

POSITION PAPER

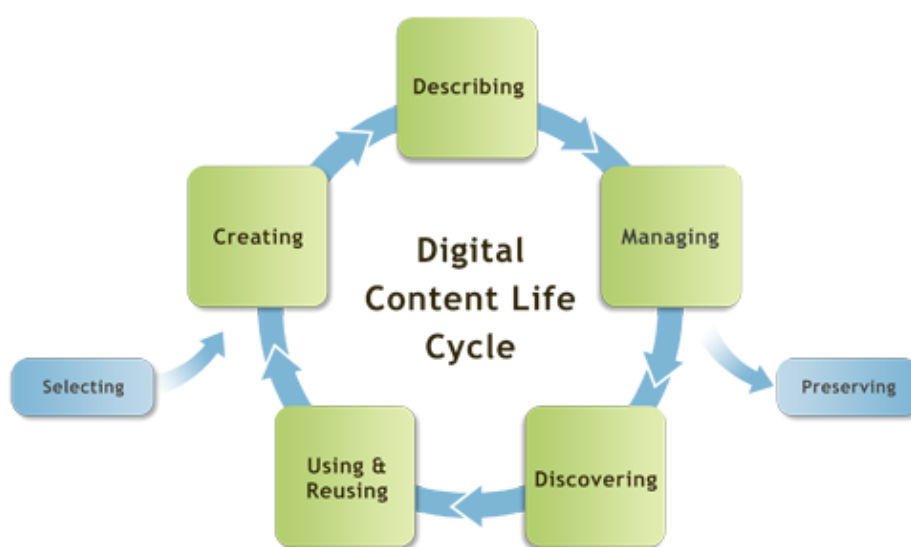
Managing the Digitisation Supply Chain

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20.09.2010

1. Summary

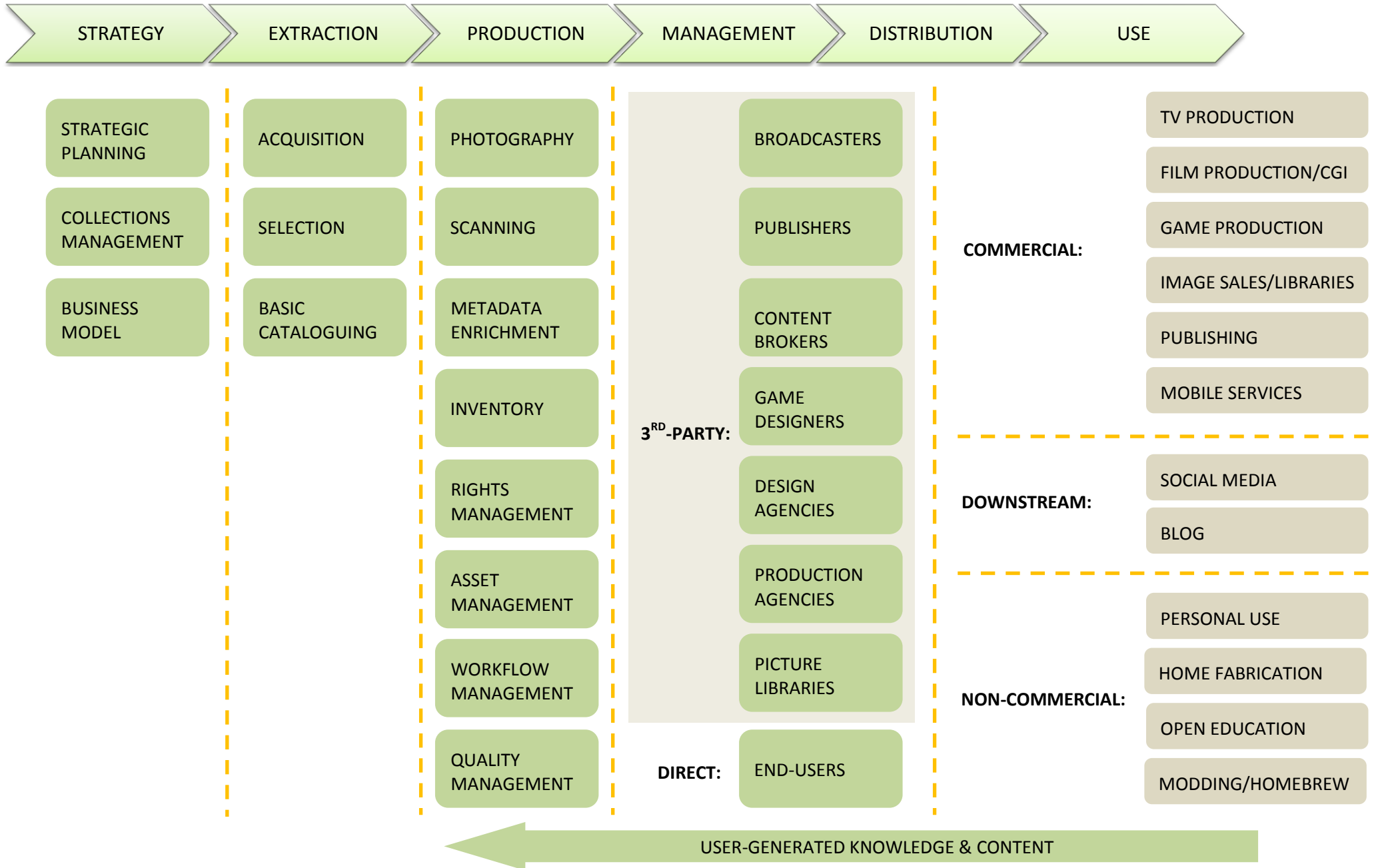
1.1 The standard definition of Digitisation focuses on the concept of a *Digital Content Lifecycle* which combines the following elements into an holistic process within libraries, archives and museums:



