BUILDING A CANADIAN
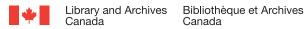## NATIONAL HERITAGE
DIGITIZATION STRATEGY

This report was designed by
Library and Archives Canada

CONTEXT

Documentary heritage is a cornerstone of all democratic societies and is an essential resource for supporting economic, social, legal and cultural domains, as well as fostering innovation.

Leveraging digital technologies makes it possible for memory institutions to provide immediate access to their holdings to an almost limitless audience.

All over the world, these institutions recognize the critical importance of making their collections available online, and they are developing strategies for digitizing their analog collections, through collaboration with one another, as well as with the non-profit and private sectors.

In the Netherlands, the Koniklijke Bibliotheek Strategic Plan for 2015-2018, entitled *The Power of Our Network*, states that this national institution will digitize 90% of all books published in the Netherlands, as well as the 'most relevant' magazines and newspapers from before 1940, in cooperation with public and private partners.

In Sweden, Digisam, a coordination secretariat for cultural heritage, has been established to assist national heritage institutions in the development of digitization strategies. Within this structure, digitization, digital preservation and digital access are balanced. While the focus is on public institutions and authorities, it is hopeed that the guidance and assistance provided will assist other institutions with their work. The country's National Digitization Strategy is the impetus for this work.

In New Zealand, digitization of cultural heritage is a central part of New Zealand's Digital Content Strategy. In order to make digital content more accessible, Digital New Zealand (Digital NZ) was created within the New Zealand National Library. DigitalNZ serves as a central hub for content about the country, as well as providing advice and guidance on digitization. Contributors include Archives New Zealand, the Auckland University of Technology, data.govt.nz, the Digital Public Library of America, Hathitrust, Internet Archive, and Wikipedia.

[A] national digitization program, in coordination with memory institutions across the country, must be planned and funded to bring Canada's cultural and scientific heritage into the digital era to ensure that we continue to understand the past and document the present as guides to future action.

Supported by UNESCO, and conducted in cooperation with libraries, archives, museums, educational institutions, and international organizations from around the world, the World Digital Library (WDL) is part of the Library of Congress, which serves as the organization's project manager. The WDL strives to make international digital documentary heritage available. In order to assist organizations that have limited digitization capability, the Library of Congress provides its partners with the equipment, software, training, and financial means necessary for digitization. Financial contributors include the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Qatar National Library/Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development, Google, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, Saudi Arabia, and Microsoft.

These projects demonstrate an international willingness and readiness to act. In our own country, however, the Council of Canadian Academies recently stated that in the digital world "Canada is falling behind". In addition, the Royal Society of Canada, in its November 2014, report on libraries and archives, stated that:

Other Canadian organizations, such as the Canadian Council of Archives, are focussed on the role of archives in the digital world. This is especially the case in their Consultation Strategy for 2015.

Recognizing the recommendations of the Royal Society of Canada, the statement of the Council of Canadian Academies, and the consultations of the Canadian Council of Archives, the National Heritage Digitization Strategy will draw on international best practices, including Europeana and the Digital Public Library of America, as well as past national initiatives (such as the Canada Project). The Strategy will reposition Canada and provide a cohesive way forward for the digitization of the collections of Canadian memory institutions, to ensure they remain relevant in the digital age by making their collections easily accessible. It will assist in the acceleration of digitization, and assure the long-term viability of digitized documentary heritage by encouraging quality, standards-based efforts. It will complement those strategies developed by Canadian memory institutions and assist them in fulfilling their goals, while ensuring that a national plan of action is in place.

SCOPE

The Canadian National Heritage Digitization Strategy will cover published and unpublished analogue materials of national, regional and local significance: books, periodicals, newspapers, government records (mandatory for federal records, voluntary for other levels of government), posters, rare books, theses, artefacts, photographs, documentary art, film and video, audio recordings, maps, etc.

In order to achieve this coverage, the Strategy will draw upon the analogue collections of public and private archives, libraries, museums/galleries, associations, non-profit organizations, corporations, and other memory institutions.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the strategy are to:

- focus the efforts of memory institutions in the area of digitization for discovery, access, and preservation;
- identify standards and methods that can be used by memory institutions, large and small, and that are based on best practices;
- share knowledge and experience among partners;
- protect 'at risk' material;
- marry the benefits of digital publishing with last copy approaches;
- avoid duplication of effort and investment; and
- increase knowledge of existing funding opportunities and develop new opportunities.

