

California Revealed
Frequently Asked Questions on
Nominating Original Materials for Digitization
(ver. 2017.08.25)

1. Who can nominate materials for digitization? Is it limited to public libraries? Can individuals participate?

California Revealed is open to all non-profit organizations: libraries, archives, museums, historical societies. Due to our fiscal arrangement, we cannot directly work with individuals but we encourage partner organizations to collect original materials from individuals, temporarily, if willing. The project could digitize the materials while held by the partner; the individual, partner and California Revealed could get copies of the digital objects; and the original materials would go back to the individual after digitization. Requests for copies of digital objects would be directed to the partner institution.

2. What can we digitize?

Books; scrapbooks; directories; ledgers; newspapers; newsletters; microfilm; microfiche; pamphlets; documents (individual sheets); photographs; postcards; slides; sound recordings; and moving image recordings. This list is not all inclusive; please tell us what is most significant to digitize and we'll try our best to find the appropriate vendor to accommodate the format.

3. What are your selection criteria?

- significance of the nominated original materials to local and state history
- availability of discovery metadata for the nominated original materials
- intellectual property rights in the public domain, held by the owning library, or secured from the rights holder, when possible
- evidence of collaboration among community heritage institutions
- technical limitations of equipment to digitize original materials
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4. What does “collaboration among community heritage institutions” mean?

“Collaboration” is a collective effort to reveal local heritage. The project intentionally keeps the definition open, recognizing that institutions may already be collaborating informally. Some institutions may collaborate by gathering collections around a theme or subject; some may collaborate by helping one another with the description/metadata or any step of the project, some may collaborate on an outreach event to promote online collections after digitization.

Please keep in mind that even for collaborations each institution separately must fill out an application and nominate original materials it proposes to digitize.

5. Our institution wants to collaborate with another institution to digitize the same collection. How many nominations are we allowed to submit?

Each institution can nominate up to 1000 (1,000 simple item records) if each nominated original requires only a single digital image (e.g., individual photographs), or 100 (100 complex item records) if each nomination is an audiovisual recording or has multiple parts or pages (e.g. an oral history cassette, a folder of images described at the folder level and pertaining to one subject, or a book of multiple pages).

If an award is made, each institution can decide if it wants its own collection page at the California Revealed website, or if it wants to combine digital objects in one virtual collection.

Keep in mind that each collection has contact information, so if you combine digital objects, you'll need to choose which institution will field user requests for copies of the files.

6. How do I nominate a collection of materials?

We normally catalog at the item-level, so we need a separate metadata record (i.e., line on the spreadsheet), for each original nomination, please.

An exception is made for original materials to be cataloged at the folder-level or envelope-level, such as a group of clippings or photos on a single subject. The digitization vendor will attach all the scans together as one object, as a .pdf file, for online access. However, we suggest that you don't catalog at the folder level if you anticipate a future need to pull out and describe individual items from the folder. Please consider how the user will search, view, and interact with the digital object.

To help us estimate costs, please let us know on the nomination form the number of items or pages in the folder and the maximum dimensions of the largest item in the folder. The numbers can be approximate.

7. If an album, book or binder does not lie flat when opened, or if part of the content is obscured, is it still possible to digitize or will it need to be unbound?

Most bound items do not need to be unbound because the digitization vendor uses a 120 degree book cradle to support bound items. They also can use glass to flatten curled pages, if necessary. However, some materials need to be disbound to enable them to be digitized. If a volume needs to be disbound, the owning institution will be consulted in advance to secure permission to disbind.

8. How do I nominate scrapbooks?

Scrapbooks are considered one item requiring one metadata record unless otherwise specified. Each of the original scrapbook pages will be digitized as a whole page image with subsequent images to show foldouts or other information hidden under each layer. The digitization vendor will attach all the scans together as one digital object, as a .pdf file, for online access. Additionally, all inserts between pages will be digitized separately and collated in the .pdf in the same location they currently are kept in the original scrapbook. For the purposes of estimating costs, note the total number of "pages" as the total number of digital images to be scanned, often many more than the number of original scrapbook pages.

9. How do I nominate newspapers and other serial publications?

Standard practice is to create a .pdf file for each issue, so please create one metadata record per issue. (The project limit is 100 issues, but an exception is being made for nominations of a single title, or run, with more than 100 issues, e.g., newspapers and other serial publications). If the nomination is selected, but the cost exceeds available funds, an award to digitize part of the run will be offered.

