Preserving Oakville's Artistic Legacy

A Feasibilty Study

April 2020

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For the Oakville Arts Council

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ARTS
council

Executive Summary

F rom October 2019 to April 2020, the Oakville Arts Council studied the feasibility of creating and publishing an online-only digital archival collection of materials relating to the history and legacy of the fine and performing arts, craft, artisanry, and creativity in the Town of Oakville.

This feasibility study reports the results of the research, consultations, and discussions on the topic. Project staff identified archival best practices including what types of archive will work best for our organization, sector and community, how to create a useful and usable archive, how to maintain what may be a large archive on a small budget, and what the costs might be.

The OAC met with community organizations and individuals, it surveyed the Oakville Arts Council membership and the artistic community, it performed research on the relevant technical and financial aspects, and it surveyed existing holdings of relevant archival and historical collecting institutions to see what was already being collected and what gaps existed.

Through this work, the OAC determined that there is no collecting institution currently strategically preserving these materials, and that most Oakville artists and arts organizations have no plans in place for long-term safeguarding or access to their materials.

The OAC identified several best practices and a list of potential collaborators and partners in this project. The recommendations are as follows:

- That the Oakville Arts Council contract with a third-party vendor for remote hosting of their digital collections.
- That the OAC use a vendor/hosting service with servers located within Canada to avoid complications of international data governance and privacy laws.
- That the OAC consider either the Omeka open-source web-publishing platform or the VITA Digital Toolkit collections management platform for its digital archive.
- That the OAC provision the yearly cost of hosting and support for the digital collection ($1300-$2700 CAD) in its core operating budget.
- That the OAC sign an agreement with the Oakville Historical Society for use of their digitization equipment and laboratory, as well as for associated staffing needs, for the duration of the project.
- That the OAC contract with a like-minded organization to plan for transfer of project assets and responsibilities in keeping with succession planning.
- That the OAC pursue the core project components of digitization and the creation of an online digital collections platform as a priority, and consider pursuing the oral history component separately, through separate funding sources.
- That the OAC build a skilled and experienced digital archivist team for this project.
- That, in order to create further access points into history and increase the audience of the project, the OAC pursue creative and research products based on the digital collection, especially including curriculum-based educational resources for local schools.

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Introduction

I n 2019, the Oakville Arts Council developed the idea for building a digital archive for the creative and artistic communities of the Town of Oakville. No brick-and-mortar archival space currently exists dedicated to the preservation and access of these materials. We note wonderful work from the Oakville Public Library to digitize and share heritage materials relating to the Oakville Arts Society and some other points of local history, but no digital archival collections have yet attempted to broadly document the artistic community.

The Oakville Arts Council procured an Ontario Trillium Foundation Seed Grant in 2019-2020 to undertake a feasibility study to assess what such a digital archive could look like: what was both technically and financially feasible, and what would best suit the unique needs of the community. With this grant, the OAC hired a digital archivist from October 2019 to April 2020, to help build capacity both within the OAC to understand projects of this type and to support the community individuals and organizations that would be involved in this project if pursued.

This feasibility study reports the results of our research, consultations, and discussions on the topic. We identified archival best practices including what type(s) of archive will work best for our organization, sector and community, how to create a useful and usable archive, how to maintain what may be a large archive on a small budget and what the associated costs might be.

Questions we sought to answer:

- What are the past, present and future needs of the Oakville Arts Council and local arts and culture organizations in terms of archiving their materials?

- How much creative output is at risk of being lost to the community?
- What do best practices look like for not-for-profit or charitable organizations and what is the best way to create an archive that encourages arts and culture organizations to regularly contribute their work and engages the community-at-large?
- What issues do organizations face in terms of creating and maintaining their creative histories?
- What knowledge, skills and financial resources will the Oakville Arts Council need in order to produce a creative history for the Oakville community and its arts and culture sector?

We defined the scope of work that may be included in the Oakville Arts Council archive, and explored the various styles, technologies and costs needed to go create an archive. We identified risks and ongoing costs, the most suitable technology, and best practices for various desirable project components.

In our Seed Grant, we estimated that over 400 individuals representing 50 local organizations and stakeholders in the Oakville community would benefit directly from the information gathered in this feasibility study. Our key stakeholders and supporters will benefit from this feasibility study, both through the information gathered and published and through increased confidence in the ability of our organization to deliver on a project of this scope.

Acknowledgements

We are indebted to our stakeholders including the Town of Oakville, the community groups and arts organizations and individual artists that participated in this feasibility study, whether through email, phone, face-to-face meetings, or survey responses.

The following groups in particular joined us for one-on-one meetings:

- Oakville Museum
- Oakville Historical Society
- Joshua Creek Heritage Arts Centre
- Oakville Centre for Performing Arts
- World of Threads
- Oakville Quilters Guild
- Oakville Symphony Orchestra
- Oakville Sculptors and Woodcarvers Guild
- Burl-Oak Theatre Group
- Oakville Fibre Artists
- Oakville Choral Society
- Tempus Choral Society
- Oakville Arts Studio
- Canadian Tapestry Textile Centre

- Art House
- Oakville Chamber Orchestra
- Oakville Festival of Film and Art
- Oakville Wind Orchestra
- Bronte Historical Society

We also wish to thank those who joined us for our two workshop webinars on how to preserve and donate archival materials.

We are very grateful to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for the funding which made this feasibility study possible.

Problem Statement

Preamble

T he Town of Oakville is a community in the Halton region of just under 200,000 residents. It sits between the larger artistic communities of Hamilton and Toronto. It has a vibrant creative hobbyist ecosystem. Many emerging artists pursue post-secondary education at Sheridan College in Oakville and can claim temporary residence there. Some professional artists practice in or retire to Oakville, but it is more common to have hobbyists pursuing artistic endeavours in their retirement or spare time.

As a result, Oakville has a large population of patrons, supporters, donors, and volunteers who pursue artistic projects through collaboratives such as orchestras, choirs, theatre and improv groups, and a number of artisan guilds. Many organizations are a mix of volunteer and paid staff, some of which are incorporated as nonprofits or charities and many of whom are informal and ad-hoc.

Arts and culture not only create a sense of belonging and community but also provide meaning and context to the past, help define the present and create the future. Working from this premise, the Oakville Arts Council has explored the feasibility of developing a digital arts archive to preserve and animate Oakville's arts and culture achievements.

This study will look at the desirability of, feasibility of, and support structures already in place for a digital-only archive documenting the creative and artistic history of the Town since its

establishment in 1827. No such project can be complete and exhaustive, so we intend to discern the project components and initiatives most appropriate to the unique cultural identity of the Town of Oakville, as well as ascertain the available collaborations and partnerships with existing Oakville cultural organizations and departments.

Oakville has a committed municipal culture branch that invests in infrastructure and space for the arts, but no dedicated brick-and-mortar archives space. The Town Clerk's Department maintains an Oakville Trafalgar Archive comprised mainly of government records with some private materials.

The Town of Oakville is fortunate to have both Oakville Museum and Oakville Galleries, who focus on exhibits and education. Although each of these organizations have collections, they are not specific to the local artistic community. Oakville Public Library focuses on local history and heritage but with limited space and capacity. The local historical societies, the Oakville Historical Society, the Bronte Historical Society, and the Trafalgar Township Historical Society, collect a broad swath of materials but with limited focus on the arts and creative communities.

The Oakville Arts Council has been the umbrella organization for Oakville's arts and culture sector for 40 years. Through their work and research with over 50 not-for-profit arts and culture organizations and hundreds of artists working in a wide variety of disciplines, they have developed a solid understanding of the composition and challenges facing local organizations.

As many of these local organizations are primarily volunteer driven, their bodies of work, history, and contributions to the community are at risk of being lost to volunteer turn-over and attrition as there is no centralized archive or standardized archival practices specific to local arts and culture contributions.

> *"Many community organizations are not properly represented in archival holdings across Canada and this absence creates a gap in the historical record as well as creates difficulties for the groups themselves as organizational memory is lost with high turnover rates. This leads to a lot of redundant effort due to the fact that projects cannot be built upon if there is no record of the project ever being undertaken to begin with."*
>
> - Braden Cannon, 2009, *Preserving Communities: A Guide to Archiving for Community Organizations*

This feasibility study is funded by an Ontario Trillium Foundation Seed Grant. The Seed Grant application was filed under the "Inspired People" action area, with a focus on preserving and animating cultural histories.

This study is intended to focus on all of the following priorities, action areas, and strategic goals:

Engaged and connected citizens

Building capacity for arts organizations

Resources for teachers and students

Project purpose

The Oakville Arts Council would like to create an archive of the past, present, and future creative histories of the many artists and arts and cultural groups whose contributions benefit the community in so many ways: increased tourism, innovation, health and well-being, and engaged and connected citizens who share a sense of belonging.

A lasting, user-friendly, centralized, digital archive will benefit the arts and culture sector by preserving their accomplishments, the student community by providing a study resource, and the general population with a deeper understanding of the town's artistic history. An archive will benefit thousands of local arts and culture creators as well as the general community, helping more people connect with arts and culture.

