



Digital Collections Stewardship Discussion Guide

Facilitating learning group discussions for the DCS course series

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The Digital Collections Discussion Guide

This discussion guide is intended for anyone leading learning group discussions for any of the DCS courses. It provides discussion questions, activities and tips for creating valuable and engaging discussions based on the DCS courses and the activities of the workbook and is intended to be used as a companion to the DCS Workbook and WebJunction's Learning Group Facilitation Guide.

Learning Group Facilitation Guide: For any person interested in organizing and facilitating a learning group for these or any other self-paced courses. It covers the basics of organizing, structuring and leading a group of learners through a self-paced course on any topic. It also provides advice on how to maximize learning in a group, keep participants motivated and on track, foster the sharing of ideas and resources in an inclusive environment, and boost each other's confidence in applying their learning.

DCS Workbook: For all Digital Collection Stewardship learners and contains the activities for all 7 DSC courses. In it, the individual learner captures their intentions, plans and priorities for implementing digital collections at their institution. It is also intended to serve as an action plan for your overall digital collection stewardship work

General Tips for DCS Course Discussions

In most cases, you will want to have all learning group participants enroll in and complete a course, including all course activities using the **DCS Workbook**, before the group meets to discuss the course. Each participant should bring their completed workbook activities to the discussion.

Most discussions can be completed in an hour; however, a few of the courses are longer, and for those you might decide to break up the discussion into multiple sessions. Those longer discussions are noted in this guide. The size and makeup of your group may also result in longer or shorter discussions. Expect to adjust the frequency and length of discussion sessions to meet the needs of your group.

Digital Collections Stewardship 1: Introduction

Overview

This first course in the series defines digital collections and introduces the digital stewardship lifecycle, a model that describes all the tasks and activities related to creating, organizing, managing, preserving, and sharing digital collections. This course also begins an exploration of how you might shape your own digital stewardship work to meet your community needs and institutional goals.

Learning Objectives

After successfully completing this course, a learner will be able to do the following things. Refer to these as the overall goals of your group discussions:

- Identify examples of digital collections
- Describe what digital collections are, what they can include and the purposes they can serve
- Understand the range of physical objects that you can digitize, and the born digital objects that you might incorporate into a digital collection
- Describe digital stewardship, and each stage of the digital stewardship lifecycle
- Be able to begin to adapt the digital stewardship lifecycle to fit your institution and community

Discussion 1: Digital collections

In Activity 1 of the Workbook, learners are asked to watch and respond to **Digital Collections Examples**, the digital collection examples from practitioners at six small institutions, and then record their current ideas for the kinds of digital collections they would like to create.

Suggested questions for your learning group discussion:

1. Which of the examples did you choose to focus on and what did you like about that collection? What elements of that collection would you want to include in your own digital collection?
2. Describe your initial ideas for new digital collections. If you will work on existing collections, describe those. Try to describe the themes they include and the kinds of stories and histories you would like them to tell. What kinds of items might go into them? *(It's OK if you're unsure, we'll revisit this question in the next course!)*

Discussion 2: Focusing on your community

Activity 2 asked you to reflect on your community and institutional values, and culture.

Suggested questions for your learning group discussion:

1. Were you able to identify any cultures, groups, and languages that are represented in your community, but left out of or not served by your collections?
2. Which groups have a voice in your library decision-making? Who is currently consulted? Who is left out of these conversations?
3. Did this reflection lead you to try to make changes? If so, how might you go about getting?

Discussion 3: Digital Stewardship Lifecycle customization brainstorm

Consider having the group hold off on doing **Activity 3** in the Workbook so that you can do it as a group activity.

Suggestions for organizing the brainstorm:

- Use a white or black board, large sheets of paper, or whatever you have to write down ideas quickly as they come up
- Break into pairs or small groups to brainstorm ideas for your Lifecycle customization, then report back and discuss
- Or a full group brainstorm with one person recording, and then reviewing afterward.
- If people are stuck, remind them that their customization may be simply reorganizing or selectively editing the lifecycle for their situation. Or they might use elements of narrative and metaphor to use when communicate meaning and importance of digital collections to stakeholders.

The Workbook activity:

Brainstorm some ways that you might customize your Digital Stewardship Lifecycle and your digital collections work to better serve your community and institutional needs. Record all your ideas below.

