



NSDL Collection Policy

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- 1.0 Mission of the NSDL**
- 2.0 Communities Served**
- 3.0 Policy Coverage**
- 4.0 Collection Scope**
- 5.0 Selection**
- 6.0 Accessioning**
- 7.0 Deaccessioning**
- 8.0 Responsibilities**

1.0 Mission of the NSDL

NSDL's mission is to provide quality digital resources to the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education community, both formal and informal, institutional and individual. NSDL resources are continuously refined by an extensive network of STEM educational and disciplinary professionals. Their work is based on user data, disciplinary knowledge, and participation in the rapid evolution of digital resources as major elements of effective STEM learning.

Through its collections, tools, services and partnerships, the NSDL strives to have a demonstrable impact on teacher practice and student learning. Partnerships involving academic, business, government, and other organizations coupled with sustainable technologies and practices are critical to NSDL's long term availability and relevance to the STEM community. The NSDL embodies long-standing library traditions of service, access, and privacy that foster a spirit of inquiry and the accessibility of science to all.

2.0 Communities Served

The NSDL collections are intended to serve the needs of a broad range of users: K-16 teachers and students; faculty and students at colleges, universities, and technical schools, generally with an emphasis on introductory courses and before discipline specialization. Self-learners; and those who teach and learn in informal educational settings such as museums, science centers, and public libraries are included. NSDL also provides resources of interest for curriculum development, educational evaluation, and educational research.

3.0 Policy Coverage

This policy applies to resources, collections, and the metadata describing them, which are accessioned and discoverable through NSDL.org and/or services that deliver those NSDL.org collections to other sources. Metadata includes resource metadata, annotation metadata, and paradata (usage data). The NSDL does not hold actual resources, rather it provides access to resources through metadata descriptions. For additional information see the NSDL Terms of Use.

4.0 Collection Scope

4.1 Subject matter. The NSDL collects 1) resources designed for teaching, learning, and research relevant to STEM education, 2) annotations, reviews, and comments about resources and 3) usage data about resources (hereafter referred to as *paradata*).

4.2 Quality and type of resource materials. Collection developers should refer to NSDL's Resource Quality Guidelines for assistance in identification and selection of resources most likely to meet the needs of educators and learners. These quality guidelines provide a target of excellence for resources and collections accessioned into the NSDL. In addition to emphasizing high resource quality, the NSDL Collection provides a variety of resource types to support learner needs:

- ***instructional materials***, including classroom activities, laboratory experiments, demonstrations, models, case studies, courses, simulations, tutorials, curricula, modules, field trips, problem sets, teacher guides, lesson plans, interactives, projects
- ***audio/visual materials, such as animations, videos, maps, graphs, images, illustrations***
- ***pedagogical resources***, including teaching techniques, online professional development courses, educational evaluation
- ***assessment materials***, such as exams, quizzes, questionnaires, self-assessments, answer keys, rubrics, portfolios
- ***reference materials that support teaching and learning***, such as relevant background material and content-related professional development material
- ***datasets that support teaching and learning***, including visual, factual, and numeric information; remotely sensed and observed data; trials; databases
- ***tools and products***, such as open source software, models, or applications for interacting, accessing, manipulating, or viewing resources and data

4.3 Impacts on teaching and learning. The NSDL focuses collection efforts on collecting resources, annotations, and paradata that can make an important or significant contribution to teaching and learning. This includes the content, skills, or understandings that are likely to be important to STEM educators and learners. For example, NSDL resources, annotations and paradata should focus on:

- learning called for in U.S. national or state educational standards

- mastering of foundational skills needed for advancement in a discipline or career
- understanding of a concept central to a STEM discipline
- understanding of linkages and interactions among or within STEM disciplines, or between STEM and other disciplines

4.4 Quality and type of annotations and paradata. The NSDL provides additional contextual information to describe the utility of, and user experience with resources by using annotation metadata and paradata. The content of these metadata may include (but is not limited too):

- educational standards (either national, state or local)
- comments and teaching tips on working with a resource
- numerical counts of user actions with a resource (e.g. favorited)
- ratings, rankings and votes
- formal reviews or other detailed discussions about a resource
- related resources or other language versions
- keywords tagged to a resource

These data elements can be shared by type of audience, educational level, or subject area.

4.5 Access. No fees are charged for searching the NSDL. The NSDL embraces the principle of open access and favors such resources in collection development activities. To ensure wide accessibility and use, the NSDL favors resources that are free or available at low cost and are linked directly from metadata provided to the NSDL. However, some resources require registration, a log-in, or a subscription fee.