A project of this nature would:
- Document Oakville's cultural histories
- Celebrate the legacy and accomplishments of Oakville's creative community
- Build a body of knowledge for future residents to learn about their new home
- Contribute valuable evidence of the creativity and partnerships of the Town
- Design & standardize community archiving efforts
- Increase organizational capacity for arts groups to preserve their own legacies in physical and digital
- Meet community needs, in terms of function, features, accessibility, compatibility
- Find & document Oakville-born and Oakville-educated artists and their careers
- Create a centralized location for research and study on Oakville's art history, emphasizing the context and relationships that make artists successful.

Context

Oakville has a rich and diverse arts community comprised of artists at various stages of their practice (emerging, established, professional, hobbyist) and many community arts groups who deliver arts programming to the community at great value; much of this is delivered though dedicated volunteers and without dedicated store-fronts or operating space. Historical cultural materials may be held in homes or in storage, at high risk of decay and loss. Current organizations may not have access to their own history; past organizations may be lost entirely - in terms of both living staff and documentary materials.

As part of the 2017-2019 Strategic Plan, the Oakville Arts Council conducted a member survey and found that almost 40% of respondents identified as senior citizens and a similar trend can be seen from the results of our most current survey, done for this study. The average age of cultural participants in Oakville trends to older adults and memories and stories are at risk of loss unless they are captured soon.

Because of Oakville's proximity to the cultural communities of Toronto and Hamilton, and the likelihood of moving away from Oakville when an artist becomes professionally successful (or sees moving as a necessary step to become so), we have a secondary target audience of what we are calling "expatriates." There are expatriate artists who are Oakville-born and Oakville-raised, of whom we know a few, and there may potentially be many more deserving of research and documentation. There is a secondary and potentially even larger population of Oakville-educated artists who attended studies at Sheridan College but have no other residence ties to the Town, but who may have memories to share.
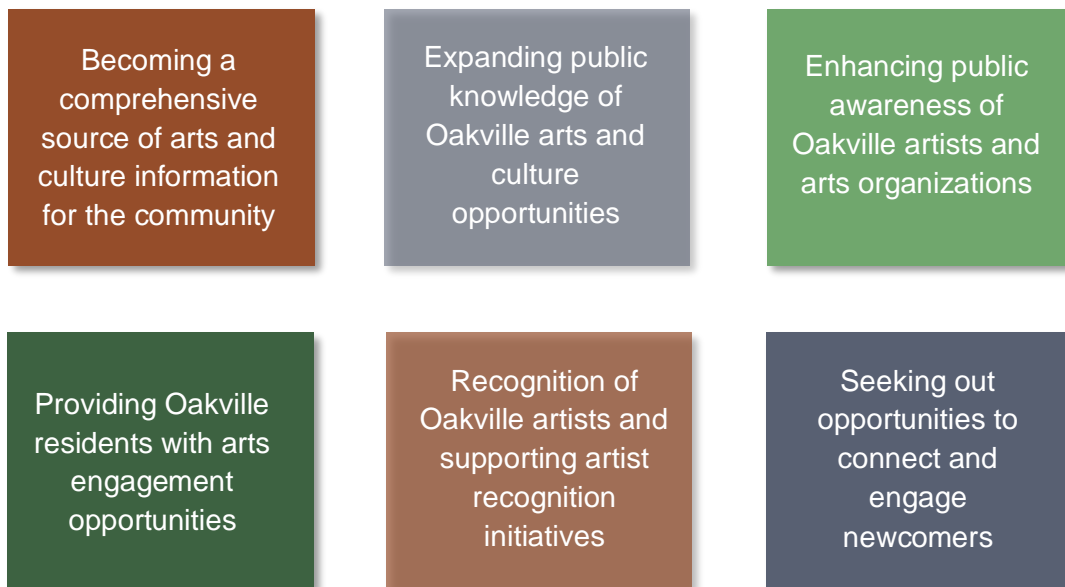
Many Oakville creative organizations are hitting milestones and looking back at their histories and accomplishments. The Oakville Symphony celebrated 50 years in 2017, with a booklet and a commemorative video; the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts celebrated 25 years in 2002 with a published book by Sheila Creighton. The Oakville Art Society was founded in 1965 and so is now 55 years old; the Oakville Chamber Orchestra recently celebrated 35 years. The Oakville Galleries are planning an ambitious move into a city-owned heritage building in the next few years; Joshua Creek Heritage Arts Centre, technically only ten years old though its Studio Show has been running annually since 1981, is contemplating the construction of a permanent museum exhibition space.

With so many Town institutions with reasons to celebrate now, it seems ideal to compile a comprehensive narrative about the development of the artistic and creative communities here - and to capture historical records that may be at risk during times of change, uncertainty, and renewal.

We also note that the unfortunate decline of local journalism means less external documentation being produced - fewer reviews, interviews, profiles, event calendars, and photographs of local performers or exhibitors.

A project of this nature has the potential to bring people together to share their memories and celebrate their histories - reducing isolation for seniors, building inclusive and engaged communities, enriching people's lives through arts, culture, and heritage, making people feel like they belong and that their voices are being heard. We also anticipate it would improve the digital and business capacities of our partnering organizations, as well as provide services especially valuable for children, through our educational components that will improve local history content in local school curricula.

This project aligns with the Oakville Arts Council's Strategic Plan, which includes:

Becoming a comprehensive source of arts and culture information for the community	Expanding public knowledge of Oakville arts and culture opportunities	Enhancing public awareness of Oakville artists and arts organizations
Providing Oakville residents with arts engagement opportunities	Recognition of Oakville artists and supporting artist recognition initiatives	Seeking out opportunities to connect and engage newcomers

A project of this nature also aligns with the Town of Oakville's Cultural Plan 2016-2021, which focuses on accessibility, diversity and inclusion, partnerships and collaboration, and innovation as guiding principles. The Cultural Plan notes the presence of Sheridan College as a creative hub. The Plan also suggests that the Town and the Oakville Museum create a dedicated program to "collect and share stories on cultural heritage."

Creating a digital archive online makes local history accessible, while collecting from a wide range of residents promotes diversity and inclusion. This project will have collaboration as its foundation, and innovation as a goal - allowing local organizations and artists to take inspiration from and build upon work that has gone before.

Discovery Process

The Oakville Arts Council undertook an extensive consultation process to understand the context of this potential project. This includes the technical possibilities and tools, the state of archival standards and best practices, the possibilities for collaboration with like-minded organizations, the funding opportunities for projects of this kind, the existing services in the region, and the status of the many community organizations and individuals the OAC hopes to serve with this work.

Consultation Process

Meetings

Over the course of December 2019 through March 2020, the Oakville Arts Council met with representatives of local arts and cultural organizations, from artistic guilds to heritage groups. We also met with the Town of Oakville and staff of similar projects in other regions. We communicated by email with 5 more similar projects in other regions, such as those who had received Trillium Foundation funding for archival and digitization projects in past years. We communicated via email with the Oakville Public Library, Halton Heritage Services, and several local historical societies. We also reached out to significant individuals, such as authors of local history books.

The Oakville Arts Council reached out to 37 organizations, of which 30 responded positively and expressed interest in scheduling a meeting. Several organizations were interested but were unable to meet due to scheduling conflicts (some of which were due to the shelter-in-place and self-isolation mandates of spring 2020 during the novel coronavirus pandemic). Of the organizations that met with us, feedback was 100% positive and gave us a broad understanding of the types of partnerships and collaborations we could expect were we to pursue this project.

Survey

We issued a final survey via email and on our website in April 2020, which was open and accepting responses for two weeks. This survey asked respondents to identify themselves as artists, arts patrons, members of Oakville arts groups, OAC members, and residents of Oakville, and then asked them a series of questions about their personal archiving needs as well as their perspectives on a collaborative digital archive for the Oakville arts community.

The survey was sent to 473 OAC contacts; we received 50 responses, or a 10.6% sample size. 100% were included in our analysis as either people who live in Oakville or people who participate in artistic organizations or activities in Oakville. The survey was anonymous, but 21 participants supplied their contact information for potential follow-up.

Workshops

We held two workshops for artists and arts groups in late March and early April 2020, where we discussed some of the issues facing records capture, retention, organization, preservation, and access. We used these workshops as an opportunity for further consultation and feedback regarding our project plans so far, by including them in our follow-up survey audience. We had 41 registrants for our first workshop and 35 registrants for our second workshop.

These workshops were both held virtually as webinars due to social distancing mandates at the time and had open attendance for people no matter where they were. We had registrants from our target groups but also nearby municipalities (Hamilton, Toronto, Guelph), across the country (Vancouver, Edmonton), and even other countries (USA, UK, Australia). This has allowed us to gauge interest in these types of projects and see the need for similar archival work around the world.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive from attendees, and we received a number of requests for further resources and copies of our presentation slide. Several attendees of the first webinar reported that they had recommended attending the second one to their colleagues or friends.

Research Process

The Oakville Arts Council conducted an environmental survey to discover existing projects that were applicable to the region, similar projects in nearby regions, similar projects anywhere, and similar projects using funding sources that would be applicable to the OAC. We paid particular focus not just to existing completed projects online, but project proposals and funded grants and their results. It was important not just to find examples of what we wanted to do but ascertain

the long-term success and ultimate form of projects that were proposed in a way that made them seem relevant to our own goals. Digital collections are still somewhat in their infancy, and while many digital tools exist that can serve some of our needs, it was important to judge how earlier projects succeeded or failed, and how they have aged since the end of their project funding.

