history was locked in thousands of pieces of aging media across more than a dozen formats, with no inventory records and some materials stored in poor conditions. The 16mm film had deteriorated beyond recovery, but by working systematically, inspecting, cataloging, photographing, and indexing every label and media case before digitizing a single item, Ovation was able to bring order to more than 25,000 pieces of media, representing approximately 15,000 hours of video. The club's quality control checks did not reject a single digital object.

That project illustrates a principle that applies at every scale - curation starts with understanding what you have, then building a plan to manage it over time.

Lifecycle Considerations

Periodic reviews: Regularly evaluate the collection to ensure its contents remain relevant to your mission. Update or remove items that no longer fit.

Metadata updates: Correct and enrich metadata as needed to reflect new information or improved descriptions. As AI tools become more capable, revisiting older metadata to bring it up to current standards is increasingly practical.

Enrichment: Link to related materials, including new acquisitions, external resources, or thematic connections. A digital collection that connects to the wider landscape is more valuable than one that exists in isolation.

Storage and access: Plan for both current and future storage and access needs, considering data integrity, security, and accessibility.

Preservation: Schedule preservation actions to stay ahead of technical and file format obsolescence. Formats that are standard today may not be in ten years' time.

Steps for Effective Curation



- 1. Assess what you have:** Before making plans, take stock of your existing materials. What formats are they in? What condition are they in? What do you know about them, and what don't you know? At one client site, the archivist's initial assessment revealed that fragile Kodak slides, aging DVDs, and 8mm film reels from the 1980s were deteriorating or had become completely inaccessible. Knowing this shaped the entire digitization plan.
- 2. Create a plan and prioritize:** You don't have to do everything at once. A detailed plan describes specific solutions and technologies, but it should also set priorities. What is most at risk? What is most in demand? What will deliver the most value earliest? Start there and build momentum.
- 3. Distill your plan into procedures:** Develop and document procedures for creating new digital assets, updating and enriching metadata, and managing, storing, and preserving the collection. Consistent procedures are what allow a collection to grow without losing coherence.
- 4. Offer training and support:** Provide ongoing training for staff responsible for managing the collection. This is especially important when staff turnover can lead to the loss of institutional knowledge about the collection.
- 5. Gather feedback:** Seek user input to identify areas for improvement. People using the collection often spot gaps and opportunities that those managing it may miss.

Where to Start If You're Feeling Overwhelmed

If your organization is looking at a large, disorganized collection and wondering where to begin, you're not alone. Many of the organizations we work with start in exactly that position. The key is to resist the temptation to try to do everything at once. Start with what matters most - the materials that are most at risk, in demand, or central to your mission. A well-curated collection of your most important materials is always more valuable than a poorly managed attempt to digitize everything.

Need help getting started?

Whether you need an initial assessment of your collection, a digitization plan, or hands-on support with metadata, Ovation Data can help.

Contact us at digitalheritage@ovationdata.com

Tip #4: Make your collection available, usable, and accessible



Ensuring Accessibility

A digital collection only delivers value if people can find it and use it. That sounds obvious. Yet it's surprising how often organizations invest heavily in digitization and metadata only to deliver results through a platform that is difficult to navigate, slow to search, or inaccessible to some users.

User expectations have shifted. Researchers, staff, students, and the public now expect to search a collection the way they search the web and, increasingly, AI chat tools. They want to find what they want quickly, from any device, with results that are relevant and easy to browse. If your digital collection can't meet that expectation, it won't be used, no matter how valuable the materials it contains.

