Core Principles and Evaluative Criteria

April 1999

The Working Group, at its April 20, 1999 meeting, determined the following as an initial set of working criteria for evaluating practice in creating, capturing and managing digital cultural heritage resources. The criteria are organized under six basic principles.

Exemplary Practice:

OPTIMIZES INTEROPERABILITY OF MATERIALS
Digitization projects should enable the optimal interoperability between source materials from different repositories or digitization projects
Criteria:

1. The project uses community-appropriate and widely deployed:
    1. means of representing content (e.g., TEI, CIMI DTD, Laban Notation, etc.);
    2. means of describing content (e.g., MARC, Dublin Core, EAD, TEI Header, Categories for the Description of Works of Art);
    3. technical means of representing information digitally (e.g., SGML, UniCode, JPEG, MPEG, etc.);
    4. means of controlling data values (e.g., AAT, Thesaurus of Geographic Names, LC-Names, etc.); and
    5. existing guidelines to digitizing particular document types and object types; (e.g., TEI/MASTERS proposals for manuscripts; LC/Amertiech Competition Guidelines, etc.)
2. The project has the capability of being used by users other than the primary intended audience.

ENABLES BROADEST USE

Projects should enable multiple and diverse uses of material by multiple and diverse audiences.

Criteria:

1. The project uses community-appropriate and widely deployed solutions, systems, standards, software, etc., to enable broadest use;

2. If the project managers have made decisions that limit the use of materials, they have declared and justified those decisions;
3. Project managers considered potential users of the digital resource other than the intended audience;
4. The project takes account of the W3C'S ["Guidelines for Web Site Accessibility"](#) or otherwise acknowledges the needs of those with disabilities.

ADDRESSES THE NEED FOR THE PRESERVATION OF ORIGINAL MATERIALS

Projects should incorporate procedures to address the preservation of original materials.

Criteria:

1. Project managers have addressed the need for the preservation of the original materials (if any) in a digital project
2. Project managers justified their choice of methods that destroyed or compromised original materials

INDICATES A STRATEGY FOR THE LIFE-CYCLE MANAGEMENT OF DIGITAL RESOURCES

Projects should plan for the life-cycle management of digital resources.

Criterion:

If long-term preservation of digital resources was a consideration, the project managers have a reasonable strategy that will facilitate long-term access.

INVESTIGATES & DECLARES INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY & RIGHTS RESTRICTIONS
Ownership and rights issues need to be investigated before digitization commences and findings reported to users.

Criterion:

Project Managers have investigated, acted on and declared the rights status of all parts of a project as much as is possible.

ARTICULATES INTENT & DECLARES METHODOLOGY

All relevant methods, perspectives and assumptions used by project staff should be clarified and made explicit.

Criteria:

1. The project has declared its rationale, its intended scope, significance and funding base (for example, is it the equivalent of a scholarly monograph or a broad collection of national resources?).
2. The project is explicit about:
    1. its intent;
    2. its primary audience;
    3. its long-term persistence;
    4. its chosen level of faithfulness to an original or an intermediate, whether analog or digital;
    5. its suitability for different levels of teaching and research.