The Digital Readiness Levels are a structured roadmap for public history organizations to plan and sustainably grow their digital initiatives in order to improve access to collections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Area</th>
<th>Bronze</th>
<th>Silver</th>
<th>Gold</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan and Prioritize</td>
<td>Set goals for digital work that fit the organization's mission and policies. Adopt a digital mission statement or revise existing mission statement to include digital work.</td>
<td>Identify and prioritize potential digital projects. Make a digital project plan that includes roles, activities, required resources, and partners.</td>
<td>Adopt a digital collection development policy or revise existing policy to include digitized and born digital content.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obtain Permissions</td>
<td>Create and use permission forms and donor agreements that include specific language for the use of digitized and born-digital content or modify existing forms.</td>
<td>Evaluate copyright status of content. Identify items with access restrictions or concerns, including privacy, ethical, or cultural considerations.</td>
<td>Assign standardized rights statements or Creative Commons licenses for collection items. Adopt a takedown policy and, if applicable, a statement on harmful content.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digitize</td>
<td>Determine standards and procedures to be used to digitize physical materials or process born-digital content.</td>
<td>Using identified standards, undertake digitization or born-digital processing work either in-house or with an appropriate vendor or partner.</td>
<td>Use a quality control checklist to review content and confirm it meets identified standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>Adopt a consistent naming convention for digital files. Determine standards to be used to describe digital content.</td>
<td>Using identified standards, create basic descriptive metadata for items.</td>
<td>Develop a data dictionary and use controlled vocabularies to standardize metadata.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Share</td>
<td>Review goals and options for providing access to content. Choose an access platform or system that meets identified needs.</td>
<td>Make items and associated descriptive information available for discovery and repurposing.</td>
<td>Implement techniques to support accessibility of online content, including alt text, transcripts, and other best practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Store and Maintain</td>
<td>Create and maintain a collection-level inventory of digital content. Move primary files to a centralized location.</td>
<td>Store at least two, preferably three, copies of each primary file and related metadata, with one copy stored off-site. Check and refresh storage media on a regular schedule.</td>
<td>Plan for future storage needs. Use software tools to check file integrity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Identify primary users and ways to engage them with digital content.</td>
<td>Collect data and stories about how digital content is used.</td>
<td>Use collected data and stories to inform future collection development, outreach, and programming. Share knowledge with other practitioners to build community around digital work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Check As You Go

As you move towards a new level in any of the focus areas, consider the following questions:

**Is it documented?**
- Are new directions and decisions represented in existing policies, such as a collection development policy or a rights and reproductions policy? Do policies need to be revised or do new policies need to be created?
- Are new procedures or processes written down, such as steps for using a scanner or standards for how to describe content? Is there enough information provided that someone new to the organization would be able to carry out these processes on their own?
- Are partnerships or arrangements with other parties, such as a digitization vendor or a content contributor, documented in some way, like a contract, Memorandum of Understanding, or letter of commitment?

**Is it sustainable?**
- Is there a plan for how this work will continue to be supported by staff and/or volunteers from year to year?
- What work needs to be done to maintain relationships with partners or collaborators?
- Is funding committed for any recurring costs, such as a cloud storage service?
- Are best practices and widely-adopted standards being used, so that digital work is “future proof”—that is, it’s compatible with commonly-used platforms and systems?
- Is there an exit strategy for any tools or partnerships? For instance, can content be removed from a platform if necessary?

**Is it appropriate, relevant and/or accessible?**
- Are new digital initiatives in line with the organization’s mission and values? Do digital initiatives reflect community needs and respect community priorities?
- If information is available publicly, is it violating any privacy, copyright or ethical considerations?
- Can all potential users access the content? What can be done to improve accessibility for people with disabilities?

**Is it working?**
- Are we doing what we set out to do? What were our goals and have we achieved them, partially or fully?
- What have we learned and what will we do differently next time?
- What lessons learned would be helpful to other organizations?
- Have we communicated our project decisions and progress to stakeholders and partners, including any funders?

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