DEVELOPING A DIGITAL ARCHIVES TOOLKIT

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INTRODUCTION

We are working with Muskeg Lake Cree Nation to create a digital archives toolkit for Indigenous and other community groups to use. The toolkit will include best practices and standards for factors like: digitization, description, copyright, and accessibility. The project started in September 2020 and is expected to be completed by August 2021.

Our research questions are:
- *What are the best practices and standards for digitizing archival materials of all formats?*
- *What are the best practices for working with and digitizing First Nations traditional knowledge?*
- *How can we create a toolkit that will allow First Nations and other communities to create and sustain their own digital archives?*

METHODS

Research methods include: interviews with local archivists (city and provincial), literature reviews, as well as research into current digitization practices. The research findings are currently being piloted using the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation archives.

ISSUES

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, much of the in-person research and testing has been cut short. An inventory of materials was to begin in October, but we are just starting that piece now. The pilot phase of the project will also be shorter. Testing was meant to begin in March but has been pushed back to July.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Part of our research shows that Indigenous communities need to be stewards of their own identities, culture, and history when archiving. This information will be built into the final Toolkit along with the necessary tools for Indigenous and other communities to begin digitizing materials to create and operate a small digital archives.

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