

Identifying Content: Sample Inventory

Explanation of Inventory Columns:

- **Category:** Identify the category of the content
 - Institutional records (IR)
 - Special collections (SP)
 - Scholarly content – licensed and open (SC)
 - Research data (RD)
 - Web content (WC)
- **Title/Description:** title by which the content is known and/or brief description to identify content
- **Creation Date(s):** specific or approximate date ranges when content was created – note: guesses noted with question marks are better than blanks
- **Type:** indicate if the content is born digital or was digitized
- **Location:** general (e.g., indicate the content is stored by a specific creator) or specific (e.g., note that the content is stored on a specific server or on tapes stored on specified shelves) location of content [note: this information use useful but may change quickly and will need to be updated]
- **Extent:** note specific or approximate size in megabytes (MB), gigabytes (GB), etc.
- **Format(s):** note format of content – create one entry per format if exact information is known and/or the inventory is detailed, create one per collection/series if types of formats are approximated and/or the inventory is at a summary level

Category	Title/Description	Creation Date(s)	Location	Extent	Format(s)

Possible additional columns:

- **Backups:** note specific or general information about backup copies for the content
- **Contact Info:** email or other contact information for creators/owners of content

How will you use the inventory as you preserve content over time?

- Identifying content: keeping the inventory updated is important – note new content and additions to existing content as you become aware of it
- Selecting content: information about the preservation commitment: e.g., preserved – full commitment, preserved – bit preservation, retained for x months or years, not preserved.
- Storing content: one would use the inventory as a basis to plan for storage needs and growth.
- Protecting content should use the inventory as a starting point for determining requirements for protecting preserved content.

Q. How detailed should your inventory be?

A. That's the first decision of the inventory process and the level of detail may increase in later phases of managing your content. Less detail may be a good place to begin because you may be able to capture basic information about all of your possible content to be preserved in a shorter amount of time, but there may be some essential information missing as you move to the select the information to preserve (see Select Module); more information may take more time to collect and require you to either find more resources to complete the process or select portions of your content to inventory in successive phases. Once you have decided to inventory (and received any necessary approvals), consider your available resources (mostly staff time and available equipment to record the results), the amount of content you believe you need to inventory, make a reasonable decision about the level of detail to capture, and start your inventory.

Examples:

Note: typically the following content would be entered by column heading into one row of a table so that the contents of the table can be sorted as needed. It is presented in this format for easier review.

1. Inventory entry that is not very detailed:

- **Category:** IR [institutional records]
- **Title/Description:** records of the institution's President: John Jones, 1992-1997
- **Creation Date(s):** 1992-1997
- **Type:** born digital
- **Location:** on server maintained by IT support for President's Office [additional: 2 backup copies – one on campus and one onsite; call jack@ouoffice.org]
- **Extent:** 22 MB
- **Format(s):** PDF, Word, Excel – less than 10% other

2. Inventory entry that is somewhat detailed:

- **Category:** SP [special collections]
- **Title/Description:** Railroad Photographs: Railroad Bridges in the Northeast, 1950-1956
- **Creation Date(s):** January – June 2006
- **Type:** digitized
- **Location:** Special Collections Archival Storage server in Rack Storage Room of Central IT
- **Extent:** 242 GB, 2,250 images
- **Format(s):** TIFF

3. Inventory entry that is detailed:

- **Category:** IR
- **Title/Description:** Records of the Health Inspector for Tyler County, 1990-1995: Type 1 Inspection Reports
- **Creation Date(s):** 10-20 March 2003
- **Type:** digitized – see digitization project report dated 21 March 2003
- **Location:** master copy stored on tapes in County Building Storage Room 213, compartment 2, shelf 4

- **Backups:** one tape copy with secure services contractor, 2 online copies managed by County IT
- **Contact Info:** Joe Friday, email@county.goc; 234-456-6789 x765
- **Extent:** 10 tape cartridges; 4MB per online copy; 25,117 files
- **Format(s):** TIFF image per report page plus PDF per report