Best Practices

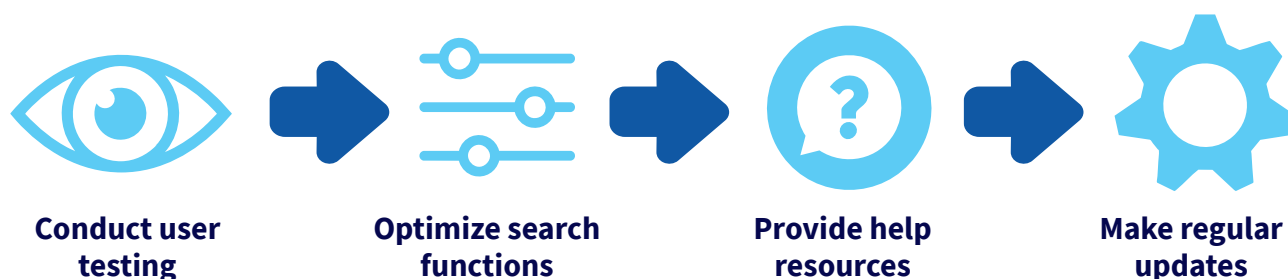
On-demand availability: Use technology or platforms that are familiar to your users. Ensure that the collection is available around the clock. For one client organization, Ovation's Showcase platform gave staff across multiple departments immediate access to digitized archives that had previously required hours of manual searching through physical materials in a basement.

Ease of use: Design the user interface to be intuitive and user-friendly. Use clear navigation, robust search, and useful help features. Users should be able to find what they need without training.

Accessibility: Ensure that the collection is accessible to people with disabilities, including those using screen readers and other assistive technologies. Follow guidelines such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). This is not only good practice but increasingly a legal requirement in many jurisdictions.

User feedback: Implement mechanisms, such as web forms or surveys, to collect feedback on issues and collect new feature requests. Regularly review and act on this feedback to improve the user experience.

Steps to Enhance Usability



1. **Conduct user testing:** Test the collection with a sample of real users to identify usability issues. People who are unfamiliar with the collection will find problems that those who built it will not.
2. **Optimize search functions:** Implement robust search capabilities, including advanced search options and filters. Full-text search, where available, dramatically increases the usefulness of a collection.
3. **Provide help resources:** Create tutorials, FAQs, user guides, and/or a chat feature to help users navigate the collection.
4. **Make regular updates:** Continuously improve the platform in response to user feedback and technological advances.

Accessible collections are more likely to be used and appreciated, fulfilling their intended purpose. A collection that no one can find or navigate is, in practical terms, no better than a collection that was never digitized at all.

Tip #5: Respect intellectual property rights



Legal Considerations

Understanding and respecting intellectual property rights is crucial for digital collections. Proper handling of copyrights ensures that your organization remains compliant with legal standards and respects the rights of creators.

In practice, rights management for heritage and archival collections is often complicated. Materials may have been created decades ago, by people who are no longer alive, for organizations that no longer exist. The rights status of a single item can be genuinely unclear and establishing it can be time-consuming. That complexity is not a reason to avoid the question. It is a reason to address it early and systematically, rather than discovering problems after your collection is already public.

Key Points

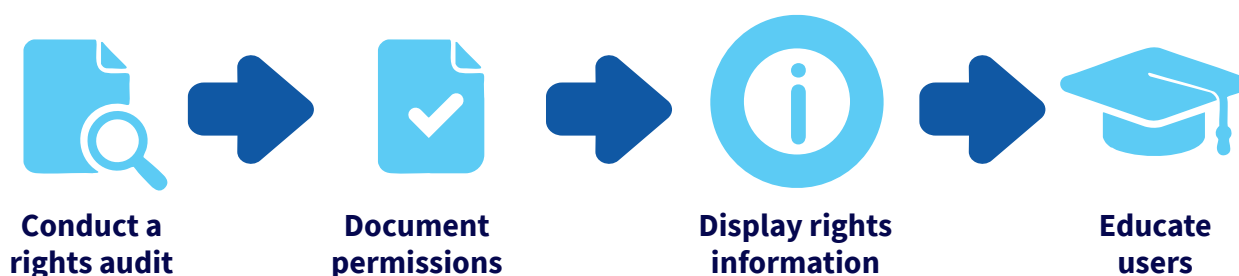
Source material rights: Understand the rights of original content owners. Obtain necessary permissions before digitizing materials. For older collections, this may require research into the provenance and ownership history of individual items.