Digital Collections Stewardship 2: Preparing

Discussion 1: Group brainstorm: Digital stewardship goals

If your group members are all from the same institution or library system, you can run the brainstorm with the learning group as written.

For other groups, have members first do the brainstorm at their institution to arrive at their answers, and bring those to the learning group. Share and discuss the answers they each arrived at. How and why do they differ? What are the commonalities?

The Workbook activity:

First, write as many ideas as you can for each question on a large surface like a whiteboard or large sheet of paper.

Next, narrow down your responses for each question to the few ideas that seem most important. Write those down below. You'll use these answers when creating your Digital Stewardship Purpose Statement later in this course.

1. Why do you want to create and share digital collections with your community?
2. What existing opportunities for collections do you have? How might these opportunities serve and support your community?
3. What are some challenges you might face? Who might you talk to or collaborate with to come up with ways to respond to these challenges?

Discussion 2: Digital stewardship purpose statement

Activity 2 asks you to begin drafting your digital stewardship purpose statement, by combining existing organizational mission and goals statements, community needs and values, and results from the **digital stewardship goals** activity.

Suggested questions for your learning group discussion

- What were some of the relevant organizational statements, policies or goals that you cited? Did you have any difficulty finding relevant documentation? If so, what might you do to answer the questions raised?
- How confident are you that you are able to identify your community's relevant needs and values? How do you know these things? What might you do to discover these, or validate your answers?

Group activity

- Each member will share their draft **Digital Stewardship Purpose Statement**. This may be done in different ways, such as:
 - Each person writes down their statement or brings a written copy. Put these on a wall, whiteboard, or just on tables around the room so that members can each read and respond to each other's statement. Encourage members to write comments and reactions but remind them they are not editing the statement.
 - Alternately, have each member read their draft statement aloud. Either allow brief initial reactions to each or save comments for after.
- Once the statements have been shared, discuss differences and similarities.
 - Did others include statements, needs or ideas that you hadn't thought of?
 - Did any of the statements make you think about revising your own? If so, how?
 - How are you feeling about the state of your draft purpose statement (understanding that these are drafts that should and will change as you progress)?

Discussion 3: Digital stewardship policies

In **Activity 3**, you are asked to review your institution's existing policies for anything specific to digital collections.

Suggested questions for your learning group discussion

- Did you find existing policies that appear to apply well to digital collections as they are? Which ones?
- Did you find existing policies that need updating? Which ones and what kinds of updates do they need?
- What was missing from the list of provided topics? How will you address the gaps? Will you create new policies, or do you think you don't need policies for these topics? How do you make those decisions?

Discussion 4: Guiding questions to set up your project

This activity asked you to describe a digital collection project you will create.

Suggested questions for your learning group discussion

- What is your project?
- Who will be involved?
- How will you complete the work?
- When will you do it, and how long do you think it will take?

Ask each participant to answer these questions, then allow questions and comments before moving on to the next.

Digital Collections Stewardship 3: Gathering

Discussion 1: What to include

In **Activity 1**, you recorded initial thoughts on four aspects of the items you will include in the collection you are planning.

Suggested questions for your learning group discussion

1. Subject
 - a. How do you define the overall subject of your collection?
 - b. Do you have specific subject limits now, or is it still evolving?
2. Cultural, ethical, or legal issues
 - a. How are you planning to deal with any cultural, ethical, or legal issues that come up, such as verifying the right to display and share?
3. Physical items
 - a. Will you accept physical items? If so have you defined any limits to what you will accept?
4. Condition
 - a. Have you defined minimum quality standards for digital items, or condition standards for physical items to be digitized?

Discussion 2: How to gather items

This activity asked you to consider how you will go about acquiring items for your digital collection and provided three categories to consider.

1. Community donations
2. External partnerships
3. Creating new content

Suggested questions for each of these categories:

- Discuss whether it is a method you might use? Why, or why not?
- If yes, what are advantages that you can foresee?
- Do you anticipate any drawbacks?

Discussion 3: Document the “what” and the “how”

In **Activity 3**, you connected your thoughts from the first two activities on what and how you'll gather items with the policies from **Course 2: Activity 3**, and/or with the appropriate procedures, forms, and collection-level documentation for each.