Most NSDL resources are readily accessible online. However, the teaching and learning of STEM content often requires work with physical objects such as rock samples, fossil specimens, museum collections, equipment, and other materials. Therefore, NSDL includes information about physical objects and about obtaining science-related materials and equipment.

4.6 Providers of content. The providers of the NSDL resources and metadata include:

- the NSDL network and partners
- professional organizations, universities, government agencies, and other grant-funded projects with educationally-focused STEM collections and resources
- educators and faculty with high quality teaching materials

4.7 Geographic coverage and languages. All geographic areas are included in the scope of the collection. The majority of the resources are in English, although resources in other languages are accepted and encouraged.

5.0 Selection

Responsibility for the development and curation of the NSDL Collection is shared by NSDL collection contributors and the NSDL Collection Development Team (CDT). Collection contributors and the CDT identify, select, and/or create resources that fall within the scope of their managed collections. All resource and annotation collections are subject to review and approval by the NSDL Accessioning Board (NAB) prior to accessioning and deaccessioning. Paradata collections are reviewed by the CDT for appropriateness and interoperability. New collection contributors are encouraged to [contact the NSDL](#) about their interest in submitting a collection

The NSDL welcomes user suggestions for adding individual resources. Users who wish to suggest individual resources complete the [Recommend a Resource](#) form to provide basic descriptive information about the suggested resource.

6.0 Accessioning

Accessioning refers to the process by which new collections are accepted and integrated for discovery through NSDL.org and/or services that deliver those NSDL.org collections to other sources.

In reviewing eligibility of new collection for inclusion in NSDL, the NAB considers the following criteria:

- Relevance to the NSDL's mission
- Fit with the NSDL collection scope
- Alignment to the principles the [NSDL Resource Quality Checklist](#) when appropriate to the nature of the resources
- Agreement with the [NSDL Terms of Use](#)
- Adherence to the criteria in the [Resource Metadata Rubric](#), [Annotation Metadata Rubric](#), or the [Paradata Metadata Rubric](#) to meet metadata indexing, sharing and metrics-gathering requirements
- Relevance to needs defined in the [NSDL Collection Development Blueprint](#)

In order to ensure that the overall size of any one collection does not negatively impact user experience in discovering relevant resources, some large collections may be accessioned as a single resource in the NSDL (*i.e. as a portal*). Some collection builders provide stewardship for resources and services for user communities or disciplines broader than NSDL's collection scope. NSDL encourages contribution of the resources in these collections that fall within NSDL's scope. If such broad collections cannot be refined for contribution to NSDL, these collections are considered out of scope.

Specific procedures for contributing resources and collections are described in the [Contribute Resources or Collections](#) document.

7.0 Deaccessioning

Deaccessioning, or weeding, is the process of removing materials from a library, or, within a digital library, rendering them no longer discoverable. Deaccessioning of resources and collections is occasionally necessary for the maintenance of a useful and reliable repository.

If a resource or collection changes over time and then fails to meet the above accessioning criteria as determined by the NAB and/or the CDT, it may be deaccessioned. Collections with a significant number of resources that fail to meet the accessioning criteria may be deaccessioned. In addition, the following criteria may result in deaccessioning:

- There has been an official finding of plagiarism or copyright violation concerning the resource.
- The person or organization that contributed the resources or collections has requested their removal from the NSDL.
- The resource is no longer available (such as a broken link)
- The resource is not directly accessible (e.g. subscription cost or goes to a landing page where it is difficult to follow the link to the actual resource)
- The annotation or paradata shows a deliberate attempt to skew information about a resource either positively or negatively

Users who discover resources that are nonfunctioning (e.g., broken links) or deemed to be inappropriate for inclusion in the NSDL are encouraged to [contact the NSDL](#) with such notification.

8.0 Responsibilities

8.1 The NSDL Accessioning Board (NAB)¹. The NSDL Accessioning Board (NAB) reviews and approves all resource and annotation collections prior to accessioning and deaccessioning according to the requirements of this policy. The NAB is responsible for ensuring that collections meet the criteria as prescribed.

The NAB is comprised of up to five (5) representative members of the NSDL and STEM education community who do not have explicit conflicts of interest in NSDL collection review activities. The NAB meets when necessary.

8.2 The NSDL Collection Development Team (CDT). The NSDL Collection Development Team (CDT) identifies and selects resources and collections that are within scope of the NSDL. The CDT is comprised of NSDL staff. They work with collection contributors to manage and support NSDL collections. Additionally, the CDT

¹ Procedures for the NAB are described in the Contribute a Resource or Collection document at <http://nsdl.org/collection/>.

is responsible for supporting the NAB in its deliberations and implementing its recommendations.

Maintenance of this Document

This document will be reviewed and revised as necessary to reflect changes in the capabilities, practices, and procedures of the NSDL.