



Planning for digitisation – Putting a process in place to prepare your collection information for the new NZMuseums website.

When you digitise your collection, you need to follow an organised plan. The following steps provide a framework for planning that you might find useful.

Step 1. Form your digitisation team

Gather a group of people together (a minimum of three) to work on deciding what you are going to digitise for the NZMuseums website. Do not leave this task up to one person only.

Step 2. Decide on a number of items to start with

Decide on the initial number of items you will photograph or scan (the absolute minimum to go online on NZMuseums is 20 items).

Step 3. Decide on the items

Make a decision about which collection items you want to digitise. The following is a list of questions to ask about the items, to assist you in making your decision.

Which of our collection items:

- *tell local stories?*
- *are popular with the public?*
- *have fascinating tales connected with them?*
- *are unique in New Zealand collections?*
- *are of national importance?*
- *are at risk, and would be best taken off permanent display to preserve them, therefore should be available to the public on the internet instead?*
- *are attention-grabbers for all sorts of reasons?*

Tip: Start with collection objects that already have good existing documentation.

Step 4. Write up a list and number the items in sequence

Now that you have decided what you are going to digitise, write a list of the items you are going to put online, and number them in sequence, starting with a number such as 001 (see Step 5). Depending on the number of items you might eventually put online, you might want to start numbering at 0001.

Step 5. Photograph or scan your items & number them

Using a digital camera, photograph the items, one by one, against a plain background in good lighting. Scan your photographs and documents.

The images should be renamed to match the object numbers/accession numbers of the items as soon as possible. This makes the process of matching them to the items easier at a later date. An additional alpha or number can be added at the end to indicate multiple images for one item.

E.g. If the object number is 1998-33, then the image would be 1998-33.jpg, or multiple images would be 1998-33-a.jpg and 1998-33-b.jpg.

Step 6. Information on the item

Two types of information are required:

6a Object Specific Record

You must include the object specific record for every item. This is your standard museum documentation, e.g.: object number, title/name, brief description, object type, etc...

6b Object Story

Using information available such as the object records, museum personnel, local historians, the internet, etc..., put together interesting information about each item.

- Keep this fairly concise, yet make sure you get the information across
- Remember that people who read this are frequently not going to know anything about your collection, region and museum, so you need to think hard about what they won't know. For instance, which of a) or b) below gives an outsider a better understanding of why the item, in this case an old pram, is considered significant enough to be in the museum?

a) This pram was made in 1900 by J & J Mill Ltd, and gifted to the museum by Mrs Bloom.

OR

b) This pram was made in 1900 by J & J Mill Ltd, a local father and son (John & John) business renowned for cane-work items sold throughout the southern hemisphere. At the turn of the century they became famous for their fashionable, lightweight, but sturdy prams.

It was gifted by Mrs Bloom who lived two doors from the museum at #96, and used the pram for all her 8 children. Mrs Bloom was well known throughout the district for her creative knitting ability, and the museum has several prize-winning items knitted by her. (See....)

To assist international readers in particular, you may feel it necessary to give an explanation of the term 'pram', being the short form of perambulator, and very different to the commonly used American terms 'stroller' or 'buggy'. You would certainly 'tag' this item with the various possible names. Tagging an item means giving it different names so that it can be found on the internet using various search terms, e.g.: pram, perambulator, stroller, buggy. Tagging will be possible on NZMuseums, so include tags in your information list.

Remember that you may need to clear copyright for some items, or seek permission from people before publishing information about them online. Always check this first even if you think it won't be an issue.

Step 7. Grow your list

Keep adding to the list of items you propose to put on the web and keep photographing or scanning them – build up your list over time.

How much information can you put on NZMuseums?

It is possible to include 100 images, and related text, for free. After that, licences are available from US\$99 a year for 500 Megabyte of space, which can hold 2000 images and text (and much more if you don't have images for every item).

National Services Te Paerangi is offering to pay the licence fee for the first **20** museums that commit to placing more than 300 and up to 2000 items online (Conditions apply. Please contact us for more information).

Contact us

Please call National Services Te Paerangi on **Freephone 0508 678 743** if you have any questions.