"University digital asset" working definition
15 January 2004

A digital asset is an electronic object that has value for some purpose. It may have been created digitally or it may have been digitized from a non-digital original source. Examples of digital assets include word processing documents, databases, websites, organizational records, digital recordings of musical performances, etc.

To become part of the University's digital preservation program, a digital asset must support (directly or indirectly) the University's fundamental instructional, research, or public service missions. A digital object should be considered a University Digital Asset if it satisfies one or more of the following criteria:

· It was created in fulfillment of the research, teaching, or creative work of University faculty, staff, or students;
· It is relevant to the planning, managing, operating, controlling, or auditing of administrative functions of an administrative or academic unit of the University;
· It was purchased or licensed by the university in fulfillment of an academic or administrative function under a contract that permits continuing use of the asset (for example, certain electronic journals licensed through the University Libraries).

Not all University digital assets will have equal priority for preservation. This working definition of "University digital asset" establishes minimum conditions for eligibility and does not determine any additional conditions that an object may need to meet to be included in the preservation program or set priorities for preservation.

Notes:
· A digital object is defined for the purposes of this document as something (e.g., an image, an audio recording, a text document) that has been digitally encoded and integrated with metadata to support discovery, use, and storage of those objects. It should be noted that there is an important distinction between digital objects (e.g., an encoded text document or a digitized image) and the digital collections to which they belong. The distinction between digital objects and digital collections is analogous to the distinction between a collection of works by Arthur Conan Doyle and a particular copy of the Hound of the Baskervilles. Continuing the analogy, this document would describe standards for the description, structure and content of the digital Hound. This document, however, would be silent on how to represent the fact that A Study in Scarlet was also part of the collection. Metadata is an important component of digital objects, as it supports the discovery, use, storage, and migration of these objects over time. Metadata must be collected and associated with each digital object as part of the collection development process. Two types of digital objects may be created, simple objects or single files, such as a digital image collection, and complex objects such as a digital books which include many files that are related and linked to one another in a specific order. It is important to make a distinction between the individual image files created in a digitization project and a digital library object which is the aggregation of digitized content and its related metadata. For example, a digital book object could include hundreds of page image files and metadata which describes their relationship to one another. [Adapted from text prepared by the California Digital Library]

· For the purposes of this investigation, digital assets of the University's affiliated corporations (Athletic Corporation, Endowment Association, Alumni Association, KUCR, Kansas Unions) will be considered University assets, on the grounds that these corporations exist

to fulfill the mission of the University. However, these affiliated assets may not meet additional conditions required for preservation.

· To be a "University digital asset" it is not necessary that the University own the intellectual property in question (example: research papers written by faculty members may be University assets). However, it might be necessary, before the University can implement preservation measures for the asset, that the owner grant certain permissions to the University.