

# The Digitisation Machine

The relationship between photography and good collections management

Nick Poole, CEO, Collections Trust

**These slides online at**  
**<http://www.slideshare.net/collectionstrust>**

**The Collections Trust is the  
professional association for people  
working in collections management**

**<http://www.collectionstrust.org.uk>**

# Why photograph?

Photography enables museums to deliver their institutional goals:

- Widening access to collections
- Engaging communities
- Improving search & discovery of collections
- Developing greater understanding
- Supporting teaching and learning
- Enable preservation & continuity

# Understanding the scale of the challenge...

**The Cost of Digitising Europe's Cultural Heritage**

**A Report for the Comité des Sages of the European Commission**

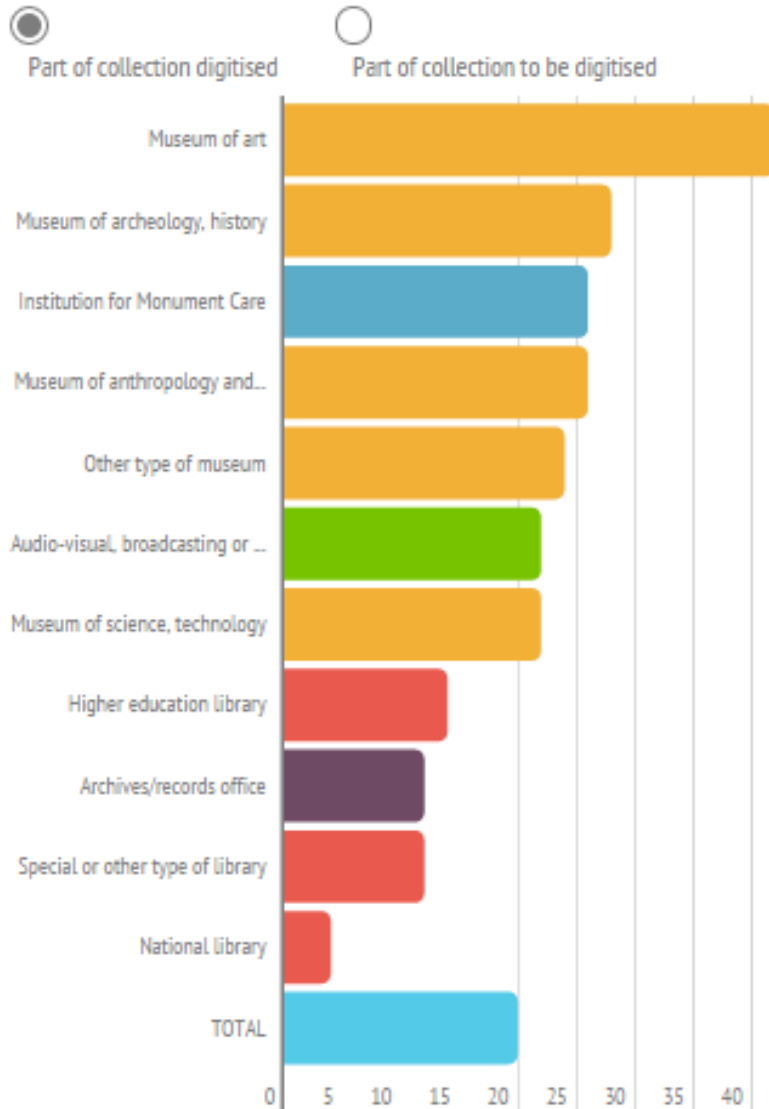
Prepared by Nick Pools, the Collections Trust

November 2010

**“[At 2010 market rates] the estimated total cost of digitising the collections of Europe’s museums, archives and libraries, including the audio-visual material they hold is approximately €100bn, or €10bn per annum for the next 10 years, factoring in a cumulative efficiency gain of 0.5% per annum.”**

