Selection for Digital Projects

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Importance of Selection

- Selection for digitization different from selection for purchase.
  - Next slide will amplify this point!
- All digitization projects are costly.
- We all have limited time and financial resources.
- All projects require a time commitment from permanent staff – even if we have external funding.
- Selecting one project means that others must be rejected.

Choose wisely!
Misconception

- We call it “selection,” so why can’t we select materials for digitization the same way we “select” other library materials for purchase or licensing?
- Technical considerations
- Relatively few number of projects that can be completed
- Long-term commitment to preservation
Selection for Digitization

- Copyright Status
- Intellectual Nature of the Source Materials
- Current and Potential Users
- Organization and Descriptive Metadata
- Relationship to Other Digital Collections
- Funding
- Other Factors
Copyright Status

- What is the copyright status of the source materials?
  - Public domain
  - Controlled by your institution
  - Permission secured
  - Situation unknown or murky
Public Domain
(http://www.unc.edu/~unclng/public-d.htm)

- Many works are no longer covered by copyright or never were covered by copyright.
- Works in the public domain may be used without permission.
- What’s in the public domain?
  - All works published before January 1, 1923.
  - Works published between 1923 and 1964 and not renewed in the 28th year.
  - Unpublished works whose author died before 1932; otherwise, the term is life plus 70 years.
- Many people attempt to claim copyright simply because they own the work or have published it.
Intellectual Nature of Source

Significance of the materials

- Does the intellectual quality of the source materials warrant the level of access made possible by digitizing?
- Will digitization enhance the intellectual value of the material?
- Will electronic access to these materials enhance their value to users?
Current and Potential Users

- Are users consulting the proposed source materials?
- Is current access so difficult that digitization will create a new audience?
- Does the physical condition of the originals limit their use?
- Are related materials widely dispersed?
- Are there librarians or archivists who might collaborate on the project?
- Will digitization meet the needs of local users?
Organization and Metadata

- Has the collection been organized and processed?
- Is there a finding aid – either paper or online?
  - How complete is the finding aid?
  - Does it include all of the information needed for discovery?
  - How easy will it be to adapt this finding aid to provide online access to the collection?
Relationship to Other Digital Collections

- If published material, has it already been digitized? All? Parts of the collection?
- Would cooperative digitization effort improve this project? Could you find partners?
- How does this collection fit in with other digital collections? Will the whole be greater than the sum of the parts?
Funding

- Need to know exactly what you want to prepare of a budget
- Small projects and pilot projects are the easiest to fund internally
- Large projects require outside funding or a collaborative effort
  - Grant opportunities may push the selection of one project over another
Other Factors (1/2)

- Size of the collection
  - Usually want to digitize the entire collection

- Preparation of the collection
  - Does it require conservation work?

- Format
  - We selected Hohenberger because we wanted experience with photographs

- Institutional priorities
  - Indiana-related
  - Indiana University expertise
Other Factors (2/2)

- Opportunity for staff to learn new skills
- Low overhead – the project is similar to previous projects so we can use established procedures and existing technologies
- Item-level information or metadata available
- Complements previous projects – creation of a critical mass
- Funding opportunity
  - Hoagy Carmichael Centennial (1999)
- Contextual materials
  - Does the primary collection have interesting contextual materials?
For more information...