Research was also conducted to identify relevant materials in existing heritage collections, either in physical or digital form. These collections included the Oakville Historical Society, the Trafalgar Township Historical Society, the Oakville Museum, the Archives of Ontario, Library and Archives Canada, Joshua Creek Heritage Arts Centre, and the Ontario Arts Society. On the whole, there were few relevant collections held elsewhere; there were mainly individual artworks or archival documents related to historical figures or locations. The majority of relevant works that are digitized and currently online are in the collection of the Oakville Historical Society. More work involving on-site research visits will be required to determine the extent of materials held in other collections that are not currently digitized or documented in online finding aids but was determined to be largely outside the scope of this feasibility study. We did plan a research trip to the Archives of Ontario held in Toronto to explore their collections further, but this trip was cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The Oakville Arts Council performed research to ascertain standards and best practices for potential project components. Digital platforms research was performed to find potential tools and workflows for our project. Our main results of this research are discussed in the Technical Feasibility section.

Discovery Process Results

Meetings

T hrough these meetings we were able to determine some availability of digitization equipment at the Oakville Historical Society, which they are willing to lend to us for our own digitization work, and that they will permit us to work in their office space to use it.

We also determined that the Oakville Museum is able to lend us photographic equipment and stands so that we can digitize larger artworks in artists' homes and studios and in the Oakville Museum storage space.

We learned that the Town of Oakville was not pursuing similar work through the Oakville Trafalgar Archives or other agencies.

We learned that most artistic organizations in the community do not have dedicated storage space for their archives and records, and that most organizations are not doing dedicated work to preserve and maintain their records. Three groups that we met with are doing some kind of preservation work, including digitizing old photographs, collecting materials into binders, and collecting materials into scrapbooks and photo albums. All three of these projects are being done by volunteers in the groups. Most of the artistic groups have at least a filing cabinet, a desk's worth of drawers, or several bankers' boxes' worth of materials each. We estimate at least 3 bankers' boxes from each organization would need to be digitized.

Arts groups also have materials of all sizes and shapes, from posters and brochures and programs to photographs. Some groups have extensive costume and props collections; others have audio and video footage in a variety of formats.

Generally, a bankers' box of materials can be digitized in its entirety in one day (7 hours) - if the materials are all letter-size papers that can be fed through an automated document feeder. Knowing that most of our participating organizations will not be that simple, we are estimating 15 hours per box and thus as many as 45 hours of digitization work per organization.
This time expenditure is just for the manual labour of scanning, not including metadata work, copyright research, file reformatting, uploading files into an online platform, or moving files into a digital preservation system. Some of the latter work will be done by the project manager rather than by the digitization assistant, and the division of that labour will be determined by schedules and availability more than anything else.

Based on our conversations that indicate a large amount of ephemera and photographs, sometimes preserved and organized in folders, binders, and envelopes, as well as textual documents that may be in folders or stapled or paperclipped, we estimate that after removing that packaging, there may be about 2,000 document-pages to digitize per organization, document-pages being either individual items (photographs and single-page flyers) or individual sheets in multi-page items (by deconstructing a concert program, for example, and resulting with 20 sheets of paper from a 40-page program).

Of course, older organizations have larger collections, while older materials are more likely to have been lost to time and transfer. Some of the oldest groups would have to prioritize which

materials they wish to have digitized - and depending on scheduling and organizational capacity, additional time might be required.

Materials from approximately the last 10 years are likely to already be in digital format, and digital estimates of organizational materials to share ranged from a few megabytes to several gigabytes per group. While these sizes can vary greatly, the workload associated with them is less variable, as they do not require digitization and manual creation of metadata.

Some of the newer groups we spoke to, such as one founded in 2009 and one founded in 2012, have entirely digital collections to share. This process may be as simple as receiving a hard drive or USB key from the donor, or as complicated as visiting in-person and manually collecting materials from a variety of devices and even physical locations. We estimate that a Digital Archivist would set aside one workday per organization to ensure as much digital record capture as possible. The processing of these digital materials into a preservation system and eventually into the online archive will take longer, depending on metadata and description for each file.

Each group was able to nominate at least one, if not several, people that could serve as an oral history interview subject. Many groups had a number of people to recommend either related to their group's work or as part of the fabric of the Oakville arts community more generally. There is some overlap of recommendations, but we were very impressed by the large number of potential interviewees.

Some groups had concerns about the copyright status of materials - not their own, but for performances of copyrighted works such as compositions or plays, they were worried about sharing audio or video recordings. One or two groups had an interest in maintaining privacy and control over their records, and so would be interested in digitization along with future, eventual online access - but not right away. The total number of groups with these concerns was very low - three or four total groups. While this may be a concern for some of the organizations or individuals who did not respond to our requests for a meeting, the estimated work involved (in finding copyright holders, asking for permission, or setting privacy and access dates for digitized materials) is very small at this time.

Most groups seem to have very good records on copyright and ownership, waivers for appearing in video or photographs, and consent forms from children and other participants. In Canada we are protected by the "notice-and-notice" copyright regime, which means anyone who wishes to pursue a copyright claim over materials erroneously posted without their permission must issue the Oakville Arts Council takedown requests.

Survey

Of our final dataset, 97.73% were supportive of the project, 100% felt the Oakville Arts Council was organizationally capable of project success, and more than 20 respondents gave us ideas about how they would contribute to the archive or use it once it was built.

97.73% would like to see more of Oakville's art history documented	▪ "I think we have a very vibrant and active artistic community and it definitely should be documented." ▪ "There is a rich history and also many newcomers to town who may know little of that history." ▪ "Many people have no idea of the wide variety of arts in which they can learn or participate even when they have lived here for several years. Newcomers of course have even less idea what is available." ▪ "Oakville has a rich history which will be lost if it is not properly documented." ▪ "No historical account of a community would be complete without the history of the arts in the community as the arts paint a rich picture of the culture and the soul of a community." ▪ "It is so important for new generations to connect with the history of their city, and how it relates to their community." ▪ "It is good to have a reliable site to research arts and artists - knowing more about both gives a better understanding of the work and can be encouraging to other artists to know more about an artist's successes and hardships overcome." ▪ "History is critical to helping current and future Oakville residents feel a greater connection to, and affiliation with, their own art, with Oakville, and with the community."
97.73% would like to see an online archive of materials related to art history	▪ "It is good to have such an archive in one place - online research is not always easy and if there is a specific Oakville art site, then it makes research or just looking for information, more accessible." ▪ "Both online and in print should be promoted. Younger people are accustomed to finding about everything online and some older generations prefer finding information in print." ▪ "Accessible at all hours and to all. However, I also am concerned about the difficulty of keeping it up-to-date as digital technology evolves." ▪ "Not only should there be an online archive, but original materials should be collected and properly stored for future researchers."
100% think the Oakville Arts Council is the right organization	▪ "They are a trusted supporter of the arts locally." ▪ "Who better?" ▪ "It is the one voice for the arts in Oakville." ▪ "They have the staff and facility to organize and amass the large amount of information which will need to be categorized and presented." ▪ "Experience and the personnel to complete it."

to pursue this project	▪ "The OAC has access to and a relationship with a variety of artists and therefore is well placed to access the information." ▪ "I look to them for general information. They already demonstrate skill online and have a recognized presence for the arts." ▪ "Projects need a leader, but this needs to be a joint effort involving as many stakeholders as necessary to ensure the final product covers all the bases."
95.45% agree that this project will help more people connect with culture, heritage, and the arts	▪ "Digital dispersal of information is practical and appealing to most of the population. It is an excellent method of publicizing upcoming arts events and also retaining the history of past performances of all kinds, usually only briefly covered in the local press. It will require great diligence to keep it going properly." ▪ "During physical distancing, residents can still engage with the arts." ▪ "If presented in a concise, exciting way I think it would be a wonderful interesting resource." ▪ "It would be an important reference source for future artistic projects to be aware of what has been done before, and the Oakville people who initiated and sustained artistic endeavours here in Oakville." ▪ "It will allow those interested in the various arts to find out who have gone before and the heritage of this town and its culture and be a link between the past, present and future."
97.73% agree that this project will benefit artists and arts orgs; 97.73% agree that it will benefit the community of Oakville	▪ "It may give newcomers a point of connection not only with the community as a whole but also lead people to the arts organization they might be interested in exploring." ▪ "Could enhance collaborative efforts." ▪ "Information is vital for getting new members involved." ▪ "We learn valuable lessons from those who have a history in the arts." ▪ "Can provide inspiration and a forum for collaboration." ▪ "More involvement in community events, potentially more volunteers and donors. Possibility of children getting interested in the history of their particular arts form here in town." ▪ "It may help those who are thinking of moving to Oakville an insight of what we feel is important to us and the preservation of our cultural history." ▪ "There is such an influx of new residents, it is important for them to know and recognize the people who have helped to create a vibrant society in the past." ▪ "It will bring people together socially." ▪ "Curated materials add to content that can be posted online, used in the classroom, whether online or not, and add to our stories."