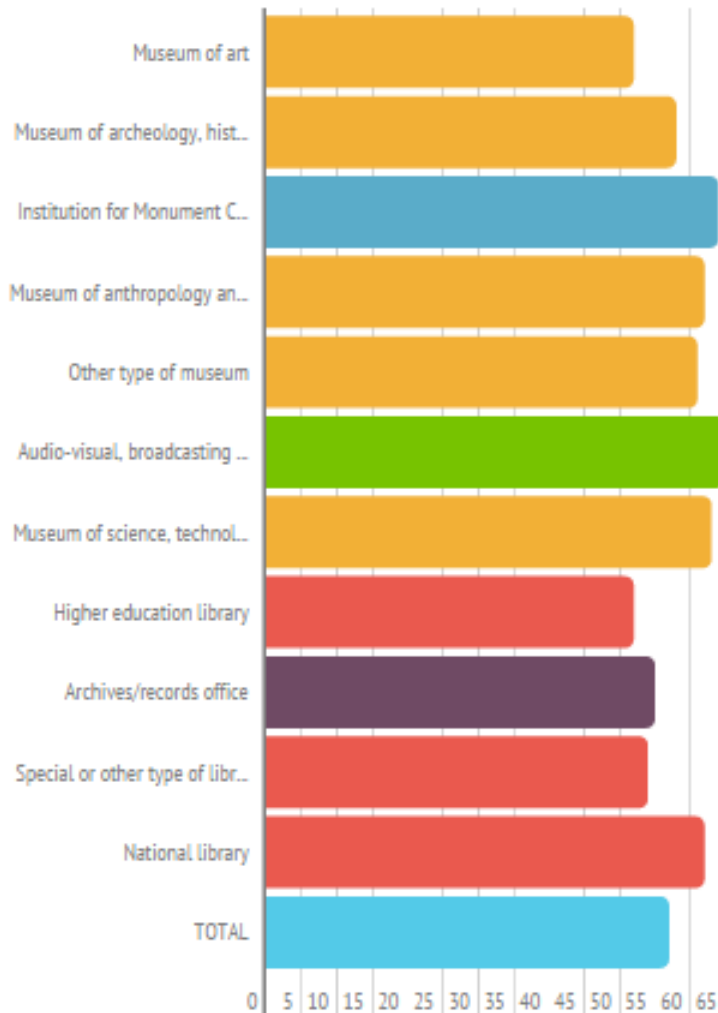
**“There is no accurate figure for the total holdings of Europe’s museums. Estimates vary between 500-600m objects, spanning natural and man-made artefacts.”**





According to the  
**ENUMERATE** study  
after 10 years, on  
average 20% of  
collections had  
been digitised

In 2011-12 this  
meant an  
estimated average  
of 57% of  
collections  
remained to be  
digitised



**The only way to meet a challenge at this scale is to integrate it into the core purpose of our museums**

**“The best way  
to eat a whale is  
in small bites.”**

Director, Digitisation Programme,  
Smithsonian Institution



**“Collections management” is defined as “the policies, processes, plans and procedures involved in the access, use, care and development of a collection”.**

FUNDERS

PUBLIC

OBJECTS



FUNDERS

PUBLIC

OBJECTS

MISSION



FUNDERS

PUBLIC

OBJECTS

MISSION





FUNDERS

PUBLIC

OBJECTS

MISSION

COLLECTING POLICIES



FUNDERS

PUBLIC

OBJECTS

MISSION

COLLECTING POLICIES

DEVELOP

CARE

ACCESS

USE



FUNDERS

PUBLIC

OBJECTS

MISSION

COLLECTING POLICIES

DEVELOP

CARE

ACCESS

USE

PEOPLE

SYSTEMS

PROCESS

CONTENT



FUNDERS

PUBLIC

OBJECTS

MISSION

COLLECTING POLICIES

DEVELOP

CARE

ACCESS

USE

PEOPLE

SYSTEMS

PROCESS

CONTENT

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE & PURPOSE



FUNDERS

PUBLIC

OBJECTS

MISSION

COLLECTING POLICIES

DEVELOP

CARE

ACCESS

USE

PEOPLE

SYSTEMS

PROCESS

CONTENT

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE & PURPOSE

RICH CULTURAL EXPERIENCES



**If this is the ‘machine’ for developing a collection, caring for it & making it accessible to the public, photography at scale & to quality standards has to be one of the core components of that machine.**