Permissions: Confirm that you have the rights to digitize and share content. This may involve negotiating with rights holders or securing licenses. Where rights holders cannot be identified, document your due diligence process.

User rights: Define what users can do with the digital content. This includes specifying whether they can download, share, or modify the materials, and under what conditions.

Standardized statements: Use established vocabulary for rights statements for clarity and interoperability from sources such as RightsStatements.org or Creative Commons.

Steps to Manage Rights



1. **Conduct a rights audit:** Review the rights status of all materials you plan to digitize. This is best done early, before digitization begins, so that rights issues don't delay or derail a project already underway.
2. **Document permissions:** Keep detailed records of all permissions and licenses. These records should be maintained as part of your collection's metadata, so they are always available when needed.
3. **Display rights information:** Clearly display copyright and usage information alongside digital assets. Users should never have to guess whether they are allowed to use a particular item.
4. **Educate users:** Inform users about their rights and responsibilities regarding the use of digital materials.

Avoid legal complications by having a documented copyright policy and a platform that supports rights information at the asset level. Getting this right protects both your organization and the creators whose work you are preserving.

Tip #6: Establish goals and metrics to evaluate your digital collection



Measuring Success

Building and maintaining a digital collection takes sustained investment of time, money, and labor. One of the most common reasons that investment stalls or is cut is that organizations cannot clearly demonstrate the value the collection is delivering. Setting goals and metrics from the outset gives you the evidence you need to justify continued support and identify where improvements are needed.

The major league ball club project described in Tip #3 illustrates how quickly measurable outcomes can emerge from a well-run digitization program. Beyond the digitization itself, video access time dropped from hours to seconds and minutes, and multiple storage rooms were reclaimed as usable office space. These are the kinds of concrete results that make it straightforward to demonstrate return on investment to leadership.

Evaluation Metrics

Use and reach: Track metrics such as the number of users, total impressions, views of digital assets, downloads, reproduction requests, and shares. These numbers tell you whether people are finding and using the collection.

User experience: Monitor feature requests, support tickets, average session lengths, and user sentiment. These indicators tell you whether people are having a good experience once they arrive.

Institutional value: Track how the collection is being used internally. Is it supporting research, fundraising, communications, or education? These use cases are often the most compelling evidence of value, even if they are harder to quantify than web analytics.

Return on investment: For monetized collections, measure financial returns and cost-effectiveness. For non-monetized collections, consider the cost of not digitizing: the staff time spent on manual searches, the risks to unprotected materials, and the opportunities missed when collections are inaccessible.

Steps for Effective Evaluation



- 1. Define clear goals:** Establish what success looks like for your collection. Be specific. “More people using the collection” is a start, but “development office completing donor research in under ten minutes instead of two hours” is a goal you can measure and report on.
- 2. Collect data:** Use analytics tools, web forms, personal interviews, and other sources to gather relevant information. Build data collection into your processes from the start rather than trying to retrofit it later.
- 3. Analyze results:** Regularly review the data to identify trends and areas for improvement.
- 4. Adjust strategies:** Use evaluation results to refine your collection development and management practices. Share your findings with stakeholders to maintain their support.

Regular evaluation ensures that your digital collection continues to meet the needs of your users and supports your organizational goals. It also gives you the evidence you need to make the case for sustained investment.

Tip #7: Ensure interoperability



Making Your Collection Work With Other Systems

Interoperability simply means making sure your collection works with other systems. Can your materials be exported in formats that other platforms can read? Can your metadata be understood by other collections and search engines? Can you move your collection to a new platform without starting from scratch? If the answer to any of these is no, your collection is more isolated and more fragile than it should be.

This matters because digital collections do not exist in isolation. Researchers want to search across collections held by different institutions. Funders and partners increasingly expect collections to meet recognized standards, and the tools people use to access and work with collections, including AI, work best when materials are held in open, widely adopted formats.

