



The mission of the Local History Department (LHD) at the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library System (CLPLS) is to document the history and culture of Lowndes County, Mississippi. Part of fulfilling that mission is to collect, create, preserve, and make accessible both digitized and born-digital collection items. To succeed, the LHD is developing and implementing the following strategy for digitization, digital preservation, and access.

Digital Strategic Plan 2024-27: Vision

The Local History Department can trace its beginnings back to the 1960s when then Library Director Chebie G. Bateman began collecting local history in paper and microfilm form. Since then, the library archive has grown to house numerous formats such as paper, photographs, film, audio/visual, and now digital media. While modern digital media was born with the advent of computers, it was the global pandemic of 2019 that exacerbated the need for greater digital access across the archival profession. Therefore, the LHD is adopting a Digital Strategic Plan to be better prepared, organized, and streamlined in our digitization efforts. This is the first such plan of its kind for the CLPLS archive.

The Digital Strategic Plan 2024-27 identifies four high-level goals:

- Produce a Digital Preservation Plan,
- Make a Digital and Audio/Visual Media Inventory,
- Implement long-term storage for digital items, and
- Create a system for the ingestion of born-digital content.

The Digital Strategic Plan defines what the LHD plans to accomplish, in terms of its digital transformation, over the next five years. The plan allows the LHD to create a foundation upon which to build our digital preservation program into the future.

In our strategy we will also:

- Advocate intellectual freedom in support of diverse points of view and confidential, equitable access to information;
- Respect intellectual property and author rights of materials;
- Endorse open access and focus on content that can be freely accessed;
- Seek to promote discoverability and accessibility; and
- Continue to protect physical materials.

Determining factors for including materials in the digital collection workflow:

- Value to user community
 - High-use of analog materials

- Defined (and anticipated) community of users
- Physical condition or access limits use of analog materials
- Digital materials will enhance user experience
- Current materials are dispersed
- Extent to which the digitized version replicates the original
- Copyright
 - Public domain
 - Open access
 - Library-held copyright
 - Granted permissions
- Accessibility
 - Compliance with accessibility standards appropriate at time of digitization
 - Identify opportunities for equitable access
 - Recommend review schedule for meeting evolving accessibility standards
- Significance
 - Important and distinctive information not well provided in other resources
 - Value to the community
 - Complements existing collections
 - Digitization affects the intellectual value of the resource
- Relationship to current collections materials
 - Digital collection fills gaps
 - Coherent collections and access
 - Collaborative opportunities within and outside the Library
 - Supports the Library mission (select, organize, preserve, and make available materials)
 - Provides opportunities to expose hidden or underrepresented voices
- Organization and Metadata
 - Grant- or gift- funds accompany the project
 - Availability of resources necessary to organize and process the collection
 - Metadata currently available
 - Completeness of existing metadata
- Preservation
 - Identify resources needed to provide stability and accessibility to the content
 - Capture and review secondary characteristics (relationships of parts to the whole, provenance, integrity, etc.)
 - Define the versioning process
 - Consider applicability of 3rd-party alternatives for preservation, re-formatting, and dissemination
 - Evaluate and prepare for potential damage to original materials through the digitization process

The Digital Collections Strategy specifically excludes:

- Materials NOT relating to Lowndes County, MS,
- Non-unique materials, and
- Materials which violate privacy laws or policies

Decommissioning Digital Collections:

The Library carefully acquires, evaluates, manages, and preserves its digital materials. However, there are circumstances that call for tough decisions regarding the decommissioning of materials, such as:

- Recognizing the lifecycle of resources and information and removing materials which are no longer usable or useful to the Library's mission
- Responding to copyright disputes
- Protecting privacy
- Preservation challenges, e.g. technical resources to repair something which cannot be fixed or has long-term renderability issues

Statements from the Library of Congress, New York Public Library, University of Virginia, and the University of Pennsylvania were used as models for this document.