Upper Peninsula Digital Network (UPLINK)
Appraisal / Acquisition Policy and Procedures

1.0 Mission Statement

The mission of UPLINK is to collaboratively manage and sustain a low-cost, secure, and geographically distributed digital preservation and access service for locally created digital primary source material documenting the history of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

2.0 Eligibility

Any UPLINK member heritage institution in good standing may contribute analog or born-digital historical manuscript item(s) or collection(s) to the UPLINK network. Any original item(s) or collection(s) documenting the history of the people, places, or events of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan are eligible for consideration and submission to UPLINK.

3.0 Selection Guidelines for Digitization (Adapted from DigitalNC)

When selecting materials for submission to UPLINK, member organizations might consider the following broad guidelines. At any time in the process of selection, member organizations should contact UPLINK staff for support and guidance.

- **Materials that Document Underrepresented Members of the Community**
  Some of the rarest materials held by Upper Peninsula heritage institutions are those that document the history of race, gender, social-economic class, ethnicity, and religious orientation. Selection of items or collections about underrepresented or marginalized members of a community tell a fuller story about the Upper Peninsula's important history.

  Example: Records of labor unions or ethnic fraternal organizations.

- **Popular and Heavily used Materials**
  For many heritage organizations, photographs, yearbooks, and local history materials are the most heavily used historical records in their collections. If many people are already using and enjoying the materials, chances are good that even more will appreciate having easy online access.

  Example: Historic photographs documenting the construction of the local high school in the 1920s.

- **Unique Materials**
  What do you have in your collection that nobody else has? Most heritage organizations have published material such as county histories or newspapers on microfilm that, while popular, may also be available at other archives and libraries. Member organizations should consider digitizing one-of-a-kind materials in their collections, such as historic photo albums, handwritten diaries, and ledgers. Not only does this guarantee that

somebody else will not duplicate the digitization work, it also helps to emphasize the unique elements of your collection.

> **Example**: Early nineteenth century business ledger documenting shipment of supplies to mining camps in the central Upper Peninsula.

- **Difficult Materials**
  Many historical records document amazing activities and subjects but are very difficult to use. Old scrapbooks, large maps, material in disrepair, film, and video are good examples. Member organizations should consider digitizing these items and collections so that they can share them with a wider audience without further damaging fragile or difficult to handle items.

  > **Example**: A family scrapbook compiled in World War II with highly acidic paper, glues, and tape.

4.0 Method of Submission

Member institutions may select from the following options the type of submission.

- **Donation**
  Member institutions may choose to donate material to Northern Michigan University Archives, Michigan Tech University Archives, or to Lake Superior State University Library. However, such a donation must be consistent with each institution's collection development policy. A donation will transfer ownership, copyright, and possession of the collection without restriction to access or use. See UPLINK *donor agreement form*.

- **Deposit**
  This agreement provides for the temporary deposit with the Upper Peninsula Digital Network (UPLINK) historical analog material for the purpose of digitization and publication online. See UPLINK *deposit agreement form*.

- **Non-Exclusive Copyright License**
  This agreement grants UPLINK non-exclusive license to post digital material online free with universal public access. The member organization retains all other rights in the copyright work, including without limitation, the right to copy and distribute the work. See UPLINK *non-exclusive copyright license form*.

5.0 Archival and Technical Appraisal Guidelines (These guidelines are adapted in part from Appendix C of *Appraisal and Acquisition Strategies*.[1])

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[1] Geof Huth, "Module 14: Appraising Digital Records", in *Appraisal and Acquisition Strategies*, ed. Michael Shallcross and Christopher Prom (Chicago, Society of American Archivists, 2016), 60-65.

UPLINK will appraise historical manuscript collections and items (born digital and analog material) for ingestion into the Network. UPLINK staff will adhere to the following professional guidelines when assessing a submission request. The staff will use information collected from the archival and technical appraisal to write a report recommending acceptance or rejection of the proposed submission. The Appraisal and Acquisition Committee of the UPLINK Board of Directors will decided upon acceptance or rejection of the submission. See UPLINK *Board of Directors Operating Bylaws*.

A. **Archival Appraisal** (for analog and born digital submissions)

- Level of Arrangement and Description
  Determine the level of processing. Is the collection arranged by series and sub-series? Have items been transferred to acid free enclosures? Have any finding aids been created? If so, what finding aids?