Interoperability Practices

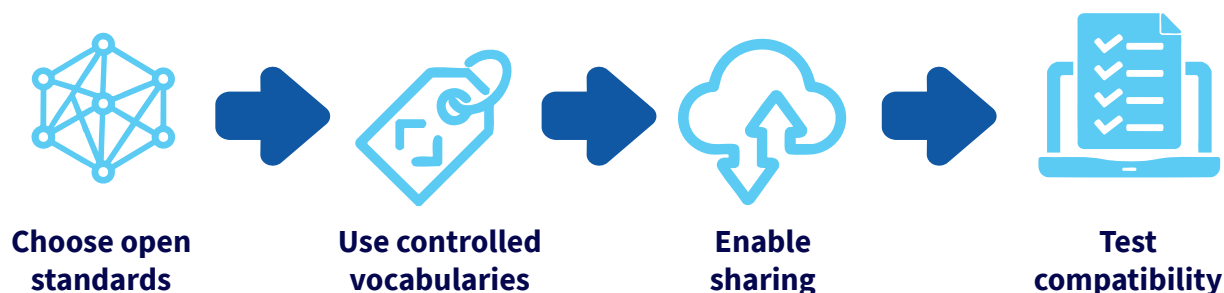
Universal formats: Ensure that your collection can be accessed programmatically or exported into widely adopted file formats. Avoid locking your materials into proprietary systems from which they cannot easily be extracted.

Standardized metadata: Use established and widely adopted metadata schemas, and draw on recognized controlled vocabularies where appropriate. This is what allows your collection to be discovered and used alongside collections from other institutions.

AI-readiness: AI and machine learning tools work best with well-structured, consistently described, standards-compliant collections. Building with interoperability in mind positions your collection for emerging technologies, not just today's platforms.

Search engine visibility: Confirm that external search engines can find and index your digital collection. A collection that can only be found through your own website is invisible to the wider world.

Steps to Enhance Interoperability



- 1. Choose open standards:** Adopt widely accepted standards for file formats and metadata. Open standards give you flexibility and protect you from vendor lock-in.
- 2. Use controlled vocabularies:** Implement recognized vocabularies to ensure consistency across your collection and compatibility with others.
- 3. Enable sharing:** Ensure your collection's metadata can be easily shared with and harvested by other systems.
- 4. Test compatibility:** Regularly test your collection's compatibility with other platforms and technologies. Don't wait for a migration to discover that your data doesn't move cleanly.

Interoperability enhances the potential uses and reach of your collection, ensuring it can be shared, discovered, and integrated with other systems both now and as technology evolves.

Dealing with data interoperability and readiness challenges?

Ovation Data has over four decades of experience in recovering, migrating, and structuring data from more than 275 media formats . We can help you move from obsolete formats to sustainable, standards-compliant, AI-ready resources.

Contact us at digitalheritage@ovationdata.com

Tip #8: Integrate workflows



Design for How People Work

The most important question to ask before digitizing anything is what will people actually do with this collection once it exists? The answer should shape every decision that follows, from file formats and metadata fields to platform choice and access controls.

Too often, digitization projects are designed around the materials rather than the people who will use them. The result is a collection that is technically well-produced but practically difficult to work with. For example, files in formats that users can't open easily, metadata that doesn't match the way people actually search, or access arrangements that create friction rather than removing it.

In a recent Ovation Data heritage project, the digitization plan was shaped from the outset by the needs of the people who would use the collection. The development office needed to research donors' relationships with the organization. Another team needed to find historical events for anniversary projects and staff across the organization needed quick, searchable access to records that had previously been locked in a basement. These needs determined what was digitized first, how it was described, and how it was delivered through Ovation's Showcase platform. The result was a collection that people across the institution immediately started using, because it was built for the work they needed to do.

