
Project Planning

IMPACT Briefing Paper

IMPACT project
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Briefing Paper on Project Planning

Executive Summary

Critical to the success of any project, the planning phase will determine whether, how, and at what cost digital resources are created and, critically, how those resources will be used and sustained.

Issues that need to be addressed include:

Reasons for digitisation

A simple but essential cost-benefit analysis which may involve:

- a clear and precise statement of what any digitisation project is trying to achieve
- a clear understanding of the potential benefits it will offer and to whom they will be offered
- a clear understanding of the needs of intended user communities
- a clear understanding of the costs involved in not conducting a digitisation project (such as reputational costs)
- an understanding of other digital resources that may complement (or make redundant) the digitisation project being considered

What to digitise?

For mass digitisation projects, selection criteria may be made at a high level (e.g. all nineteenth century monographs), but in addition to high-level criteria the following are some further considerations:

- a project's aims (which items or collection of items, when digitised, will support these best)
- what items are most readily available for digitisation (availability may be restricted, for example, by intellectual property rights or by their physical media)
- items for which digital surrogates already exist elsewhere for acquisition (e.g. by purchase, subscription, etc.)

How to digitise?

An initial review of the technical requirements that will ensure a digital resource actually serves the purposes for which it is made. The review may take account of the following with regard to the creation, management, and delivery or use of a data resource:

- workflow approach
- hardware and software requirements
- user requirements
- technical standards (including file formats, encoding methods, compression techniques, bit-depth)
- metadata standards

The following is a graphical representation of a standardised digitisation workflow, going from planning to delivery. The graphic is indicative rather than prescriptive (not all digitisation projects will require all stages), and tasks within this workflow appear in the order in which they are most likely to happen. This document will follow that order from this point forward:

Indicative digitisation workflow

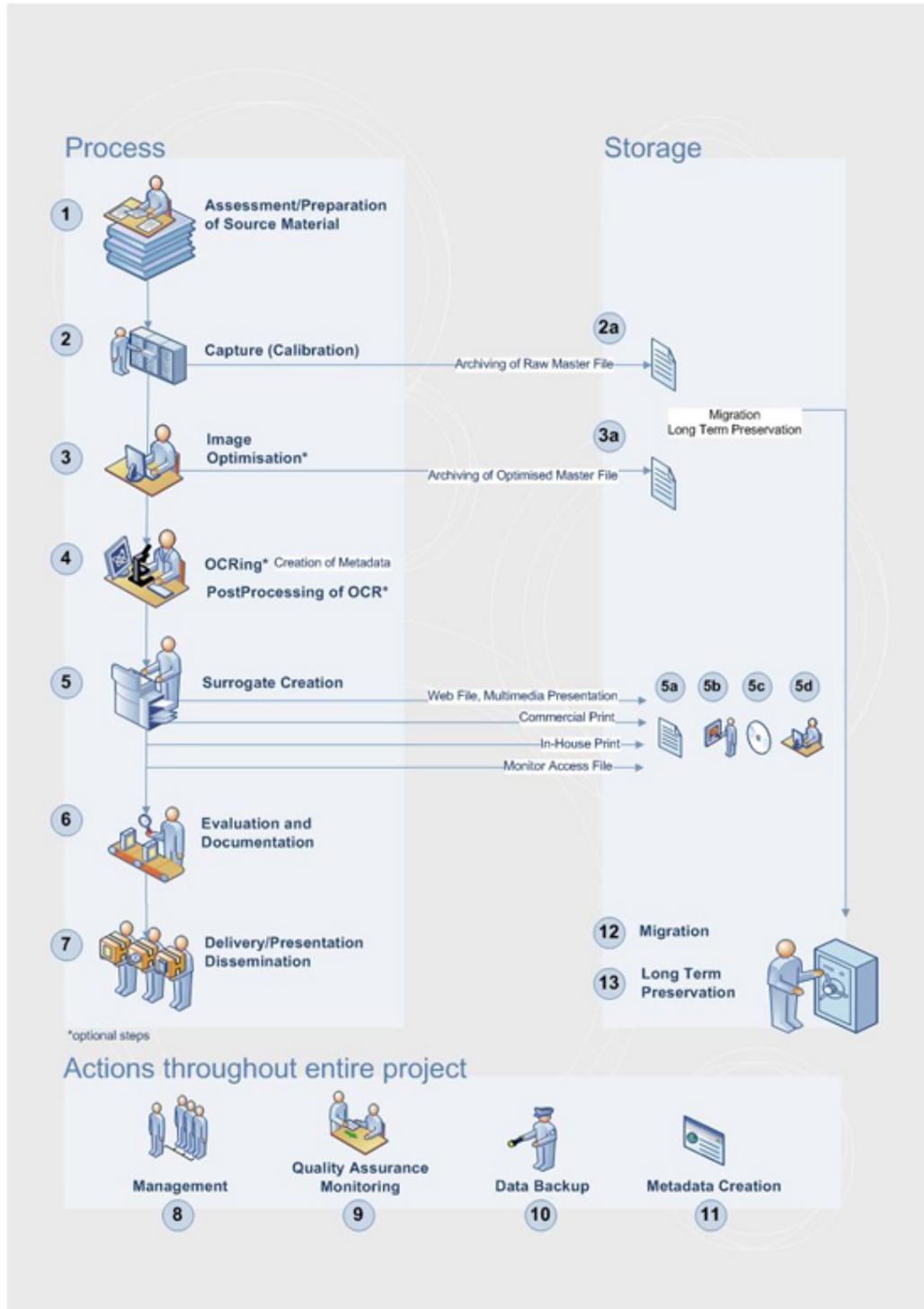


Figure 1: Indicative digitisation workflow

Key Terms

Digital surrogate: a digital image derived from an analogue or digital original, created for output through display devices (e.g. monitors or printers). For this reason, surrogates may be of lower quality than master images.

Image Compression: An algorithm applied to a digital image to reduce its file size, enabling swifter transfer across a network and the preservation of storage space. Compression techniques are distinguished by whether they are lossless or lossy. Lossless techniques compress image data without removing detail; lossy techniques compress images by removing detail.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR): an individual or company's moral right to ownership and the ability to earn money from the product of intellectual activity in a commercialised field.

Metadata: Data about the content, format and use of a knowledge resource, compiled to enhance the retrievability of the resource, and to give information about the technical and legal standards that govern its use. Metadata therefore usually includes information about the intellectual content of resource, digital representation data, and security or rights management information.

Workflow: A workflow is a repeatable pattern of activity enabled by a systematic organisation of resources, roles and information flows, into a work process that can be documented and learned.