

National Heritage Digitization Strategy – Content strategy

Context and vision

Canada is a multinational country, defined by diversity as much as by common values. This diversity ranges from the language, culture, and self-governance traditions of Canada's First Nations to the language, cultural, legal, and other traditions of the French and English, as well as successive waves of immigrants and refugees who have added their mother tongues, customs, and perspectives to Canada. As a result, the 'content' of the national heritage digitization strategy is diverse and constantly evolving through dialogue among the rich, and sometimes competing, narratives of memory, as well as through the recovery of knowledge that has sometimes languished in the margins.

Moreover, in today's globalized digital world, there is an ongoing challenge to maintain a pan-Canadian cultural space and presence, given the economies of scale and speed available to larger non-Canadian players.

As such, improving discovery to ensure all Canadians have ready access to all the Canadian knowledge and culture repositories, through metadata enhancement as well as a unified, national platform, will be as important as digitizing as much, wide-ranging and relevant content, as possible.

Impact

Content included under the National Heritage Digitization Strategy (NHDS) will be an essential part of the global digital cultural heritage network. A model partnership of Canadian cultural organizations, the NHDS will encourage the sharing of expertise and content to advance knowledge in Canada and around the world.

Purpose

This document proposes the content scope and priorities of the NHDS, in pursuit of our vision to provide increased digital access to Canadian heritage. It is intended for cultural heritage institutions to help guide their decisions when applying for NHDS funding, contributing to the discovery platform, enhancing metadata on digital collections and objects, and/or prioritizing their own digitization projects where possible.

Principles

The principles guiding content development under the NHDS are:

Representativeness and inclusion – The NHDS will adopt Canada-wide approaches to ensure collections represent the diversity of the country, on both the supply side and the demand, which means that content selected for digitization is responsive to the priorities of specific communities

Collaboration – Content development, including the selection of materials for digitization and their inclusion in the discovery platform, will be a collaborative effort and one that values openness and transparency. NHDS will inspire, complement, and build on digitization activities already in place to help Canadian memory institutions fulfill their goals.

Quality-based efforts – Content digitized or made accessible under the NHDS will be of high quality, taking advantage of standards and best practices established through the shared expertise of our expert communities. .

Access and openness – Content development will balance digitization, digital preservation, and digital access. The NHDS supports equitable, barrier-free access to digitized resources for all Canadians, and will endeavor to anticipate rights and access issues so that these do not create artificial barriers to access.

Impact – The NHDS will encourage projects that have wide appeal, are unique and/or particularly relevant to a specific field of study.

Sustainability – The NHDS recognizes that proper stewardship of digitized resources is critical to their sustainability. The NHDS supports the long-term digital preservation of material.

Intellectual Freedom – The NHDS supports the rights of Canadians to have unrestricted access to a broad range of knowledge, ideas, and opinions.

Flexibility – The NHDS content strategy is flexible rather than prescriptive, to support the overall goals of the NHDS while accommodating different models of potential funding and partnerships.

Content scope and priorities

The NHDS encompasses the following:

- Digitized materials (i.e. materials converted from analog to digital);
- Resources by or about Canada or Canadians;
- Resources in a variety of formats (see below);
- Resources from libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural organizations.

More specially, the NDHS content strategy applies in three areas:

1. **Funding program priorities** – Where NHDS funding to support digitization is available, the NHDS will make efforts to prioritize: (TO BE CONFIRMED THROUGH SURVEY WITH GLAM COMMUNITY)
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2. **Discovery platform priorities** – The NHDS discovery platform will serve as a national index of digitized collections and a learning tool for promoting understanding of the totality of

Canadian cultural heritage collections. The discovery platform includes descriptive metadata that is:

- Open – The digitized object and the associated metadata are accessible without barriers (i.e. not password-protected or behind a paywall).
- Linkable – the digitized object can be linked to through an unambiguous URL (e.g. mycollection.ca/id-12345).
- Described – based on commonly agreed standards defined by the NHDS.
- Reusable - Contributed metadata must be made available and placed in the public domain either through a [Creative Commons CCO license](#) or by other means.
- Consistent – The metadata must meet the NHDS metadata specifications when these become available.

3. **Institutional priorities** – The NHDS recognizes the expert work that organizations are already doing to digitize and provide access to their collections. By providing this national vision, the NHDS encourages organizations to align their digitization activities with the principles and priorities outlined in this document where they can.

At this time, the NHDS does not include:

- Born-digital material
- 3D scans
- Password- or paywall-protected objects
- Research and/or scientific data

The NHDS may be expanded to include these types of material in future.