**Digitisation is not a project**

PROJECT FUNDING

INTERNAL

2004-5



PROJECT

INTERNAL

2004-5

PROJECT

INTERNAL

2011-12

**Collections management is one of the biggest & most consistent areas of investment for museums – it makes sense to ensure that photography is embedded within it**

# The SPECTRUM Standard

- Industry standard for collections management
- Developed jointly with RCE in the Netherlands
- A procedural standard, not a quality standard
- Used in 27,000 museums worldwide
- 40 countries
- 8 languages



**STANDARD**



**SCHEMA**

**GUIDANCE**



**NEW IDEAS**

**COMPLIANCE  
(19)**

**WORLDWIDE COMMUNITY  
(27,000)**



[Dossiers](#) > Dossiers



## Dossier: Spectrum

Delen: [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Email](#)

### SPECTRUM voor collectiemanagement

SPECTRUM is een handleiding voor collectiemanagement. De handleiding is ontwikkeld voor én door museumprofessionals. Collections Trust in Londen startte met de ontwikkeling in 1994 en is nog steeds de eigenaar van SPECTRUM.

SPECTRUM bestaat uit twee delen:



aanmaakdatum 11 februari 2014, laatst gewijzigd 19 januari 2015

### Contact

**drs. A.A.M. (Alexandra) van Kleef**  
Medewerker Kunstcollecties

[s.van.kleef@cultureelerfgoed.nl](mailto:s.van.kleef@cultureelerfgoed.nl)

033 – 421 71 08



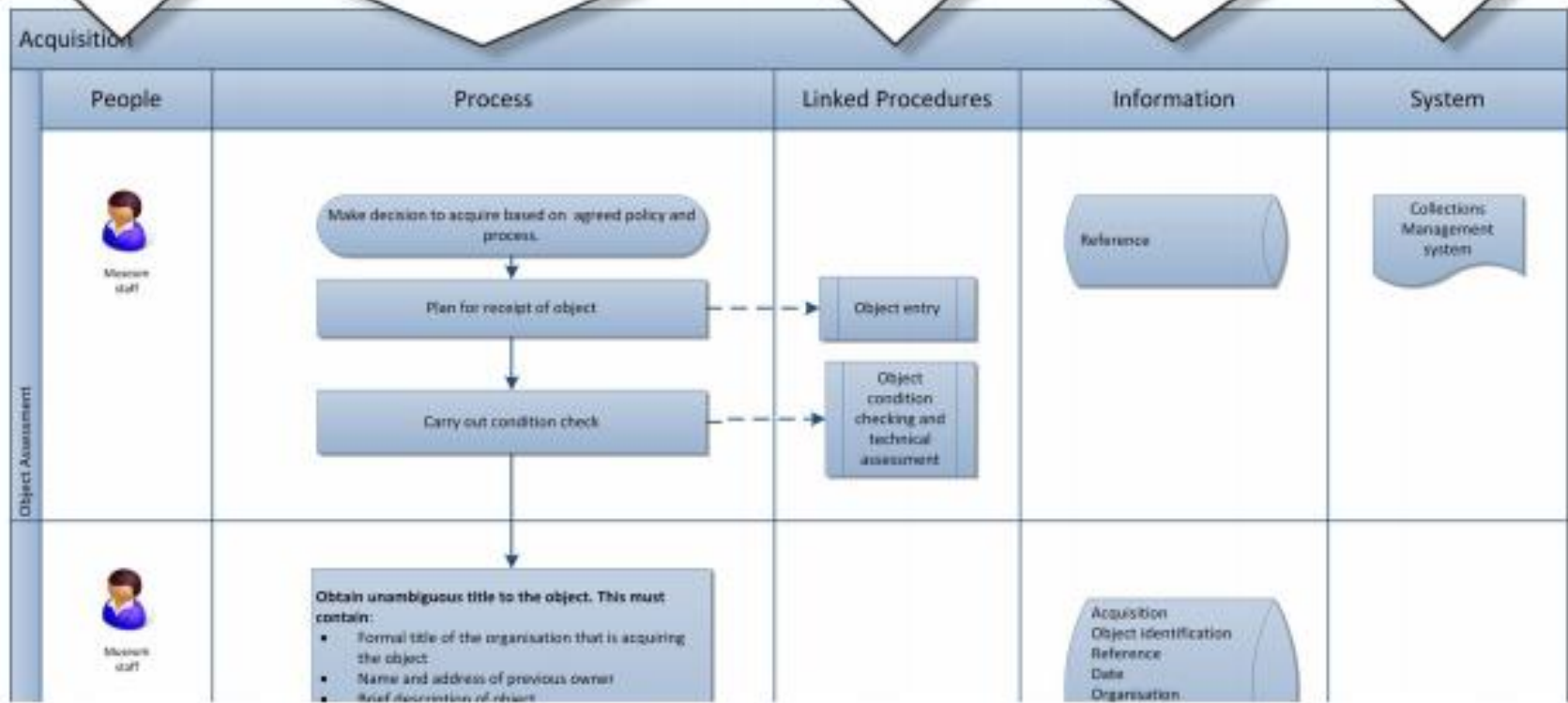
Types of people with a role in the procedure