- Physical Condition
  Is the collection in good, fair, or poor physical condition? What is the extent of disrepair, if any? Will the collection require minimal or extensive conservation work?

- Content Value
  Does the material align with institutional collection development policy and the mission of UPLINK? Is the informational content unique? Is there an alternative organization more suited to the preservation of the material? Does the content hold high informational research value for current and future users? Explain the kinds of information that appear in these records, giving enough detail to help others understand the value, quantity, and quality of this information. Explain any gaps in the records, whether chronological or informational, and note if there are any issues that might bring the reliability or authenticity of the records into question.

- Structure
  Evaluate and explain the structure of the records, even if that structure is overall disorder. Outline how the records are conceptually organized, and provide information on the physical organization of records spread across various storage locations and devices. Describe how the system's original users located records in the system, and indicate whether that same methodology can be employed for secondary use.

- Cost
  Estimate the costs for commercial or distributed digital preservation over time and the development of discovery and access. Estimate the cost to replace, reprocess, or re-digitize analog materials.

- Restrictions

Are there rights or access restrictions on the content that will require long periods without public access? Are the rights unknown or unclear? If rights are known, is it understood how access and preservation actions will reflect them?

B. Technical Appraisal (for born digital submissions)

● Responsibility for Record Creation
Explain who is responsible for maintaining this system, series, or collection. Include information on those who maintain the data and those who maintain the technical infrastructure and functioning of the system. If the creator receives some of the data from the outside, describe those who submit the data and how submission occurs. (Note that those responsible for technical design and maintenance may come from outside the organization.) For the records of individuals, there is likely no technical maintenance beyond the individual.

● Technical Specifications
Provide detailed specifications of the technical aspects of the system, such as hardware and software. This information provides the appraiser with the information needed to evaluate the archives' ability to maintain and preserve the records. Investigate and report on whether there are data migration difficulties, such as TIFF files with proprietary headers or file formats with no known preservation path. Examine and describe any data compression or encryption used in the system and how these were implemented. Evaluate how the archives will be able to accession and preserve records with these technical characteristics.

● Size of Digital Items
Indicate the overall size of the system in mega- or gigabytes. Calculate the number of archival files in the system versus the total number of files, and determine the means to cull the non-archival records. Estimate the anticipated increase of records per year in either bytes or number of files.

● Structure and Relationships
Examine, define, and possibly illustrate the file structure of these records. Describe the file naming conventions, if any, and the native or human-created metadata within the system. Collect, review, and summarize any user manuals, codebooks, or other guides that describe the system and its use—and note any limitations of these, such as being out of date. Describe the relationship of these records to other electronic or analog records.

● Data Quality
Evaluate the accuracy of the data by interviewing the creators and by evaluating the tools and processes the creators use to verify accuracy. Estimate the completeness of the data, and identify any missing or legacy data maintained outside the system, such as in an abandoned system or offline.

- Storage

  Provide detailed description and analysis of data storage used for the system, series, or collection. Cover data storage that is active or inactive, online or offline, such as primary storage, removable media, backups, and cloud services. Indicate the frequency of backups and all related backup procedures, and identify any that may lead or have led to data loss or corruption.

6.0 Method of Transfer

- Transfer of Analog Collections and Items

  Member organizations donating or placing on deposit analog material must arrange and provide for transportation to the appropriate UPLINK service hub.

  Before UPLINK can accept historical records for digitization, the member organization must first "process" the collection. Archivists refer to processing as "arrangement and description" – the organization of a collection in identifiable categories, basic document conservation and the creation of collection level finding aids with folder or item level (small collections) inventories. Please contact UPLINK staff for assistance determining the appropriate level of collection processing.

- Transfer of Digital Collections and Items

  Member organizations donating or placing on deposit digitized or born-digital records may use a number of different transfer methods. Transfer methods include, but are not limited to, delivery of hard-drives, flash-drives, the use of third party cloud services, and email attachments. All transfers must include directory, file format information, and system documentation.

  Whatever the method, the transfer of digitized or born-digital records must protect the records' integrity, accuracy, and completeness. Member institutions should contact UPLINK staff to determine the most appropriate and cost effective method of transferring digital records to the Network.

You can learn more about how to select records for digitization here.