Suggested questions for each documentation level:

- **Policies**
Which “what” or “how” collecting guidelines do you think should be documented at the policy level?
- **Procedures**
Which activities represent ongoing procedures that should be documented, but not in a policy. How will you document these?
- **Forms**
Will any of these activities require forms? Will you need to update or create forms? Where might you find examples to borrow from?
- **Collection documentation**
Did you identify any guidelines specific to your proposed collection? Should any be documented for any digital collection you develop?

Digital Collections Stewardship 4: Digitizing

Discussion 1: Digitization process, equipment, and standards

In **Activity 1**, you recorded your initial understanding of the digitization processes for up to 5 different types of items for your collection – photographs and documents, three-dimensional objects, audio recordings, analog video, and motion picture film.

Ask the group which item types they will digitize. Depending on the variety of responses, you might discuss the most common types with the whole group, break up the group. Or, if most choose the same type, it might be helpful to discuss specifics of sub-types.

Suggested discussions questions for each item type

1. Which specific sub-types will you digitize? Do these sub-types require different processes, equipment, software or formats?
2. What processes will you use? Are you still deciding? If so, what do you need to know or do to make that decision?
3. What potential equipment needs have you identified? Do you have access to the equipment, or plans for how to obtain it?
4. What potential software needs have you identified? Do you have access to the software, or plans for how to obtain it?
5. Do you understand which file formats you will use for your digital surrogate files? What more do you need to learn?

Discussion 2: Strategies for digitizing

In Activity 2, you considered three digitization strategies. In your group, discuss these three, which one(s) you are planning to use, and which you need additional information about. Ask group members to share any experience they have with these.

1. In-house digitization
2. Sharing digitization work with a partner organization or institution
3. Hiring a digitization vendor

Discussion 3: Digitization Documentation

Discuss which, if any, of these forms of documentation make sense for your institution, and why you will or will not use them.

Which already exist, and which do you need to create. Are group members able to share any examples?

1. Digitization policy
2. Digitization guidelines and procedures
3. Digitization project plan
4. Digitization workflows

Digital Collections Stewardship 5: Enhancing

Discussion 1: Folder structure and file naming

Review the folder structure and file naming conventions you each identified in Activity 1, for the digital collection project you identified in **Activity #4 of Course 2: Preparing**.

Discuss the decisions about folder structure and file-naming that group members have decided on or are considering:

1. Folder Structure:
 - a. Have you defined a folder structure scheme for this collection?
 - b. Do you know if it reflects your institutional and workflow needs?

2. File-naming:
 - a. Do you have a pre-existing file-naming scheme in place?
 - b. If so, does your digital collection naming need to mirror or extend a paper-based environment? And do you know if it will meet your file management needs for this collection?
 - c. What information is most important to capture in your file names?

Discussion 2: Review description and metadata

In Activity 2, you assessed any existing descriptions of items and collections for completeness, source, accuracy, reliability, and possible bias. Discuss what you each have found, what remediation might be needed, and what ideas you might have for improving them.

Sources

- Did you find that descriptions came from the community or culture that created them?
- How accurate, reliable, and up to date did you find the information to be?
- Were you able to identify any important biases of the description sources?

Existing descriptions that may need revision, additional information or perspectives added.

- If you found descriptions needing revision, how many were there, and how much work will it be to correct them?
- Have you identified groups or communities that might have a connection to the collections/items you are describing?
- Do you know how you can contact, or learn more about the communities or groups associated with this collection and build relationships with them?
- Have you done, or are you planning outreach to connect them to the collection and support the sharing of stories and context?
- What resources have helped guide this work? What kinds of resources do you need?

Review the completeness of your metadata:

- What metadata standards, content guidelines, or classification schemes are you using?
- How complete is your existing descriptive information compared with either the fields of your chosen metadata standard, or with **Dublin Core Metadata Elements**.
- What is your plan for filling any gaps?

Digital Collections Stewardship 6: Saving

Discussion 1: File storage planning

In Activity 1, you recorded responses to questions about your storage technology, maintenance and responsibility.

In your discussion, it is likely that you won't yet be able to completely discuss all of these. If that's the case, you can begin by identifying which group members have the most outstanding questions about and focus on those.

1. What are your two types of storage media?
2. Have you identified who is responsible for selection, setup, and maintenance of storage media and technology?
3. Have you identified who is responsible for maintaining duplicate storage of files in multiple locations?
4. Do you have a schedule and assigned responsibility for duplicating new files?
5. Do you know where will funding for storage media and technology will come from?
6. Do you have a plan for version tracking and backups?
7. What will happen if a disaster strikes? Who is responsible for damage assessment, and how will your files be recovered?

