

RESOLUTION ON *PRINCIPLES FOR DIGITAL CONTENT*

WHEREAS, Libraries are increasingly collecting, managing and creating resources in digital formats; and

WHEREAS, Digital content is a significantly large part of the content that libraries provide to their users; and

WHEREAS, Mass digitization of library materials is being undertaken by libraries and by libraries in collaboration with for-profit and not-for-profit entities; and

WHEREAS, Leaders in the library profession have expressed concerns about policies and procedures relating to the ownership and control of digital content in library environments, in particular regarding digitized library materials; and

WHEREAS, The ALA Executive Board requested that the Office for Information Technology Policy form a task force to propose policy in the area of digital content; and

WHEREAS, The task force sought and received feedback on the principles from across the Association; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the American Library Association adopts this declaration, *Principles for Digital Content*.

Adopted by the Council
of the American Library Association
Tuesday, June 26, 2007
Washington, D.C.

*Adopted by the ALA Council at the
2007 ALA Annual Conference*

Principles for Digitized Content

The accelerating mass digitization of collections in libraries and cultural heritage institutions demands a framework of principles and a body of policy to guide decision making and to enable values-driven choices. The principles for the digitization of content will provoke a review of American Library Association policies that address the creation, access, use and preservation of digital materials and that require revision, enhancement and creation. This is critical to the advancement of ALA's leadership role in the information society and to the support provided to members. This will also sustain the relevance and impact of libraries and librarians in their communities.

1. Values

1. Digital collections are as important to libraries as all other types of collections. The policies of the Association apply fully to digital collections, including values such as intellectual freedom, commitment to access, respect for confidentiality and privacy, freedom of information, service for the public good, and professionalism.
2. Digital content must be given the same consideration as other library materials when conducting collection development, organization and cataloging of works, reference services, and preservation.
3. Digital content must be provided in various and alternative ways to meet the unique needs and circumstances of all people.
4. Equitable access to digital library materials is ensured through maximum accessibility, ubiquity, sustainability, and barrier-free access

2. Intellectual Property Rights

1. Access to and use of digital content that is protected by copyright should be provided in a fair and equitable manner, balancing the rights and privileges of users, creators, and owners.
2. Rights management policies and procedures must promote the advancement and sharing of knowledge, innovation, and creativity.

3. Sustainable Collections

1. A library's digital collections and associated activities must be sustainable.
2. Sustainability requires secure and ongoing funding, technology solutions that are appropriate to the longevity of the cultural record, and long-term management capabilities.

4. Collaboration

1. Collaboration enables the building of collections that support research, scholarship and information needs of diverse communities.
2. Collaboration will require strong organizational support and promotion by library and cultural heritage practitioners, their institutions, and their associations.

5. Advocacy

1. A library's digital programs and associated activities require ongoing communication for its success.
2. The library and cultural heritage communities must reach out to the public, to government, and to funding institutions with a clear and compelling message regarding the role of digital libraries and collections.

6. International Scope

1. Digital collections increasingly serve an international audience and are part of a global information infrastructure that is not limited by geography.
2. The library and cultural heritage communities must understand the origination of materials in digital collections, respect the ownership of these materials, and be attentive to issues surrounding cultural asset exploitation and repatriation.
3. Digital collections and services must be developed with goals of technical and social interoperability in the international information sphere.

7. Continuous learning

1. Digital collections are developed and sustained by an educated workforce.
2. Members of the library and cultural heritage professions must engage in ongoing learning. They must explore new technology, work with new partners, and reach new audiences

8. Preservation

1. Digital resources must receive appropriate preservation
2. Preservation activities require the development of standards, best practices, and sustainable funding models to support long-term commitment to digital resources.

9. Importance of Standards

1. Digital collections must be built upon standards and best practices that maximize their usefulness.

2. Such standards and best practices must serve the broadest community of users, including those with disabilities, support sustainable access and use over time, and provide user functionality that promotes the core library values.
3. Preference should be given to open standards and non-proprietary technologies that support long-term sustainability.

