

# **DIGITAL CONTENT GUIDELINES FOR AUDIO**

## **UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND LIBRARIES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Digital Content Guidelines were amended by Ann Hanlon and Kate Murray to include audio objects in May 2008. The guidelines outlined below are intended to address selection for the digital repository based on digitization that takes place as part of the daily work flow and does not address project development.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. Unlike other formats, all digitized audio objects, regardless of the rationale for the digitization request, will be permanently retained.
2. In conjunction with other relevant staff, curators will make decisions on how audio objects will be accessed, if at all.
  - o It is recommended that some degree of metadata should be publicly accessible for all audio objects, even if the content of the audio file is not.

### **DIGITAL CONTENT GUIDELINES FOR AUDIO OBJECTS**

Digitized audio objects are different from digitized image and textual documents for two main reasons:

#### Preservation: Source Objects

- The source object often is so fragile or deteriorated that redigitization is impossible. If the digital file is not retained permanently when first transferred, the contents might be lost forever.

#### Workflow: Staff Time and Labor

- Transferring analog audio to digital files is extremely time and labor intensive. A typical sixty minute recording will take about ninety minutes of dedicated staff time to complete the transfer and metadata process. Creating a lower quality or lower resolution file will not make the process any faster because audio transfer is completely dependent on the playing time of the recording. Selected technical metadata is relatively easy to capture initially during the lengthy file transfer process. Descriptive metadata may require additional research outside of the transfer time.

In addition, the workflow for creating digital audio objects from analog source items is centralized in dedicated transfer facilities. Details of the audio reformatting facilities and

planning are outlined in the **Plan for Reformatting Audio Materials at UM Libraries** document.

The *Plan for Reformatting Audio Materials at UM Libraries* spells out two possible rationales for digitization requests: a preservation queue and a patron request queue. There may be patron requests that are peripheral to collecting focuses but these objects would still be permanently retained. Curators and other relevant staff would have discretion in terms of how the files would be accessed by the public. In other words, content decisions affect public accessibility, not permanent retention. Metadata should be widely accessible for all audio objects in the repository.

It is expected that any digital audio object that is not part of a formal digital collection must fit into one of the general repository browse terms (browse-able categories). Objects that do not fit into one of these categories should still be retained, and subject matter should be tracked in order to determine if the browse terms warrant expansion.

## **SAMPLE SCENARIOS BASED ON ACCESS CRITERIA**

### **1 Wide-spread public access via Web**

#### ***Scenario:***

The Special Collections in Performing Arts collections contain open reel recordings of a campus *a cappella* group specializing in Renaissance and Baroque music. The musical works are within the public domain and the concerts were recorded by UM staff on the campus. In addition to the recordings, the collection also contains detailed programs and other supporting material.

#### ***What to do:***

Digitize the full recordings for the repository, according to best practice guidelines, including full metadata, and add to repository. This collection has no identified intellectual property issues so access to this material will be open to the public online via Digital Collections.

### **2 Restricted access via Web**

#### ***Scenario:***

Within the Katherine Anne Porter collection is a commercially produced LP of Mexican Christmas songs. This recording is now extremely rare. Ordinarily, commercially produced items are not digitized and permanently retained in Fedora because the audio plan for reformatting at UM Libraries specifies that we concentrate on unique archival material. However, the UM Libraries copy may have gained “last copy status.”

#### ***What to do:***

Digitize the full recording for the repository, according to best practice guidelines, including full metadata, and add to repository. Because of intellectual property issues, access to these materials will be restricted to those with UM logons. Details on the technical aspects of restriction and access should be verified in consultation with DCR.

### **3 No access via Web/Access only by request.**

***Scenario:***

SCPA's collection contains very early recordings from a now well-known musician. The open reel tape containing the recordings is failing and reformatting is necessary to assure continued access to the content. However, the musician does not want his early recordings publically available. UM Libraries does not hold copyright to the recordings and so they cannot be widely distributed.

***What to do:***

Digitize the full recording for the repository, according to best practice guidelines, including full metadata, and add to repository. Because of intellectual property issues, metadata records would be publically available but access to the recorded content will be available only upon request and at the Curator's discretion. Details on the technical aspects of restriction and access should be verified in consultation with DCR.

## AUDIO ACCESSIBILITY FLOWCHART