95.45% agree that this project is needed now	▪ "As time marches on resources that are hidden away in boxes and basements will disappear forever." ▪ "The arts are needed more than ever during Covid-19." ▪ "Pertinent documents may be lost if not gathered soon. I am over 80, and if I can no longer be active, my reference material will be discarded." ▪ "Much of the past is disappearing and needs to be archived before it is too late." ▪ "If we do not have something like this already, then why not now? The longer we wait the more gets lost as people of previous generations with valuable input and information may no longer be around." ▪ "This will take time and the sooner you start the better. There are many who would say we will need all our money and help to rebuild the economy for those who have lost work and businesses and this is true, but we also need to keep in mind those things that enrich our souls, our inner spirits and give us joy - the kind of joy we can get from a fine painting or a beautiful song or performance by someone who has been gifted and nurtured here in our own Town." ▪ "In terms of self-isolation - provides more connection for the community (this would be a very immediate need)." ▪ "This question couldn't come at a better time - we're housebound, and having curated materials posted online allow for learning experiences we can't otherwise have." ▪ "You don't want history to fall through the cracks."
92.86% of eligible respondents would be willing to participate in some way	▪ "I have much of the above material which needs to be saved." ▪ "Because I was born here and have been involved with the artists of Oakville for almost a century." ▪ "Yes, if it moves forward, I would think that I/we would participate, as we participate in any opportunity that may give us some visibility, however small." ▪ "As I continue to make art, teach art and write about art, I hope to contribute what I have been privileged to learn. Being born here 91 years ago and I can still remember, there are stories that I can contribute." ▪ "I'm not sure how, but I'd love to." ▪ "I'm always available to help the arts."

We asked people to tell us in their own words how they might be able to contribute:

- "I would provide audio and video recordings, and historical documents, about the groups I work with."
- "[Our group] has existed in this town for almost 60 years and we have material that could be digitized covering most of those years."
- "I have items of historical importance for [a group]."
- "Photographs, newspaper articles, audio and video recordings"
- "I would submit paintings and animation and reference my writing and books."
- "submit videos, student compositions."
- "I'd happily work/volunteer/promote the collection. I have memories of taking pottery courses in the little building at Coronation Park as a child and have the horrid creations still. The experience meant something to me."
- "I would like to contribute memories and stories. I was part of community theatre for many years."

We then asked people to tell us in their own words how they would use the archive:

- "As a history buff, I would consult it to find out about artists of the past."
- "Referring to it for information on past and present artists and their works and new ideas of what constitutes art."
- "Excellent resource for developing community projects and bonds."
- "To connect with other arts organizations."
- "I could refer new chorus and orchestra members and future concert goers to the material in the archive."
- "Share it with audience members"
- "Promotion of Oakville"
- "I would refer to it in marketing and correspondence, for artists I am involved with."
- "If allowed, to continue providing updated images."
- "I'd personally love to read others' stories, use them for research when writing, and to teach."
- "It would be interesting to see the history of such things as the Joshua Creek Art Centre, and the OAC itself."
- "sharing it with new members of our various organizations, providing a link to it on our website and social media."
- "I would refer to it in our literature and on our websites to draw people's attention to this resource."

We asked respondents to rank various potential components of the project. In order of preference, 50% or more of respondents were interested in:

1. Profiles of Oakville-related artists and arts organizations (84.85%)
2. Virtual exhibits exploring aspects of Oakville's art history (81.82%)

3. Oral history interviews with Oakville artists and patrons (78.79%)
4. Video tours of Oakville cultural venues, landmarks, or studios (69.70%)
5. Success stories about Oakvillians (including students) that made it big (69.70%)
6. Educational resources for classroom use (60.61%)
7. Audience-submitted stories or memories in text, audio, or video formats (57.58%)
8. Audience-submitted materials, such as event or exhibit photographs (54.55%)
9. Interactive map of Oakville cultural locations over time (51.52%)
10. Historical magazines, periodicals, and newspaper articles (51.52%)

Finally, we asked people to share their thoughts on any of the topics we'd covered, or the project in general:

- "I think this project is an excellent idea and please feel free to call on me at any time to participate."
- "It would be a good idea to emphasize newcomers and diversity - showing us to be a welcoming community."
- "The concept of arts organizations should be interpreted broadly to include educational organizations that deal with digital arts, for example, and not be restricted to graphic art such as painting. The administration of arts organizations should be included."
- "Would like to see profiles of Oakville based artists who are internationally recognized as I am not aware of many."
- "Your project is a great idea. Now, bring it to life."
- "Focus first on gathering the available information together before embarking on expensive or grandiose projects like documentaries and professional editing."

Findings

Operational Feasibility

After our extensive consultation with community arts organizations, clear patterns began to emerge as to what materials were available, what they documented, and what should be done with them.

As a result, we believe initial efforts would focus mostly on archival materials from artists and artistic organizations, with a smaller component to include artworks directly from artists who give their permission for us to share digital images & recordings.

We suggest that this project may also build capacity in participating arts organizations and for individual professional artists on greater records management and administration that can lead to better personal and institutional archives later on. It would also support organizations through the digitization and digital preservation of their records.

The Oakville Arts Council Digital Art History project would be an online digital collection (with an offline & private component for records digitized but not yet available due to copyright or privacy concerns). The digital collections would be hosted in Omeka or a similar collections management tool. The digital collections platform online would be the front-facing side of a digital preservation system that ingests files at the point of capture (either digital donation from the contributing organization or individual, or digitization of borrowed analogue materials).

Digital collections should be organized by group and then into sub-collections. For example, a list of collections and sub-collections may include:

Local Theatre Group:
- Seasons [Organized by year]
  - [Four shows per year]
    - Photographs
    - Posters and programs
    - Previews and reviews
    - Video
      - Preview / teaser
      - Footage
      - Interviews
- Special events
  - Photographs
  - Etc.
- Fundraisers
  - [Organized by year]
    - Photographs
- Costume collection
  - [Organized by production where possible]
    - Photographs
- Prop collection
  - [Organized by production where possible]
    - Photographs
- Business records
  - Annual reports
  - … etc.
- Concerts
  - [Organized by year]
    - Programs and posters
    - News clippings
- Tours
  - [Organized by year]
    - Planning documents
    - Photographs
    - Programs and posters
    - News clippings
- Events
  - [Organized by type, e.g. galas]
    - Photographs
    - Speeches

Each organization and artist contributing to the collection could have a short profile page with a summary of their history and activities and a link to their current web presence.

Organizations would be filed under categories (for Musical Group, Visual Arts Group, etc.) and given tags to help facilitate browsing (such as "Groups formed in the 1970s" or "Volunteer-run" or "Schools"). Organizations related to one another (such as the Oakville Symphony Orchestra

and the Oakville Symphony Youth Orchestra) would be linked to each other, in a "See also" section of their profile.

These organizational collections would be supplemented by other records capture:

- Arts columns and reviews from local news publications
- Materials contributed from the Oakville Public Library local history collection
- Indexes or finding aids to relevant materials that can be found in other archival or museum collections worldwide

The digital collections themselves would not be the first point of contact for most audience members. They would be first directed to explore the collection through online exhibits, short research essays, audio and video footage, maps, timelines, and other interactive access points. They may then explore individual collections in more detail or search keywords to find specific items. For example, a visitor might wish to see the instances of Bach's music being performed in the community - they could search "Bach" and receive results based on choral and orchestral performances, as documented by posters, flyers, programs, and reviews. They might also find mention of Bach in the transcriptions of oral history interviews with community members, or in comments left by users on items in the collection.

Volume

As mentioned above, there is an estimated average of 2,000 document-pages per organization to be digitized. This is based on user-supplied estimates of what they have currently available in storage (though some of the oldest organizations have vastly more), not including what may be sourced through public call-outs and galvanizing organizations to aggregate from former and current staff and volunteers. As such, the total of digitized or digital materials may be much higher. Using a number of 2,000 document-pages will ensure that each participating organization (and individual artist) is able to contribute something meaningful and contextual, spanning the whole active period, without overwhelming the collection with too much from any one source.

Notably, boxes delivered to us for digitization may have fewer paper records, which can be digitized at a smaller file size, and more photographs, which will require high-quality, full-colour digitization, meaning a larger file size. Digitizing ephemera - posters, flyers, handbills, concert program and booklets, guestbooks, and other evidence of cultural activity would also be included. These will be digitized at the same file size per page of photographs - high-resolution full-colour images - but can be deceptively large based on the number of pages as well as the measurements of width and height. This means two things: a large amount of offline storage in the digital preservation system, and extra work to downsize these files for the web when uploaded to a digital collections platform. So, 2,000 document-pages can vary widely in the actual amount of digital storage space needed.

Some organizations will submit already digitized materials, especially items from more recent years. Both a greater number of digital materials and a slightly smaller size requirement (a

digitized version of, say, a page of printed text is likely a larger file than the equivalent word-processing document, or even an exported PDF of that document) may be expected. This can be balanced with the knowledge that digital records will lessen the farther back in time we look, with most records being paper more than 20 years ago. These files also have more easily extractable metadata, and more obvious copyright restrictions, making the processing labour easier.

We are interested in digitizing artworks, and audio and video recordings. These will all be relatively large file sizes - at our likeliest video quality, 20 megabytes per minute of footage, for example. In the latter case of multimedia, the original file size created upon digitization for capture in a digital preservation program will not be the ultimate storage requirements for an online collection platform - both because we will downsize a web-friendly version, and because we hope to store these items in third-party tools like YouTube, Vimeo, or SoundCloud. For now, we are excluding these estimates in our needs for online hosting.