The steps of the process, including decision points

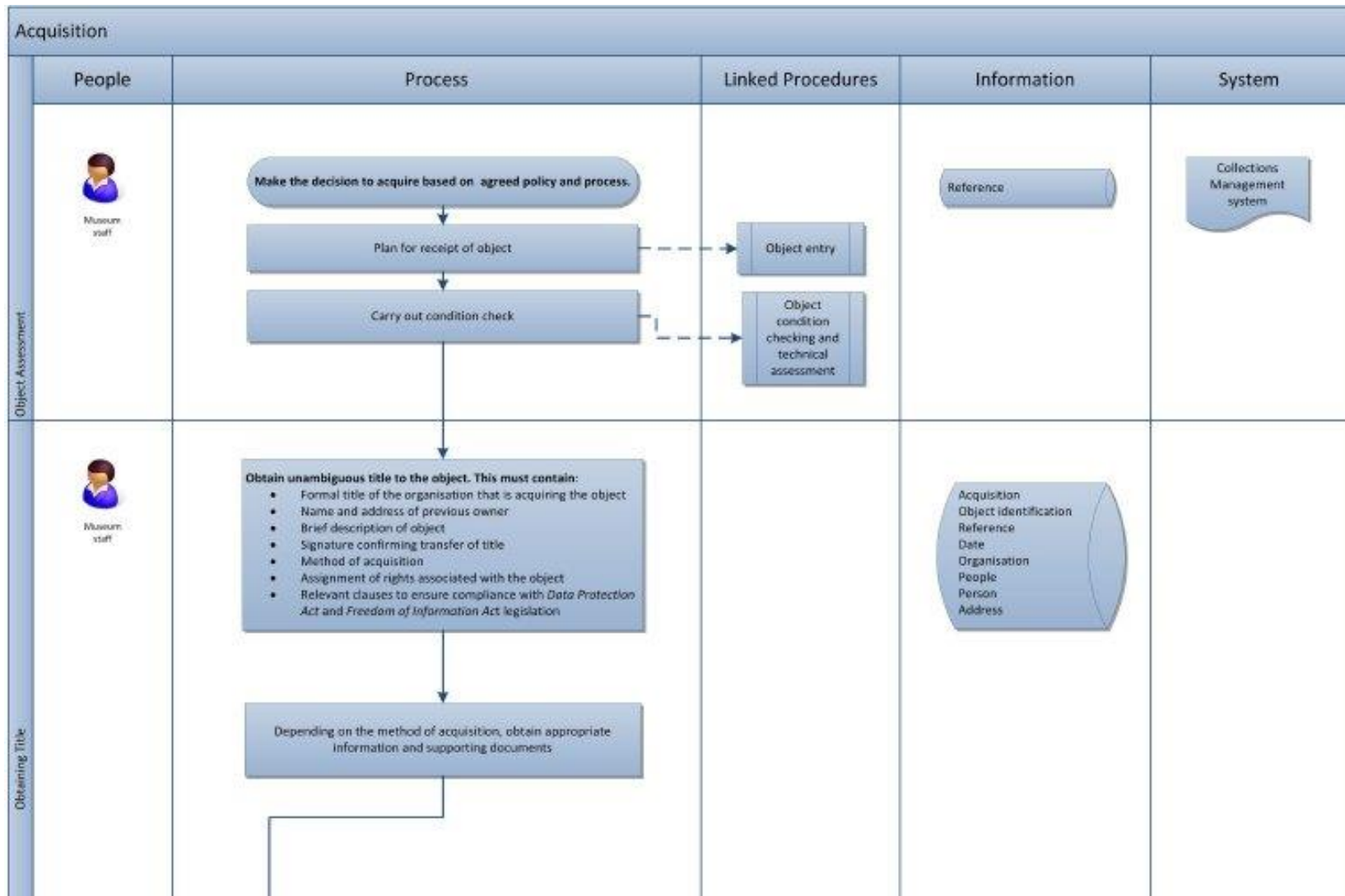
Other procedures you may need to refer to