Your nomination form should use one row for each issue, usually modifying only the issue number, date and number of pages with each issue. Please include the date and volume/issue number in the title to differentiate each issue. If the number of pages per issue is mostly the same issue to issue, then multiply the number of pages in a typical issue by however many issues you have; otherwise a count of the number of pages proposed for scanning will be needed to estimate costs.

If the dates of the publication include 1923 and thereafter, and the library does not hold the intellectual property rights to the publication, the rights issue will need to be addressed prior to digitization.

In addition to providing access (to .pdf files) at the California Revealed website, newspapers digitized by California Revealed will be contributed to the California Digital Newspaper Project for article-level indexing and inclusion in the California Digital Newspaper Collection. The additional work required to provide article-level indexing will be done as capacity and funding allow. Since both projects are funded by the State Library, we are working in tandem, and cooperatively, to provide both preservation and access to endangered historical newspapers.

10. If we have microfilm as well as the original newspapers, which source do you prefer?

We prefer microfilm if it's available as it's less costly to scan compared to scanning the original newspaper. However, if the library does not have the intellectual property rights to the microfilm version (a copy was purchased rather than original filming paid for by the library), or if the film is poor (e.g., scratches, blurry, damaged), the originals may be preferred if they are in better condition. As above, intellectual property rights to the content will need to be addressed prior to digitization.

11. May I nominate maps and other oversized flat resources?

The largest camera currently available (100 megapixels) limits original maps and drawings to maximum dimensions of 28" x 37" at a recommended minimum resolution of 300 ppi. (Originals larger than the maximum size would need to be digitized in sections and the sections digitally "stitched" together, a relatively slow and expensive process that cannot be accommodated at this time.) Additionally, the challenges of shipping oversized originals should be borne in mind when nominating them. If originals in good condition have been folded or rolled for storage, they may be nominated because they will be able to be shipped relatively easily. Fragile or deteriorated originals should not be nominated due to risk of damage during transit.

12. May I nominate transcripts?

We are able to digitize both oral history recordings and transcripts and can create links between them. California Revealed will fund the digitization of one format and ask the partner to fund the digitization of the other. If only one format is to be digitized, we defer to the partner's judgment which format is most valuable to them.

N.B.: While the CA-R recognizes that a full text-searchable transcript could be useful for researchers, the original audio source generally is preferred because it can be a more complete and enriching experience, and the audiovisual media are at greater risk of loss. If you have in-house scanning capabilities for transcripts, we prefer them scanned as searchable .pdf files, with embedded OCR. California Revealed can help upload the .pdf file online and add a link between the transcript and the digitized recording.

13. What is the turnaround time?

Given the scale of the Project, we are estimating most of 12 months from the time your institution receives the award letter to the time your originals come home, but we also plan to negotiate tighter timelines when needed.

14. How can I trust that my original materials are in good hands?

Materials need to be shipped to us ready for scanning, with object identifiers and a packing list, packaged and cushioned in shipping boxes that can be used to safely ship to/from the

digitization vendor. With the award letters, we will post preparation and shipping guidelines for digitization.

Our vendor requirements are in our [Statement of Work](#). California Revealed staff and the vendor handle original materials with extreme care. When the materials arrive at the vendor, the vendor reviews a selection to determine any specific needs. The vendor will report any problems, as well as any treatment or repair needed before proceeding with digitization. California Revealed staff will pass this information to you to decide how we should proceed. All partner original materials at the vendor are housed in storage areas that are light and temperature controlled. A trained digitization technician will carefully place books on a book cradle; photographs and documents are placed on a copyboard. The vendor uses an overhead digital array camera to capture the images. Extra care is taken if the originals are fragile or brittle. Audiovisual recordings are transferred on clean, calibrated equipment. Film is transferred on sprocketless scanners.

Items are not insured by California Revealed, so please check with your insurer to make sure the materials are protected while away from the home institution. Items are insured in transit from the CA-R project site to the vendor via FedEx, while at the vendor's facilities by the vendor, and during shipment back to the partner by FedEx.

15. If I have received a California Revealed award in the past, am I allowed to submit additional nominations?

Yes, partners are welcome to nominate additional materials in response to all calls for nominations.