Based on our assessments and estimates from participating organizations (2,000 document-pages multiplied by about 50 organizations), we estimate there would be up to 100,000 items or pages to upload over the course of three years just from community groups. We may supplement this with tens of thousands more items from existing digital collections, such as a copy of arts-related articles in the Oakville Public Library digitized newspaper collection, or from the Oakville Historical Society photograph collection. Alternatively, we may simply point people to those collections.

Assuming 100,000 items, ranging from simple black-and-white text document-pages (averaging 50 kilobytes each) to full-colour photographs (averaging 500 kilobytes each), we estimate that half of those may be simple documents and half may be colour images. Thus, 2.5 gigabytes of storage space for textual documents and 25 gigabytes of storage space for images would be required. This means the OAC would need approximately 30GB of online storage space, not including website backups or project files, or space for digital collections tools and software.

Potential Project Components

Digital collections:
- Digitized historical materials:
  - Organizational records
  - Event materials - flyers, posters, brochures
  - Arts-related publications & newspaper clippings
  - Arts directories over the years
  - Video & photographs of events & programming
  - Artworks (analogue)
  - Drafts, instructions, sketches, floor plans, etc.
  - Provenance records (commissions, receipts & invoices, proof of ownership)
  - Cultural Grants documents from the Oakville Arts Council
  - Stars Among Us and Mayors' Awards documents from the OAC

- Finalists & submissions
- Promo materials
- Event slideshows, video, audio (played onstage)
- Event photographs & video
- Other granting documents
- Other commissions, contests, and other submission documents
- Born-digital historical & contemporary materials:
    - Artworks (digital)
    - Individual artist profiles
    - Publication PDFs (*Arts About Town* & others)
    - Video, audio, & photographs
    - Social media posts
    - Websites
    - User-submitted content:
        - Multimedia
        - Social media posts
        - Text stories
        - Comments

The following components are in order of interest based on our exit survey.

Profiles of artists and arts organizations:
- Short biographies or historical information
- Links to current web and social media presence
- A sample of related items in the collection
- Links to any relevant virtual exhibits, oral history interviews, or other elements

Virtual exhibits:
- A series of short, interactive virtual exhibits that contextualize contributed materials in the collection and tell stories: artist biographies, the history of arts collectives or groups, or focus on particular genres, movements, or occasions.

Oral history interviews:
- Organizational heads past and present
- Individual artists & artistic teams
- Journalists & critics
- Audience members
- Volunteers

Video tours of cultural venues, landmarks, and spaces:
- This can be easily done with time in an oral history videographers' schedule but may be an issue when it comes to copyright (e.g., hallway art exhibits in Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre) or scheduling (e.g., the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts when it is closed but staff are available).

- For most organizations or artists with studios or offices, such as some of the theatre groups with practice space and storage for costumes and props, this video footage could be easily collected before or after oral history interviews and would be essential documentation of creative spaces in the Town.

Success stories:
- We hope to reach out to "expatriate" Oakvillians living elsewhere, at all career levels; these interviews would focus on their memories of Oakville and how the community supported their artistic endeavours.
- We have collected a list of 20+ potential success stories, but for privacy reasons we are keeping this list confidential until we are able to reach out to those potential subjects individually.

Curriculum resources:
- A series of online & interactive, as well as downloadable/printable handouts and in-class activities, that work with the materials to provide educational local history lessons or teach about art, music, theatre, dance, or literary history in the community.

Audience-submitted material and stories:
- Our digital collections platform tool would have this capability - we would need to staff the moderation and management of the submissions.

Interactive features:
- Maps of historical entertainment & culture-built heritage
- Timelines of groups and venues

Historical magazines, periodicals, and newspaper articles:
- We would like to work with the Oakville Public Library to identify relevant periodical articles and issues.
- Knowing that many issues of publications such as the *Oakville Beaver* are already digitized and available, we may be able to pull directly from the OPL's digital collections.
- We may be able to provide digitization for relevant materials not yet digitized and outside the OPL's collections.

Walking tours & audio guides of Oakville cultural locations:
- This would be a labour intensive undertaking that would require a fair amount of tacit knowledge on the part of contributors. This may be a project to pursue with volunteers from community groups, or to collaborate with historical society staff and members who have an interest in the arts; this might be a project phased in at a later date.

Research essays:
- We would consider commissioning short research projects from interested members of the community, especially writers and students.
- These essays would focus on particular aspects that span the organizational collections, such as "Women artists," "Craft & artisan work," "Guilds," "Pre-1900" or "1970-2000," "Classical music," "Outsider artists," "Artists of colour," or "Avant-garde music."
- The essays would be illustrated with items from the collections or used as the text in virtual exhibits.
- These essays would be commissioned later in the project, to complement collections or explore more deeply the relationships between items.
- They could be aggregated for eventual publication as a downloadable e-book, or a print book (which can be sold as a fundraiser).

Information about collections held elsewhere:
- Archives of Ontario, Library and Archives Canada, Art Gallery of Ontario all have pieces that are relevant to our collection. These can easily be described as individual items with links to the collecting institutions' websites. Or, we can approach these institutions to ask for permission to "mirror" their collection and provide digital copies of what they have, if fully digitized.

We did not include the following aspect in our exit survey, but we would consider a project component of physical exhibits & events:
- With the community groups we met, we discussed the possibility of coordinating special events and exhibits during the active project period. We would want this project to be a celebration of the artistic legacy of the Oakville community, and having in-person events can provide that, as well as drive interest and use of the digital collections, and inspire more people to contribute. This could include:
  - Retrospective exhibits by our partner organizations
  - OAC-run retrospective group exhibits
  - Pop-up exhibits around town
  - Special concerts or performances coinciding with exhibit openings
  - Special concerts or performances curated by the organizations
- Ideally, this project would occasion cross-disciplinary collaborations and new partnerships, such as a choir performing at the opening of a fibre-arts exhibit, or a dance performance alongside a symphony concert.

Potential partners

The 21 groups that have so far indicated their willingness to participate in this project:

- Oakville Museum
- Oakville Historical Society
- Joshua Creek Heritage Arts Centre

- Oakville Centre for Performing Arts
- World of Threads
- Oakville Quilters Guild
- Oakville Symphony Orchestra
- Oakville Sculptors and Woodcarvers Guild
- Burl-Oak Theatre Group
- Oakville Fibre Artists
- Oakville Choral Society
- Tempus Choral Society
- Tempus Youth Choir (defunct)
- Oakville Arts Studio
- Canadian Tapestry Textile Centre
- Oakville Handweavers and Spinners Guild (defunct)
- Art House
- Oakville Chamber Orchestra
- Oakville Festival of Film and Art
- Oakville Wind Orchestra
- Bronte Historical Society

A further 9 groups indicated a willingness to meet and discuss the project, but we did not meet with them during this study phase.

Technical Feasibility

Do we want to host this collection ourselves, or use a vendor's hosting service?

There are a number of variables to be considered when selecting between self-hosting and using a vendor's hosting service. These include costs, storage size, back-up/preservation of data, administrator access, maintenance and upgrades, security, and the sustainability of the host company.

Self-hosting would require paying for server space with a hosting service, which will cost $200 per year at minimum - more as the project expands its storage requirements. For example, the [Enterprise plan at Web Hosting Canada](#) currently costs $204CAD per year plus tax, outside of any discounts or promotional rates. This includes unlimited storage space (the storage needed for the digital collection itself) and unlimited bandwidth (the amount of administrator and user access).

The chosen hosting solution will need some digital preservation capacity, preferably daily backups that allow restoration of the collection with all of its user-submitted content and comments if something breaks. For example, Web Hosting Canada automates daily backups only for collections under 20 gigabytes (the estimated storage needs by the end of the project may be closer to 50 gigabytes).

Self-hosting can be an installation of one of a variety of free or purchased collections management tools, but will require maintenance, upgrades, and testing, to ensure everything keeps working.

Remote-hosting is something that many software providers offer, and some third parties too, at a fixed monthly or yearly cost. The costs vary - anywhere from $35/year to $3500/year, usually depending on the collection size and traffic. This will include maintenance and upgrades and support people on request and may or may not include backups and other services. The OAC may still need to set up and pay for its own backup system on top of this.

Making the digital archive work seamlessly with the OAC website still needs to be explored - and we should consider making the separation clear so that users know they can't search for information not intended for public consumption, e.g., Cultural Grants information, in the archive collection. No matter where it's hosted, it can be customized to look much like the OAC website itself and present in a way that's visually consistent. The same designer could work on both sites.

Some of the software options provide both self-hosted (download for free, install, set-up in-house) or cloud-hosted (installed and set up by a service provider) options. We may wish to choose the software first and then decide how we want to access it, but this first question is where the main associated costs will come in.

We need to consider whether the cloud-hosted services will be sustainable: is the company making enough money to keep the service going for years? Will they raise their prices? Will they get bought or amalgamated with another service? Will we have enough time to transfer our materials out to another service if they cancel ours?

We should also consider whether the self-hosted tools will be usable in the long term: who built it? Are they supporting it? Will they lose funding or interest, and abandon it? What happens when they stop updating it - will it stop working on some devices, in some browsers? Will we have time to move to a new system?

There are some legal issues around hosting user data and ensuring privacy & account security. We may wish to host our materials only in Canada, rather than in the United States (opening us up to their legal system) or in Europe (the General Data Protection Regulation). Several identified service providers use Canadian servers.

