

Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI)
Digital Collections
Collection Development Policy

Revised: May 1, 2007

Introduction

In 2005, CARLI licensed CONTENTdm for its I-Share (formerly ILCSO) member libraries. CONTENTdm provides a method to manage digital collections including documents, images, video, and audio files. Other CARLI libraries may choose other software solutions or methods for managing digital content. This policy addresses those collections that will be stored on resources centrally managed by CARLI. Libraries are encouraged to plan and develop digital collections so that access to the state's resources is made widely available.

Access to CARLI digital collections will be made available through a website designed and maintained by CARLI staff with input from CARLI member contributors. Separate digital collections stored on the CARLI server may include

- 1) Collection(s) licensed by CARLI for the use of CARLI institutions
- 2) Collection(s) developed by one or more CARLI institutions to be accessible to all CARLI institutions
- 3) Collection(s) developed by and restricted to the use of a single CARLI institution, as long as required restrictions can be maintained

Links to digital collections developed and maintained locally on a CARLI institution's server may be made available through the CARLI Digital Collections website.

Mission and Guiding Principles

The CARLI Digital Collections are created and maintained in keeping with the mission statement of the organization itself:

“The Consortium leads Illinois academic libraries to create and sustain a rich, supportive, and diverse knowledge environment that furthers teaching, learning and research through the sharing of collections, expertise and programs.” (CARLI Bylaws, 2005)

As a shared resource, the CARLI Digital Collections are designed to support the teaching and research functions of academic institutions in Illinois. Essential criteria for the collections include

- Adherence to copyright and intellectual property guidelines: intellectual property rights must be managed in accordance with applicable laws, and any necessary restrictions to access must be implemented through current institutionally-supported mechanisms. All materials made openly available must be in the public domain or cleared for public distribution. Teaching collections may choose to restrict images at the institutional level, while allowing the metadata to be openly available. It is the responsibility of each

institution to seek and maintain documentation of ownership and digitization rights for their digital collection(s). Ownership of the digital content remains with the institution or copyright holder; CARLI does not claim ownership of the content in the digital collections.

- When possible, digital collections should be created and maintained as shared resources for CARLI institutions, and to others accessing them from any place in the world via the Internet. In cases where access to digital objects must be restricted due to copyright or local restrictions, institutions are encouraged to share item level metadata.
- Adherence to guidelines adopted by CARLI, including technical guidelines for digitization and metadata.
- Digital collections will serve to provide access to but not replace the original materials as current digitization methods do not meet preservation standards. It is recognized that use of electronic reproductions does protect original materials from unnecessary handling and as such does provide some preservation protection.
- Digital collections may be in a variety of formats including but not limited to text and manuscript documents, photographs, postcards, art reproductions, illustrations, sound, video, and representations of 3-D items.
- Access to the CARLI Digital Collections for the visually impaired is encouraged and should be planned for and implemented whenever possible. Such access may include, but is not limited to, audio files describing the collection, audio descriptions of individual images, or audio transcriptions of text documents.
- The CARLI Digital Collections are to provide resources that may be of research and learning value to member institutions.

Collection Development Criteria

Creation and maintenance of digital collections is an expensive venture, and must be undertaken with deliberate planning and quality control. Content selected for digitization should have strong, immediate yet durable interest and research value within CARLI and beyond. Materials that represent the depth and diversity of the historical and cultural resources of Illinois' academic and research libraries, especially rare or unique materials, have a high value. The discovery and use of digital collections are enhanced by the availability of accurate, rich metadata descriptors attached to items in the collection, as well as overall finding aids and clear organizational structure. Therefore, those collections that are well documented and organized have higher value than those with minimal identification. The responsibility for accuracy of information presented in the collection remains with the institution providing that digital collection.

Although digitization does not serve as a substitute for preservation of original documents and material, digitization may contribute to preservation efforts. Providing a surrogate representation of original material may minimize handling of fragile or rare materials and so protect materials from damage, mutilation, or theft. However, efforts must be made to ensure that the digitization process does not damage or destroy the original materials.

Digitization of a photographic representation of the original may be necessary, and is acceptable for inclusion in the CARLI collection if the image is of good quality.

Technical considerations to be made in determining the appropriateness of an item or items in the collection include

- The extent to which the digital version can represent the original; if the full content is not to be included, the usefulness of the digital object must be carefully considered.
- Whether the materials will display well digitally using current, readily available technologies
- File size and network capacity to deliver the digital content to the user with reasonable speed
- Resources available at the institution to support collection organization, scanning, and interface design to support and maintain the digital collection
- Resources available at the institution to catalog and provide metadata relating to document identification, provenance, full item description, and technical capture information for each item in the collection
- Original items which are oversized, poorly legible, require extraordinarily high resolution, or true color representation may be unsuitable for inclusion.

Standards and Quality Control

When possible, CARLI Digital Collections should be created, organized, digitized, and maintained following best practices recommended and/or adopted by CARLI.

Institutions providing content for the CARLI Digital Collections are responsible for technical quality of the digital objects, and accuracy of the metadata and finding aids. CARLI endorses compliance with accessibility standards developed as part of the Web Access Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium (<http://www.w3.org/WAI/>). It is the responsibility of each contributing institution to conform to these standards. CARLI does not guarantee that all collections or sites linked to within the collections will comply with these compatibility standards.

Removal Policy

A site may be removed from the CARLI Digital Collections in case of one or more of the following conditions:

- Violation of copyright laws, including violations of restrictions placed by a content donor or owner
- Site provides substantial inaccurate information that the institution does not correct within 60 days of notification
- Site content is no longer available, or is not consistently available and reliable
- Access to the site or its content is no longer made freely available

The CARLI Board or its designated committee/agent will have the final decision on removal. The originating institution will be notified in writing of the decision.

Policy Review

The CARLI Board will review and revise this policy on a regular basis in order to incorporate changes in licensing, technology, or statewide collection goals.