Discussion 2: File integrity planning

In **Activity 2**, you recorded responses to questions about your plans for file integrity work. It is likely that you won't yet be able to answer all the questions. If you don't know an answer, consider how you will find it.

Suggested discussion questions:

1. Who will be responsible for the overall integrity of your digital files?
2. Technical support: Who is responsible for setting up, managing, and implementing file integrity technology/systems?
 - a. Have you created a plans for fixity verification, security, authenticity checking and virus checks?
 - b. Have you identified who will perform these tasks?
 - c. Are there any specific concerns around any of these at this time?
 - d. Have you planned for a source of funding for any software or hardware needed?
3. Disaster planning: What will happen to file integrity after a disaster event?

Discussion 3: File access planning

Activity 3 pairs with the previous activity in recording responses to detailed planning questions, in this case about archival digital file access practices. Depending on your session time and group size, you may wish to either combine these two discussions into one or leave them separate. This decision may rest on how confident participants are in their planning, and how many open questions they still have. Consider taking an informal poll ahead of time to gauge the level of discussion you might expect.

Suggested discussion questions:

1. Who will be responsible for handling access concerns for your digital files?
2. Technical support: Who is responsible for setting up, managing, and implementing file access tools or processes?
3. Have you created a plan for collecting preservation metadata?
 - a. Have you identified who will perform these tasks?
4. Have you decided on the file types you will use for the different formats and versions of digital files?
5. Have you created a migration plan for replacing storage media, and updating file types as existing ones become obsolete?
6. Have you planned for a source of funding to obtain any tools needed to support your digital preservation activities?

Digital Collections Stewardship Workbook 7: Sharing

Discussion 1: Review your goals and collections

In Activity 1, you were asked some basic questions that will impact how you share your digital collection(s). In this discussion, review participant answers and discuss what they might mean for sharing decisions.

1. *Why are you sharing your digital collection(s)?*
 - a. How much variety is there in individual answers?
 - b. How does this answer drive your decision-making?

2. *Who are the primary and secondary audiences for your collection(s)? Where are they and what are their needs?*
 - a. How uniform are the primary audiences across the group? Any that are different?
 - b. Are there secondary audiences that have different needs? If so, what might that mean for how you share?

3. *Are digital collections intended to be a permanent offering at your institution?*
 - a. How does your answer affect your sharing system decision and how you plan for and finance your collections?

4. *Will you share your digital collections only at your physical institution, or online? If online, will access be restricted at all?*
 - a. Depending on the makeup of the group, this question may require very little, or a great deal of discussion.

5. *What types of files are in your collection? Primarily images and documents, or audio and video?*
 - a. How does it change your best options if primarily one or the other? If you need to support both, will you need one system or two?

6. *Are there any copyright or donor restrictions for items in your digital collections?*
 - a. If so, what kinds of restrictions do you have?
 - b. How will any restrictions be managed, and users informed?

Discussion 2: Sharing methods

Activity 2 asked you to consider these options for the type of system you will use to share your institution's digital collections:

1. *Dedicated static website*
2. *Dedicated content management system*
3. *External archives*
4. *Social media*
5. *Photo and video sharing sites*
6. *Exhibits, education, And outreach*

In the group, start by asking which of these options participants have chosen or are considering. This discussion will vary significantly depending on the group, the institutions represented, where they are in the decision process, and the types of collections they will be sharing. You may wish to either break into smaller groups or stay together depending on some of these factors.

Suggested lines of discussion:

Option 1

If participants are still deciding, you might ask the whole group to focus on prevalent outstanding decisions:

- Ask participants to share their outstanding questions, concerns and needs around sharing methods.
- Ask those who have decided to talk through their decision-making.
- Open up discussion to questions and answers. Record unanswered questions.

Option 2

If group interest is focused on certain system types, organize brainstorms around them, whether with the whole group, or in breakouts:

- What are the advantages you see in this method?
- What are the drawbacks you see in this method?
- What are your unanswered questions about this method?

Discuss the discussion results with the whole group. Are there different perspectives on perceived advantages and drawbacks? Are there any new answers to questions?

For either option:

How will you research your unanswered questions? Do participants wish to partner or form ongoing groups to further explore these questions and support each other?