What features do we require?

We can say for certain that we want to be able to host a variety of digital items (images, text, video, audio) in a system that allows us to search and browse those items. Item-level displays should be attractive and useful. Searching should be accurate and controllable. Search results should be attractive and navigable. We need a way to contextualize and curate the materials so they are navigable, so collections or exhibits. The site should work well on a variety of devices, be backwards compatible, and have high accessibility for assistive devices.

Because we will be featuring beautiful visual arts and photographs of objets d'art, we probably want something designed around large images that take up much of the screen. We want our collection to be visually striking so something with small thumbnails and limited image displays might not be good for our project.

Digital collections mainly score on three elements:

1. The front page
    - How easy is it to figure out what it is? What to do?
    - Are there intuitive options for both browsing and searching?
    - How many clicks would it take for someone to get to one precise item they might be looking for?
    - How well can people learn general information if they're not looking for one specific thing?
2. The search results or collections display
    - Can you tell the difference between individual items and groups or hierarchical levels?
    - Can you tell the difference between item types (images, audio, video, text)?
    - Can people narrow down the results easily to find precisely what they want?
    - If you're looking at a collection or group, where is the general information about that group?
3. The item-level display
    - Is there a visual preview? Is it a small thumbnail or a big image? If it's not full-size, how can you get to full-size?
    - If it's audio or video, is it embedded and stream able? Or do you have to download it?
    - If it's text, is the full text readable on-screen? Or do you have to download it?
    - Is the metadata readable? Is it comprehensible to humans, or does it look like machine nonsense?
    - Can you find your way to similar or relevant items from here? Can you tell what group it's in? Does looking at the item teach you things about the way everything else is organized (e.g. by the words used as the subjects or tags)?

Potential features

We may want to focus on mobile access if we think users will be doing things like uploading photos from their phones. We may want to design for the sorts of computers that students have access to in their schools, or mobile devices if we think they'll be accessing the collection that way.

We will require a system that functions well with oral histories: something that can display a video or audio player in the window, ideally with a transcription displayed alongside, or something that allows users to download each of these components. Automated closed captioning technology is improving, so we may find that using YouTube and its closed-captioning tools is enough for our purposes - assuming we are recording clear & high-quality

audio. We can reduce our hosting needs by putting videos on YouTube and simply embedding them in our collection interface.

If we want to share vintage video, we may have issues with audio or video clarity. If we are required to closed-caption our multimedia for accessibility purposes (because of a grant or municipal stipulation), this can become costly if the automated services aren't good enough.

We may want users to create accounts, post comments, build their own collections or be able to "like" items. These can be useful for teachers and students as well as the general public.

If we want to allow users to upload files, we will need not just a tool that makes that possible, but something that will scan files for viruses and make sure no one can vandalize our site. User-submitted media is usually held in a moderation queue, so we need staff to process those materials in the future. User submissions will need to be read or viewed and moderated for inappropriate content or language.

As we would want to incorporate maps, timelines, virtual exhibits, and short research essays, we should look for tools that both already have that capacity and tools that can have that capacity added by developers. Some tools can be customized upon request. We can work the development of those elements into our grant requests.

We will want to align our metadata with the schemas and standards used by others so that the collection can be indexed easily by specific searching tools or integrated and imported into another particular organization's collection. Tools that can do this for you (e.g. by pre-populating a dropdown menu of choices, instead of asking you to type everything from scratch) exist or may be developed with grant funds.

See Appendix A: Digital Archive Design Examples, for some best-practice digital collections platforms, most of which are built using the tools we would be most likely to use.

What can we afford?

Whether we self-host or cloud-host, the costs may come out close to the same. Self-hosting will cost us several hundred dollars a year in paying for server space; some number of hours per year will be dedicated to maintenance and upgrades (either within the organization or through summer students or other staff funding, or through a collaboration with another organization such as the Oakville Historical Society). We may not want to risk the costs of going over our bandwidth or storage if we allow user uploads (and this may cost us more, for a server with greater security).

Paying for a cloud-hosting solution will not be the only cost; we will still need some hours of staff time per year for maintenance and monitoring, and for communicating with the service provider about expected upgrades and changes or tech problems.

What kind of technical support will be needed?

We may decide that we want external technical support services and go with a service provider that will answer support requests with a yearly rate or on an as-needed basis. As mentioned, some service providers will offer customization to build precisely the tool we need, or to mix and match existing elements. This may just be an initial start-up cost or something we investigate at a later date as the project expands.

Some organizations, such as [the team who makes Omeka](#), operate as part of a university project or nonprofit team - it is likely that teams such as these are more reliable than for-profit companies.

We reached out to two Canadian organizations to get detailed quotes and discuss customization and technical support fees for their hosting services.
One organization quoted us $2,700 per year for hosting and technical support (one ½ hour per month) with up to 50 gigabytes of storage space. Extra technical support beyond that is available at the rate of $200 per hour.

The other organization quoted us $1,300 per year for hosting and unlimited technical support with up to 50 gigabytes of storage space. This rate is only true for the active phase of the project (i.e. when using lots of bandwidth to upload, modify, and administer the collection). After the grant term, the digital collection would go into a "parked" state with minimal modifications (except for summer students or occasional moderation of user-submitted comments or materials) for $455 per year.

These prices do not include taxes, and do not include the initial startup or customization costs - they only help us understand technical support structures and estimate the long-term costs of supporting the completed project.

How will we preserve and safeguard our collection?

Once the project activities are complete (i.e. at the end of the grant term), our work needs to be protected long-term. If we are doing our own digitization, or creating our own video or audio oral histories, we will need to safeguard these master files as well as the metadata we create for them. At the very least this will be an external hard drive with its own inbuilt backup. This drive will need to be plugged in and tested every few months to ensure it checks its two copies against each other and fixes any errors. Drives need to be replaced at least every eight years - ideally, every five - to be sure they don't fail and to stay with current technologies.

We may have versions of everything that we digitize and that was donated to us - but we will not have copies of the online collection and its designs, comments, user submissions, and other online-only elements. So, we would need some digital preservation on top of being careful to keep copies of everything that passes through our hands.

Other organizations may do their own digitization or send us their digital files. We should ensure they have backups and are doing proper physical and digital preservation - and we should keep copies of all submitted things with our own collection, especially if we do any metadata editing or improving along the way (or crop photos, or edit videos, or etc.).

It is not easy to back-up some remote-hosting sites - we could grab copies of all the files on the server, but not be able to instantly re-vitalize our collection website from that; or, we could get copies of the front-end look and feel of the site (the way the Internet Archive provides snapshots of old websites) but not be able to reconstruct the code that generates those pages.

Some tech support people will guarantee you that they will always have a "restore point" of your site - an instantly operable version - and others will give you precise instructions on how to create your own backups. But this is something we should take personal responsibility for.

The easiest do-it-yourself method is to have a mirror - a second site just like the first - that is duplicated regularly using a backup or duplication tool.

Digital Collections Tool Comparison

Name	Hosting	Canadian hosting?	Pricing Overview (taxes not included)	Website	Example Site
Omeka Classic	Self-hosted	NA	Free and open-source	https://omeka.org/classic/	https://omeka.org/classic/showcase/
Omeka.net	Cloud hosted	No - USA	$35-$350 /year USD depending on storage size	omeka.net	https://clevelandhistorical.org/
Omeka hosted by AndOrNot	Cloud hosted	Yes - Vancouver	$2700 /year CAD plus startup services	https://www.andornot.com/managed-hosting/omeka-hosting/	
VITA Digital Toolkit	Cloud hosted	Yes - Hamilton	$1300 /year CAD plus startup services for active use; $455 /year CAD for passive hosting (long-term)	vitatoolkit.ca	http://digital.westvanlibrary.ca/search
Collective Access	Self-hosted	NA	Free and open-source	https://www.collectiveaccess.org/	https://collections.irshdc.ubc.ca/
Collective Access - Whirl-i-Gig	Cloud hosted	No - USA	$2100-$3420 /year USD depending on storage size	https://www.collectiveaccess.org/hosting	

ContentDM	Cloud hosted	No - USA	Unknown	https://www.oclc.org/en/contentdm/features.html	https://hrc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15878coll15
DSpace	Self-hosted	NA	Free and open-source	https://duraspace.org/dspace/	cadair.aber.ac.uk/dspace/
Samvera	Self-hosted	NA	Free and open-source	https://samvera.org/	http://colleccions.cdmae.cat/
CollectionSpace	Self-hosted	NA	Free and open-source	https://www.collectionspace.org/	http://collection.movingimage.us/
CollectionSpace hosted	Cloud hosted	No - USA	Unknown	https://www.lyrasis.org/services/Pages/CollectionSpace-Hosting.aspx	
AndOrNot Interface + DBTextWorks	Cloud hosted	Yes - Vancouver	$2700 /year + CAD	https://www.andornot.com/software/andornot-discovery-interface/	https://arquives.andornot.com/
Preservica	Cloud hosted	No - USA	"less than $3000 per year" USD to start	https://preservica.com/heritage-digital-preservation-services/archives	https://cityofboston.access.preservica.com/

See the full tools comparison chart in Appendix B: Digital Collections Tools Comparison, with additional evaluation of the most likely solutions for this project.