Source: [makeit.digital.nz](http://makeit.digital.nz)

- 1.2 The key features of this lifecycle are that it is ongoing, cyclical and incremental – it is a continuing process within the institution, which ensures that new content and contextualising information continues to be generated.
- 1.3 Over the previous decade, various standards and protocols have been developed to help cultural institutions manage the processes of digitisation. These include technical and format standards, metadata content and structure standards and protocols for data interchange and interoperability.
- 1.4 The difficulty with this lifecycle model is that while it works in relation to itself, it fails to take account of the broader business, strategic and operational contexts within which the digitisation is taking place. It is sufficient to the generation of internal research resources, but it fails in several respects to reflect the broader supply-chain by which raw materials are acquired, packaged and brought to audiences in an economically-sustainable way (both directly and indirectly through 3<sup>rd</sup>-party channels).
- 1.5 The purpose of this new programme, undertaken jointly by the Collections Trust and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council is to overlay the concept of the *Digital Content Lifecycle* with a *Digital Content Supply Chain*, in order to maximise use, sustainability and return on investment.

## 2. A Supply-Chain Model for Digital Cultural Content



### **3. Basic Principle**

- 3.1 The basic principle underlying this model is that decisions about the *inputs* to the Digitisation process (the selection of objects) and the *outputs* (the format of the digital assets and the contextual metadata) should both be attuned to the forms of commercial and non-commercial use which best fit the organisation's strategic objectives and the needs of their users.
- 3.2 Hence, if it is the organisation's strategic purpose to provide online access to images of artefacts or scans of books for non-commercial research, they should develop a Digitisation workflow and protocols appropriate to this purpose.
- 3.3 If, on the other hand, the organisation is required to develop income streams based on their digital assets, they may develop a workflow and protocols which are better suited to the provision of hi-res 3D scans which can be repurposed as textures for the commercial game production or film CGI communities.
- 3.4 Maximising the value for money on the Digitisation process also requires organisations to think strategically about their production process – for example by producing higher-than necessary quality surrogates which can be reformatted and degraded to suit multiple outputs and uses.

### **4. Objectives of MLA/Collections Trust Project**

- 4.1 The objective of this project is to enable museums, archives and libraries to make informed decisions about their Digitisation activities, based on a clear understanding of the relationship between their strategic objectives and the different potential forms of use of their content.
- 4.2 The deliverables of this project will include:
  - A 'map' (as above) of the Digital Content Supply Chain
  - A decision-tree which enables people to consider their inputs, outputs and priorities, presented as an interactive tool
  - Guidance on the relevant technical standards and protocols at each point in the supply chain
  - Illustrative examples (use cases) of the different forms of use