

Outsourcing Digitization

Robin L. Dale

Heritage Preservation

Connecting to Collections

Online Community Chat

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Heritage Preservation

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Issues to Discuss

- Easing concerns: a false dichotomy
- Defining outsourcing: content and context
- Who is outsourcing?
- What is being outsourced?
- Quick Comparison: In-house vs outsourcing
- Keys to Successful Outsourcing

Reality Check

- How many of you are considering doing your digitization project in-house?
- How many people even considered using a vendor for any portion of a first project?
- How many of you have state-based collaborative digitization programs in your state?
- How many of you know of “trusted” partner organization with a digitization facility in-house?

Easing Concerns – a False Dichotomy

- There will always be in-house components as a part of *any* digitization project
 - Selection
 - Purpose of digitization (determining user needs)
 - Technical specification setting
 - Metadata
 - Quality control

Defining Outsourcing: Content and Context

- Types of content
 - Still image (photo, neg, slide)
 - Microfilm, microfiche
 - Audio
 - Video
- Types of service providers
 - Redefining outsourcing

RE-Defining Outsourcing (1)

- Traditionally, a business relationship with a profit-based vendor for services at market cost



HUDSON MICROIMAGING

Quality That Creates A Lasting Image

RE-Defining Outsourcing (2)

- Partnerships and collaborations
- Leveraging existing infrastructure of other organizations (not-for-profits)
- State-based digital collaboratives
- Subject/genre-based projects and programs
- Best-price collaboratives



Who is Outsourcing?

- 2002: 50% of larger organizations (NINCH)
- 2008: 49% of study outsourced some or all of digitization (Primary Research Group)
 - Museums more likely than others: 61%
- 2011: On average, participants outsourced 27% of their digitization work (PRG)

What is Being Outsourced Today?

- Original materials preparation (flattening, consolidation, cleaning)
- Digitization
- Encoding
- Metadata services
- Additional file processing
- Access systems
- Digital Preservation & file-back-up services

A Quick Comparison

In-House vs Outsourcing

In-House Advantages: It's About Control!

- Learn by doing
- Define requirements incrementally
- Retain direct control
- Ensure security and proper handling
- Ensure the primacy of library/archives/museum requirements

In-House Disadvantages

- Larger investment and ramp-up time
 - Good infrastructure takes a while to build
 - Most institutions cannot afford range of quality equipment for all formats
- No set price per digitized (image, audio or video file) or encoded item
- Comparably limited production capabilities and facilities
- Wide range of staffing experience

Outsourcing Advantages

- Broad range of options & services
- Investment and technical infrastructure is responsibility of vendor
- Set cost per digitized or encoded item
- Volume and throughput
- Expertise/staffing incurred by vendor
- Limited risk

Outsourcing Disadvantages

- Institution removed one step from digitization
- Not all vendors are experienced with library/archives/museum needs
- Contracts/expectations must be articulated clearly *and* at the beginning of the process
- Transporting and handling of possibly unique and/or fragile materials

Bottom Line Reasons to Outsource

- Expense
- Expertise
- Time

Roy Tennant. "Outsourcing Digitization." *Library Journal*. September 15, 1999 <<http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA156509.html>>

Keys to Successful Outsourcing

- Know your project, your desired outputs, and your materials well
- Locate potential partners, collaboratives
- Locating potential vendors
- Contracting and working with vendors/partners

Locating Collaborative Opportunities

- Call State Library/Archives/Cultural Heritage agency
- Determine types of assistance: advice, digitization services, metadata assistance, content hosting, digital preservation?
- Determine their requirements for working with them
 - Contribute to system, different standards, scheduling, etc?

Locating Potential Vendors

■ Finding qualified vendors

- Call colleagues (friends, same kind of project, same geographic area, etc.)
- Read final (or periodic) reports from grant projects
- Check AIMM.org (Association for Information & Image Management) – trade organization

■ Formal processes

- RFIs, RFQs, RFPs
- Generally used for very large or complex projects with vendors

Critical Contract & Communication Advice

- Describe vendors responsibilities
 - Sub-contracting be allowed?
 - Work for hire!
- Technical specifications
- Work schedule, deadlines, penalties
- Error correction? Who pays?
- Who is your dedicated contact?
- Regular communication is key: bi-monthly?
- Stay on schedule

Keys to Remember

- Seek advice from colleagues!
- Leverage existing (and better) infrastructure where possible
- Look to possible partnerships, collaborative opportunities *first*
- Success of outsourcing will depend upon how well you know your project and more importantly, the project goals & expectations.
- It's not an “all or nothing” decision.
- Resources exist – please use them!

And Speaking of Resources . . .

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