



Digital Return

Digital Stewardship Curriculum

What is “Digital Return”?

- The transfer of cultural heritage materials back to a community in a **digital form**
- Sometimes called “digital repatriation”
 - Links to NAGPRA
 - Practice care around the term “repatriation”

- DR is the transfer of materials...but more than that it has political, social and cultural foundations
- Informed by NAGPRA -- the physical return of cultural materials sparked a similar movement with digital materials
- However, use care with the term “repatriation” which holds a political, legal meaning and framework

Digital Return in your Community

- Knowledge sharing
 - Intergenerational, regional...
- Expanding use
 - Digital materials can be more accessible
- Building partnerships with other depts/units
 - Creating curriculum, language materials, summer programs etc

- What can “digital return” do in your communities...
 - Knowledge sharing -- intergenerational, inter-tribal
 - Use of materials --often times physical objects can't be used, touched...digital files more mobile, agile, reusable
 - Partnerships -- internal work with other departments though digital materials
 - BUT need to think through : several different factors to think of when you are dealing with digital materials

Digital return: Planning Ahead

- Circulation of materials
 - How and for/to whom?
- Copies (and more copies)
 - Who has additional copies?
- What is the legal status?
- Where is the metadata?
 - What metadata can you add?
 - Does everyone have access?

- With physical objects you can control the circulation more closely
 - You will need to plan carefully for how digital materials should be accessed, and who is accessing them.
- You may not know what copies are out there
 - Copies may exist in multiple places
- What is the legal and copyright status of materials? Are there any errors or matters to dispute?
- For digital materials, you may need to create metadata from multiple sources and decide how to provide access to the items AND metadata
- All this leads to **policy decisions**

Digital Return in your Policies

- Within your Strategic Goals for Digitization
 - Collaborations you want with other institutions
 - Goals for use of materials
 - Priorities for returned collections
- Digitization Policy
 - What digital materials do you accept?
 - What **terms** for return (legal, social etc)
 - Who makes the decisions to initiate digital return
 - Tribal council your department? ...

- **What types of collaborations do you want** -- do you want institutions to be closely involved or do you just want the materials back? Define what you think the partnerships should entail
- **Goals:** What do you want to do once you get the materials back? create curriculum for the schools? do online exhibits? community archiving events? make big bucket lists in your policies.
- **priorities** for these collections: is your top priority identifying as many materials as you can and getting them returned? Is your priority language materials, family histories?
 - You can list your top FIVE priorities as a start
- These inform your overall digitization policy -- what do you accept and **HOW**
- Then think of uses....one main focus of digital return has been (use in communities...)

Defining Steps in a Digital Return Project

- Working with institutions and individuals
 - Define who
 - MOU or MOA to guide **partnership**
 - Not just “getting” digital files
- What legal work may need to be done?
 - Who legally owns collection?
 - Are there restrictions on reproductions?
- Will there be a cost?

- As you think of who you might work with in a digital return project, consider what you need to have in place to lay our expectations for all parties
 - Who specifically will you work with?
 - MOU or MOA or other formal agreement
- What legal work needs to be done? What issues should be discussed?
 - Copyright, ownership, intellectual property, third party privacy, restrictions, etc.
- What are the costs involved in this project

Partnerships and Agreements

- Building relationships
- Understanding collections/needs
- Formal Agreements
 - Shared agreement
 - Shared expectations
- Starting a project

- Many steps to partnerships
 - Think about the way that you want to reach out and build a relationship with the institution and staff. Sometimes persistence is key.
 - There is a lot of information to absorb about the institution (collections, procedures, history, policies), and a lot of information for you to share about your own institution and community - how will you go about reaching a shared understanding?
 - Formal agreements are also important, what is your usual process for partnering with outside organizations? What legal protections and assurances are needed? What do you want your partner to agree to before starting?
 - As mentioned in the last slide, an MOA or MOU may be needed
 - Localcontexts.org has examples and resources for formal agreements
 - What do you need for a successful project?
 - What is your goal?
 - Is it a small project or a large project?
 - If it is large, can you break it into multiple stages?
 - What resources do you need?

Examples of Digital Return and Physical Repatriation

- Plateau Peoples' Web Portal (regional)
- Dane Wajich: Dene-zaa Stories (scholars collection)
- Tlingit Dakl'aweidi clan and Smithsonian 3D Digitization collaboration
- Passamaquoddy Nation projects
 - Passamaquoddy Peoples' Knowledge Portal
 - Ancestral Voices Project at the Library of Congress American Folklife Center

- Links to examples of digital return projects:
 - <https://plateauportal.libraries.wsu.edu/>
 - <http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/danewajich/english/index.html>
 - Tlingit Dakl'aweidi clan and Smithsonian 3D Digitization collaboration
 - <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/replica-tingit-killer-whale-hat-spurring-dialogue-about-digitization-180964483/>
 - <https://3d.si.edu/explorer/killer-whale-hat>
 - Passamaquoddy Nation projects
 - <https://passamaquoddypeople.com/>
 - <https://www.loc.gov/collections/ancestral-voices/about-this-collection/>



Discuss or Reflect

- What kinds of digital return projects are you involved with?
- Or, what digital return projects would you like to start?
- What questions do you need answered?

- Discuss with others in your community, or start reflecting on your own:
- What digital return projects are you involved with, or would like to start? (list 2-3)
- List questions you need answered
 - Legal questions
 - Cultural issues (access or use)
 - Institutional workflow (get MOU, meet with tribal council, etc)

Digital Return Project Planning Worksheet

- Add known universities, libraries, archives, museums, etc. with your community's cultural heritage materials.
 - List people you know
 - List collections or materials you know
- List repositories in your region or nationally that you would like to contact.

- The SHN resource Digital Return Project Planning Worksheet is a tool that you can use to start organizing your thought and information on what institutions you might want to engage with and initiate projects involving digital return
- A tool for creating a list of possibilities with needs and questions
 - Start by adding institutions you would like to work with, or who have materials you are interested in
 - Then, contact information
- Please note that a table like this may be useful for organization and brainstorming, but there are many steps in building relationships of trust and accountability.
- Further fields available on this Digital Return Project Planning Worksheet are:
 - Institution, department
 - Individual Contact Information
 - Previous Interactions
 - Content
 - Needs, Resources
 - Challenges
 - Possibilities
 - Priority

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