Workflow Considerations

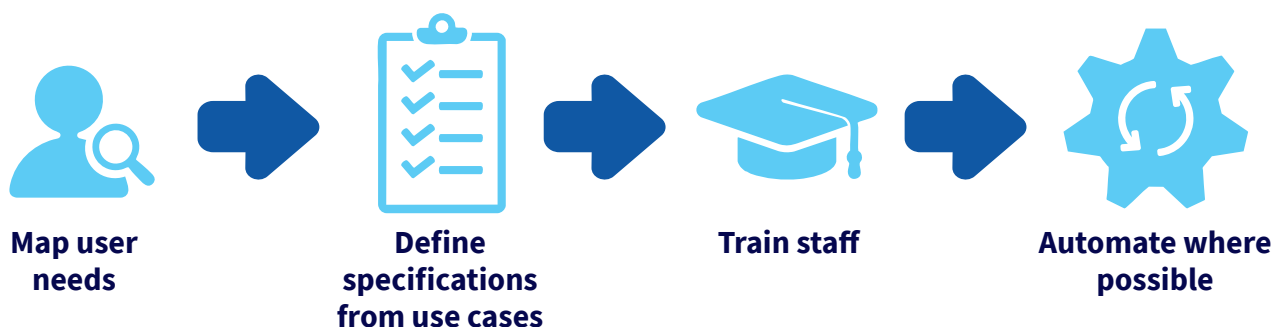
Understand your users: Before digitization begins, identify who will use the collection and what they will use it for. Researchers, communications staff, educators, fundraisers, and the general public all have different needs. A collection designed for one group may not serve another well.

Let use cases drive specifications: The intended use of a collection should determine technical decisions. At the Andersonville National Historic Site, the National Park Service specified the prioritization, file naming conventions, and final file formats before digitization of the oral history tapes began, because they knew exactly how the files would need to work in park exhibits and for researchers.

Build collection tasks into staff routines: Ongoing tasks such as adding new materials, updating metadata, and responding to user requests should be part of regular staff workflows, not treated as occasional extras. If these tasks are not built into someone's role, they will fall behind.

Review and refine: Periodically review how the collection is being used and whether workflows are keeping pace. Staff closest to the work are likely to have the most constructive insight and ideas for improvement.

Steps for Integration



1. **Map user needs:** Talk to the people who will use the collection. What do they need to find? How do they need to search? What formats do they need files in? What would save them the most time?
2. **Define specifications from use cases:** Translate user needs into technical specifications for digitization, metadata, and delivery. Agree on these before work begins.
3. **Train staff:** Provide training to help staff work effectively with the collection and with any new tools or platforms.
4. **Automate where possible:** Use technology to automate repetitive tasks such as file naming and format conversion. AI tools are making this increasingly practical, even for smaller organizations.

A digital collection built around user needs is one that gets used. One built without that focus risks becoming an expensive archive that no one can navigate.

Planning a digitization project?

Ovation Data works with you to design every stage around the needs of the people who will use the collection, from specifications through to delivery and ongoing management.

Contact us at digitalheritage@ovationdata.com

Tip #9: Plan for long-term sustainability



Sustaining Your Collection

Long-term sustainability means ensuring that your digital collection remains accessible, usable, and secure for future generations. It also means protecting the original physical materials, where they exist, because digital surrogates are not a reason to neglect the originals.

At Camden Place in Chislehurst, UK, the final home of Napoleon III, Ovation Data digitized a fragile archive of documents in various formats and conditions, some dating from the early 1600s. For their protection during processing, the original materials were kept in environmentally controlled archival storage at Ovation's offices. The digitized versions made it possible to begin sharing the Camden Place collection globally for the first time. Angela Hatton of the House and Heritage Committee described the outcome: "Ovation provided us with ideas and information to help ensure that we have an archive of images that can be used for multiple purposes over many years. We plan to create a searchable archive for specialists, teaching materials for educators, and virtual events and exhibitions for the public."