Technical Components Summary

Digital submission process:
- Not every digital collections tool has a user submission or upload component.
- Some tool vendors will build custom add-ons or plugins by request; we will need to get quotes and budget for this work with our funding applications.

Digital collection display:
- Searching and browsing should be intuitive and user-friendly, as well as accessible to people using assistive devices or a variety of visibility settings (such as high-contrast, zoomed-in, etc.).
- Item level display should be graphically pleasing and feature the vibrant art or design objects we're collecting. Metadata should be short, simple, and human-readable.

- Items should clearly indicate their date of creation, the contributing organization, their copyright status, and their importance to the creative history of Oakville. Standard schemas and vocabularies should be used where possible.

Virtual exhibits & curation tools:
- The ability to embed individual items from the collection (whether a photograph, an audio or video recording, or a multi-page book with page-flipping capacity) into a virtual exhibit or a page with text will be essential.
- Timelines that allow people to view items or short texts by scrolling backwards and forwards would be useful but are not essential. There are third-party tools that can provide this service, which may be embeddable themselves within pages in a digital collections platform.
- Maps that allow people to view cultural locations in Oakville, or collection items mapped by location, would be useful, but are not essential. There are third-party tools that can provide this service, which may be embeddable themselves within pages in our digital collections platform.

Digital preservation strategy:
- Best practices should be used where possible, including following the LOCKSS model.
- The OAC should employ a cloud backup, a localized backup onto a dedicated hard drive with redundancy and find an offsite backup with a trusted community partner.
- Backups should be automated and scheduled, with regularly scheduled checks and sampling from staff.

Maintenance strategy:
- As the intent is for the OAC to support this digital collection long-term, it is advised that some staff time be dedicated to yearly content moderation of user submissions and comments. This may come in the form of a day monthly or quarterly, or with special staff (through summer student employment or etc.) dedicating time once a year.

Ongoing promotion & use:
- The tool we choose should generate social-media friendly "cards" using Twitter Card and Facebook/OpenGraph metadata.

Organizational Feasibility

H aving established that the Oakville Arts Council is an excellent organization to take on this project, we must assess the current assets, where our capacities lie, and what complements would be required to succeed.

Staffing

Were a project to proceed, it would need a project manager to work full-time to both supervise the multiple staff required for specific project components, to liaise both with the OAC and the many community partners, to oversee agreements and contracts, to be responsible for budgets and purchasing, and to work hands-on on any project component that requires it.

A project manager should be trained in archival principles, have archival experience, and be technically skilled in digital preservation, digitization, and digital collections management online and offline.

Reporting to the Executive Director, a **project manager** would be responsible for the following duties:

- Recruit and train project staff
- Select and liaise with vendors
- Work with partnering organizations

- Work with community organizations
- Supervise digitization work
- Supervise oral history work
- Lead communications & education work

Additional staff will be needed to manage these additional potential project components:
- Oral history component:
  - **Videographer**
  - **Interviewer**
    - Two part-time staff should collaborate to schedule, set up, conduct, record, and post-process interviews. It is recommended to have two staff, rather than combine the roles into one.
    - Staffing for these two positions should be determined by the total number of desired interviews, with some room for following up with second interviews for some interviewees, or adding people based on data collected during the project. A ballpark rate would be 10 hours per staff member per interview: preparation, research, and booking for the interviewer; set up & recording and post-processing for the videographer.
    - A secondary staff member should be available to supervise and perform quality control on video footage & interview quality, especially at the beginning of collection, but throughout the collection period as well.
    - Interviewing someone about their memories can be sensitive and intimate and may be the only opportunity to capture essential historical information. Interviewers require tact, discretion, compassion, improvisational skills, and a high level of both general knowledge and knowledge specific to the topics at hand. Effort should be made to ensure interviewers are skilled, experienced and knowledgeable. At the same time, it is not advised to use members of the target group to conduct interviews: people with shared histories often speak in insider language and forget to explicate or expand on things that outsiders won't know.

- Digitization component:
  - **Digitization technician**
    Working around the schedule of the hosting organization, the Oakville Historical Society, a staff member can utilize the existing equipment and space of the OHS digitization lab. There is space for one person and storage for several bankers' boxes of materials (up to 8 boxes). The OHS usually has a summer digitization student who works around 20 hours a week from May to August. The OAC can schedule a digitization technician around this, either by adding more hours the rest of the year or by working 20 hours whenever the space is available. It is estimated that between 2 and 5 boxes can be digitized per week depending on contents, which gives the OAC about two weeks to fully digitize and quality-control the materials of each organization before returning to the owner.

- Ideally, a secondary staff member would be available to perform quality control on all digital output, preferably within a reasonable timeframe before borrowed materials are returned to owners. If revisions or re-digitization are required, they should be done immediately without needing to reschedule owners in or re-transfer materials. Quality control may not be more than 2 hours per week, and so can be part of the project manager's duties.

- Outreach component:
    - **Communications coordinator**
      Communications and promotions work can be part of the project manager's duties or combined into communications work for the organization as a whole or separated out into part-time work (5-10 hours a week). As such, it can be combined with one of the following positions.
    - **Education coordinator**
      A staff member is required to liaise with educational systems in the catchment region and find ways to incorporate the digital archives into curricula. This can include public and private K-12 schools, Sheridan College and other post-secondary institutions, and extracurricular and private classes.

No matter what project components are pursued, the project will require an online presence with a web-accessible digital archive of materials. That web presence will require some design customization, both in web (using HTML and CSS) and graphic (producing images and colour schemes). This may necessitate hiring a **freelance designer or a design team** to produce a custom branding and look for the site as well as assessing & improving the chosen digital collections management tool for accessibility, function, and form.

Some of the digital collections vendors identified will provide some customization as part of the contract, and may offer further customization options, or can recommend some trusted third-party designers. The OAC should prepare for a one-time design contract after the tool has been selected and set up, after some digital items have been added, and before publishing the collection to the public. It does not seem necessary to pursue a longer-term staffing solution for this work.

Infrastructure

The Oakville Arts Council headquarters at Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre comprises two enclosed offices and one communal meeting space. One office is for the Executive Director and one is for the part-time Membership & Office Administrator; the latter also holds a second workstation used part-time by seasonal communications staff. The communal meeting space currently holds a fourth workstation that can be used intermittently when the room is not required for meetings.

At least three workstations will be required for the duration of this project: one for the Project Manager and two to rotate between other staff. The former would ideally be in a private office where phone calls and meetings can take place without disruption to other staff. The two latter stations would need to be used by all of the communications staff on a part-time basis, the education staff on a part-time basis (in year three), and the two oral history project staff on a part-time basis (in years one and two), assuming one station can be upgraded and supplied with video editing and rendering software. The OAC does not currently have office space and equipment that can be dedicated to this need.

The communal meeting space has space for four or five people, and when in use would exclude work from the fourth workstation. Assuming this project meets regularly in the OAC offices, it may include the Executive Director, the Membership & Office Administrator, the Project Manager, one digitization staff, one or two oral history staff, and one communications staff. The OAC does not currently have office space that can be dedicated to this need, but meeting space rentals are available in the same building.

Ideally, much of the work of the project work detailed above can be accomplished off-site. The oral history project staff may be able to provide their own equipment as well as computers to edit and process video. Communications and education staff can work remotely and only attend the offices for meetings. Working remotely will require shared digital infrastructure such as Google Drive or Dropbox for file-sharing and collaborative work, shared calendars, Skype or Zoom or Google Hangouts for regular meetings, and a high level of communication and proactivity for project staff. Thus, this project is being conceived of largely as a remote-work project.

A digitization laboratory would require an enclosed office at a minimum of 100 square feet, with a desk, at least six electrical outlets with surge protectors, and internet access. Were this project to pay for conversion of one portion of the OAC offices into a digitization laboratory, it would cost roughly $1700 a year for rent and utilities and technical support. This does not include the purchase of digitization equipment.

An ideal setup would be both a fast document scanner for paperwork, and a large flatbed scanner for individual items that cannot be fed through automatically. One digitization workstation would be attached to the equipment, while the second listed below would be in the OAC offices and used by the Project Manager for file formatting, exporting web-quality versions, and uploading to the digital collection. Two hard drives can be transferred for scanning at one station and quality-control at the other. A third hard drive would hold finalized files in long-term preservation.

Digitization equipment should include:
- A two-sided-document scanner with an Automated Document Feeder & text-recognition software (roughly $1000CAD)
- A large flatbed scanner for fragile papers, artworks, photographs, film, slides, & posters (roughly $1000CAD)

- Two high-powered desktop computers for processing large images & text recognition (roughly $1200CAD each)
- Two external RAID1 hard drives for safe storage & processing of digitization files (roughly $400 each)
- One external RAID1 hard drive for long-term storage (roughly $1000CAD)

In its current space, the OAC cannot support a digitization laboratory, nor does it seem justifiable to purchase digitization equipment solely for this project. This is the single greatest space need of the project, and thus the OAC requires a partnership or collaborative agreement to undergo this part of the project.

We wrote to several community partners in search of an agreement to share digitization equipment and space for the duration of this project. The Oakville Public Library was unable to respond during the timeline of this study. The Oakville Museum offered the OAC use of their photographic equipment for large-scale digitization, such works of art.