Lists of information requirements relevant to the procedure

All the procedures are part of your Collections Management system



Object Assessment



# SPECTRUM DAM

- Since 2014, SPECTRUM has integrated Digital Asset Management across the collections management lifecycle
- DAM is about organisational culture more than databases
- Valuing images, knowledge & digital media as cultural heritage assets





# Entry procedures

PRE-ENTRY

ENTRY

LOANS IN

ACQUISITION

The processes for introducing new material to collections provide an opportunity to capture images & knowledge

# Management procedures

INVENTORY

RISK

LOCATION

INSURANCE

TRANSPORT

VALUATION

CATALOGUING

AUDIT

CONDITION

RIGHTS

CONSERVATION

USE

The ongoing  
custodianship of &  
interaction with  
collections provide an  
ongoing requirement for  
image capture &  
management

# Exit procedures

EXIT

LOSS

LOANS OUT

DEACCESSION

The responsible removal  
of material from  
collections depends on  
good-quality cataloguing,  
documentation & images

FUNDERS

PUBLIC

OBJECTS

MISSION

COLLECTING POLICIES

DEVELOP

CARE

ACCESS

USE

PEOPLE

SYSTEMS

PROCESS

CONTENT

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE & PURPOSE

RICH CULTURAL EXPERIENCES



FUNDERS

PUBLIC

OBJECTS

MISSION

COLLECTING POLICIES

**DEVELOP**

**CARE**

**ACCESS**

**USE**

PEOPLE

SYSTEMS

PROCESS

CONTENT

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE & PURPOSE

RICH CULTURAL EXPERIENCES



FUNDERS

PUBLIC

OBJECTS

MISSION

COLLECTING POLICIES

**DEVELOP**

**CARE**

**ACCESS**

**USE**

**IMAGING**

PEOPLE

SYSTEMS

PROCESS

CONTENT

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE & PURPOSE

RICH CULTURAL EXPERIENCES



FUNDERS

PUBLIC

OBJECTS

MISSION

COLLECTING POLICIES

DEVELOP

CARE

ACCESS

USE

PEOPLE

SYSTEMS

PROCESS

CONTENT

IMAGING

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE & PURPOSE

RICH CULTURAL EXPERIENCES



**If imaging is a requirement across the collections management lifecycle, we need to equip non-specialists with the skills to take good photographs throughout these processes**



**If photographs of collections items are themselves part of the collection, we need to manage & preserve them as such**

**We need to develop systems which maintain the relationship between the object, the image, the knowledge and the circumstances under which it was created**

**Good photographs are one of the  
foundations of good collections  
management**

# Thankyou!

Nick Poole

@NickPoole1

[www.slideshare.net/collectiontrust](http://www.slideshare.net/collectiontrust)