That combination of physical preservation and digital access is at the heart of long-term sustainability. The digital collection extends reach and usability. The careful stewardship of originals ensures that irreplaceable materials survive.

Sustainability Factors

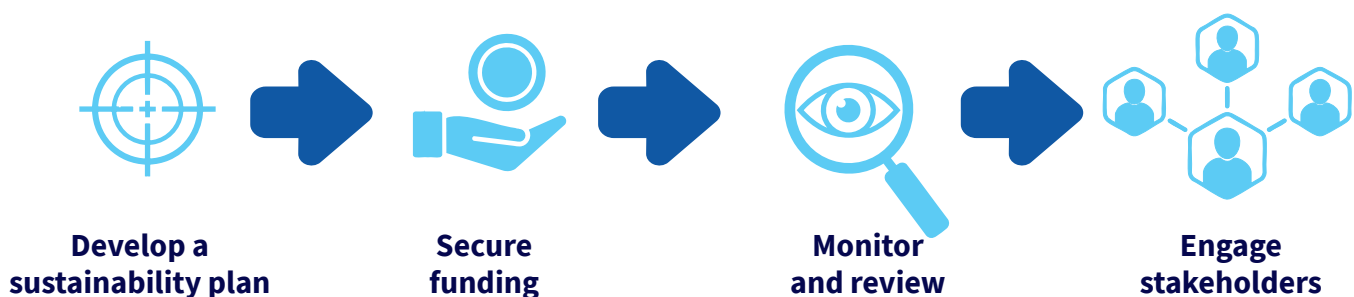
Organizational support: Strong leadership, understanding, and long-term commitment to digital preservation are essential. This includes provisions for ongoing funding and resources, not just startup costs.

Financial planning: Plan for ongoing costs such as storage, maintenance, and staffing. Develop a funding strategy that includes grants, donations, and institutional support. The cost of maintaining a digital collection is real, but it is almost always smaller than the cost of losing an irreplaceable one.

Physical preservation: Where original materials exist, ensure they are stored in appropriate conditions. Digitization protects access to the content, but the originals may have research, evidential, or cultural value that a digital copy cannot fully replicate.

Technical maintenance: Regularly update and maintain the collection to ensure usability over time. This includes migrating materials to new formats and platforms as technology evolves, and monitoring the integrity of stored files.

Steps for Long-Term Sustainability



1. **Develop a sustainability plan:** Create a detailed plan that describes how you will maintain and preserve the digital collection over time. This should cover both the digital assets and, where applicable, the original physical materials.
2. **Secure funding:** Identify and pursue funding opportunities to meet ongoing costs. Present the evidence gathered through your evaluation metrics (see Tip #6) to make the case for sustained investment.
3. **Monitor and review:** Regularly assess the collection's condition, both digital and physical, and update the sustainability plan as needed.
4. **Engage stakeholders:** Involve stakeholders in the planning process to build broad support and understanding. The more people who understand the value of the collection, the more resilient it will be under budgetary pressure.

Thinking about the long-term future of your collection?

Ovation Data can help you develop a preservation plan, whether you have digital assets or are starting from scratch with original physical materials.

Contact us at digitalheritage@ovationdata.com

Conclusion

Building and safeguarding a digital collection is not a one-and-done project; it is an ongoing commitment to protecting materials that cannot be replaced, and making them accessible and useful to the people and communities that need them.

Whatever the size or nature of your collection, the principles are the same - start with a clear policy, invest in good metadata, curate with intention, design for how people will actually use the collection, and plan for the long term. No organization gets all of this right on day one; what matters is to make a start.

Whether you are just beginning to explore digitization or looking to bring structure to an existing collection, Ovation Data is here to help. We work with organizations at every stage, from initial assessment and planning through to long-term preservation. Every project begins with a conversation about what you have, what you need, and what's possible.

Adapted from: National Information Standards Organization (NISO). (2007).
A Framework of Guidance for Building Good Digital Collections (3rd ed.).

Start a conversation

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