The digitization of documentary heritage will assist with the sharing, expression, and appreciation of Canadian identity, while ensuring that Canadian content is accessible at home and abroad. This work will also foster the re-purposing of cultural material to stimulate innovation and contribute to the nation's economic, social and cultural development.

FOCUS

Under this strategy, the following are potential digitization projects that could be realized over the next ten years, through appropriate partnership arrangements.

In line with the projects developed by other organizations, the following goals could be achievable over the next ten years. All projects developed will prioritize last copy and at risk material:

- **90% of all published heritage before 1917 and 50% of all monographs published before 1940;**
  - Focusing on published heritage leverages the roles of generations of editors and cataloguers. It allows for efficient collection management practices such as last copy approaches. Most works published over a century ago are in the public domain; this allows their dissemination through union catalogues or simple web portals. A broad and collective approach to works published prior to 1953 would also help secure the social objectives of legal deposit before it was created in Canada. These objectives also build on past investments made by the library community through Canadiana and its parent institutions.

- **All scientific journals published by and theses accepted by Canadian universities before 2000;**
  - Preservation and access to collections of scientific publications and scholarly journals is broadly distributed in Canada. This objective would consolidate them and respond to growing demand as the knowledge-based economy expands.

- **All microfilm from memory institutions;**
  - Microfilm and microfiche digitization maximizes digital output and minimizes costs by leveraging access and preservation investments made over the past 60 years. This will also free up dedicated reading room space, shift printing costs, and reduce consultation equipment.

- **Selected audio and audio-visual recordings;**
  - A significant portion of our audio and audio-visual recordings are on obsolete analog carriers. Digitizing the most significant ones will reduce the amount of material at risk.
  - Aboriginal oral histories recorded on analog audio carriers are particularly at risk of disappearing.

- **Selected archival fonds and finding aids;**
  - Digitization of high-interest archival fonds that are split between various institutions, as well as finding aids, will help plan and/or reduce travel expenses for researchers.

- **All historical maps;**
  - Historical maps are among the most fragile, precious and significant holdings. Digitizing them is as much a preservation measure as an access one.

- **All archival material of genealogical interest.**
  - Genealogical resources are the most popular holdings and, therefore, the most likely to interest a private partner.

GOVERNANCE

In their September 2013 final report *Preserving Canada's Memory: Developing a strategic approach to digital preservation*, Canada's Public Policy Forum stated:

Converting oral and written history into digital media, as well as determining which technologies to use, and how best to connect with citizens, are common issues that governments, businesses and the voluntary sector face every day. By working in collaboration, stakeholders from different sectors could leverage skills and best practices to meet their objectives.

Following the recommendations of the Public Policy Forum, a cross-institutional National Steering Committee will be created in Canada to develop digitization initiatives. Members of this Committee will include creators, writers, cultural communities, end users, as well as representatives from libraries, archives, historical societies, museums/ galleries, universities, and the private and not-for-profit sectors.

As an independent body, this Committee will set direction, organize projects and develop funding models for various initiatives. The group will function along the lines of a 'board of directors,'with each participant having equal opportunities to propose solutions and projects. A Chair will be appointed by the Board; however, this individual will not have extra weight in decision-making. In addition, while one organization may participate at certain points more than others, all participants are to have an equal voice and their goals respected.

Based on the Digisam and DigitalNZ models, Library and Archives Canada (LAC) will establish a secretariat to:

1. develop an inventory of existing digitization projects and systems to identify gaps;
2. develop, share, and determine future requirements in the area of standards;
3. collect and share best practices for infrastructure to ensure sustainability of repositories;
4. create a collaborative portal ensuring access;
5. develop tools to help organizations identify documents of national, regional and/or local significance;
6. create a list of suppliers and costs for digitization work;
7. raise awareness of funding opportunities; and
8. support the work of the National Steering Committee.

FUNDING

In keeping with this strategy and in order to maximize cooperative efforts, various sources of funding will be explored, including:

1. pooling of in-kind and/or financial resources from different memory institutions;

2. government funding;

3. philanthropic organizations;

4. collaboration with the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors; and

5. crowdfunding.

CONCLUSION

This document is meant to be a unifying framework for multi-institutional digitization projects related to Canadian documentary heritage for the next ten years. The strategy will be regularly assessed and adjusted, as required. In this manner, digitization projects which reflect the Canadian experience will be developed in order to support access, discovery and preservation.