The Oakville Historical Society is currently willing to serve as a partner and time-share their digitization laboratory in their headquarters at the Cottages at Erchless. They may also be willing to transport their digitization equipment, when not in use for their own projects, to their storage space in Queen Elizabeth Park, down the hall from the OAC offices. Assuming the OHS's agreement, three external hard drives and one computer workstation for the OAC offices would be required. Alternatively, investment could be made in a laptop for off-site use.

The OAC's location in Queen Elizabeth Park is ideal for its convenient co-location with some of the target groups in this project - the fibre artists, woodworkers, ceramicists, and other artists who meet and work there; the community gallery's and hallways' exemplary record of showing local artists - as well as its rentable meeting and community spaces. This may also allow us a convenient project component of recording or photographing artists at work or works in progress. QEPCCC currently offers a recording studio which this may be available to rent to record oral histories if the subjects do not have space to offer.

The OAC would supply its existing physical and technical infrastructure, including its offices and meeting space, the ability to rent meeting space in Queen Elizabeth Park at a reduced rate, its contract with the Town of Oakville's information technology department, its computer and printing equipment, phone lines and internet access, website and social media channels, and other organizational assets including its membership and contact list.

Under a proposed agreement with the Oakville Historical Society, we would pay them a monthly honourarium for the time-sharing of their existing digitization equipment and space (including kitchen and washroom access for our staff members):
- One office (with storage for up to 8 archival boxes of material)
- Three scanners - one Automated Document Feeder (ADF) scanner and two flatbed scanners with negative & slide scanning equipment
- One computer

- Photography equipment
- One 16mm film scanner.

The OAC would need to coordinate use of the OHS space, particularly when the OHS has summer students working on digitization from May through August. This allows us to estimate that we can employ a digitization assistant for eight months of the year at anywhere from part-time to full-time; during the summer we will have to schedule around OHS's work schedule, which means part-time at the most, and likely evening and weekend hours. However, while we do want to take advantage of this arrangement, we want to be sensitive to the OHS's needs and mindful of our use of their space. We would estimate roughly 20 hours a week for the digitization position, knowing that it may be 30 hours during eight months of the year and as few as 10 during the summer. The project manager may be able to perform digitization as well, outside these hours.

Financial Feasibility

The Oakville Arts Council currently rents office space in Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre in Bronte. It employs a full-time Executive Director, a part-time Membership & Office Administrator, and an occasional Communications staff. All other staffing and space would need to be grant funded.

The OAC occasionally hires student workers through the Canada Summer Jobs funding through Employment and Social Development Canada. It also receives occasional project funding through the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

This project will require hiring staff, as outlined in the Organizational Feasibility: Staffing section above. Funding is available to supplement or cover some of the recommended staffing needs. As these funding streams come with their own stipulations and constraints, a variety of funding needs may need to be compiled to supply the needed labour.

Potential Funding Sources

Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grant (OTF)

OTF Grow Grants support the delivery of evidence-based projects, whether adapting and replicating projects used elsewhere, or launching a new project based on research. Grow Grants are two to three years in length and can fund $50,000 to $250,000 per year. The next Grow deadline is August 12, 2020.

Thanks to the OTF's extensive granting history information on its website, similar projects were reviewed. Here is a summary of recent similar projects including their project description and their funding requests:

Organization	Project Funding	$ per year	Description
Six Nations Polytechnic	$732,000 over 36 months	244000	To hire staff to train eight highly proficient speakers of the Cayuga language and create an archive of resources. Enriching people's lives through arts, culture and heritage, this initiative is helping the transfer of skills and knowledge to the next generation of artistic leaders and has an impact on the lives of 100 people in the community.
Six Nations Polytechnic	$450,000 over 24 months	225000	To hire staff for the Archival Development Project, which will catalogue the language and cultural archives, create oral renditions of ceremonies and transcribe recordings from the Ǫgwehǫ:weh civilization. A business plan would be developed and digital equipment purchased so that transcribed cultural records can be documented and safely stored.
Royal Botanical Gardens	$337,200 over 25 months	168600	To expand community engagement by offering new cultural heritage programming and digitally preserving its archival collection. Enriching people's lives through arts, culture and heritage, this initiative is helping the preservation and animation of cultural heritage and has an impact on the lives of 10,000 people in the community.
Aphasia Institute	$406,000 over 36 months	135000	To digitize a substantial pictograph collection to create electronic communication resources for Ontarians with aphasia, their families and care providers.
Multicultural History Society of Ontario	$398,800 over 36 months	133000	To hire staff, digitize oral histories, print materials and visual records and conduct outreach to improve access to the immigrant and ethnic experience. Educators, young people, scholars and the public will be engaged through online curricular links and other resources to celebrate Ontario's multicultural heritage.
Workman Arts Project of Ontario	$258,400 over 24 months	129200	To hire staff to digitize the organization's archives, publish research on the efficacy of art and mental health programs, and expand its practice model to three communities in Ontario.
Arts Inter-media Canada/Dance Collection Danse	$381,000 over 36 months	127000	To hire staff and to digitize the organization's collections of Canada's dance history, including the legacy of artists from Aboriginal, Asian and Urban dance genres. Funds will also be used to market its archival and publishing work and to present educational programs about the diversity of Canadian dance in schools in Durham Region, Renfrew County, Essex-Kent, and Toronto.

London Arts Council	$376,700 over 36 months	125000	to expand an arts and heritage youth education program and develop learning modules . Enriching people's lives through arts, culture and heritage, this initiative is helping access to arts-based learning opportunities and compelling artistic, cultural and heritage experiences, and has an impact on the lives of 5,250 people in the community.
National Campus and Community Radio Association	$224,500 over 24 months	112250	To increase capacity for collaboratively building an online digital archive, learning tools and remuneration models to preserve, promote and celebrate the diversity of Ontario-based independent music by making musicians' songs available to the public.
Hamilton Arts Council	$249,800 over 35 months	83000	Delivering a project that builds on the success of a proven model or program with a $249,800 grant over 35 months to assist with staffing and program costs involved with raising awareness of Hamilton's artistic history. Enriching people's lives through arts, culture and heritage, this initiative is helping the preservation and animation of cultural heritage and has an impact on the lives of 1,250 people in the community.

We contacted six Grow Grant recipients to discuss their projects:

- Building Cultural Legacies from the Hamilton Arts Council
- The Workman Arts Project of Ontario
- The Royal Botanical Gardens
- The National Campus and Community Radio Association
- The Multicultural History Society of Ontario
- Arts Inter-Media Canada/Dance Collection Danse

Although the proposed OAC project differs in many aspects to the projects listed above, discussions with these organizations provided insight on the elements of their projects that were successful and those that were less so including some of the associated project costs and staffing requirements and use of technology.

Many of these projects were based on the substantial use of volunteer labour and/or part-time staff, and at the time they were executed some required the development of entirely new web platforms.

We are able to see how some of these factors influenced the long-term success of these projects, as evidenced by how some of the projects are no longer available online. The OAC project is intended to be multidisciplinary and will be more inclusive than some of these discipline-specific projects, and therefore runs the risk of being much larger in scope.

Canadian Internet Registration Authority Community Investment Program

The CIRA Community Investment Program supports charitable and nonprofit initiatives that include technology and connectivity in some way. This project is most likely applicable to the Digital Literacy stream based on our focus on learning & education. Similar projects have been funded in the past through a now-defunct "Online Services" stream; another stream may become available in the future. Applications are usually due in February of each year. Grants can be up to $100,000.

Ontario Arts Council

The Ontario Arts Council provides operating and project grants for artists, arts groups, and arts service organizations. It does not currently provide funding for archival projects. It is possible that some project components may be eligible for project funding, such as

- virtual or in-person exhibits celebrating artistic accomplishments and legacies
- research essays and publishing projects focusing on community art history
- capacity-building for arts organizations on records management
- educational programming for local schools on local art and community history.

For example, Market Development Projects (under Building Audiences and Markets) may see an online archive as a way to present artworks to a global art market and to build the audience for Oakville art productions. Compass grants fund capacity-building for arts management, as another example.

Market Development Projects have an annual deadline in May. Funding is a maximum of $20,000 towards online platforms for showcasing Ontario artists to a wider market. Our project may not qualify if we do not have portfolios of artworks, perhaps even for sale.

Arts in Communities and Schools Projects have two yearly deadlines, in April and November. Funding is a maximum of $20,000 over two years to produce educational experiences for students in partnership with Ontario artists working on artistic creation and expression activities. Educational programming in local art history, without a creation aspect, would not be eligible.

Canada Council for the Arts

The CCA's Digital Strategy fund includes the Public Access To The Arts stream, which is meant to increase discoverability of and access to Canadian artists and artworks. There are no clear deadlines but small applications (under $50,000) seem to be judged on a rolling basis. Initiatives where "the final goal" is digitization of materials are ineligible. For all projects, whether under $50,000 or up to $250,000, the fund will cover up to 85% of costs. Initiatives from $250,000 to $500,000 and that are multi-phased must be collaborative projects with multiple applicant partners.

Canada Cultural Investment Fund - Strategic Initiatives

The Strategic Initiatives component of the CCIF "provides financial assistance for projects involving multiple partners that help arts and heritage organizations improve their business practices and diversify their revenues." This application must be made collaboratively between organizations and create economic benefits. This project may not be eligible without a revenue component or a strong argument for improving business practices of the OAC or our target organizations. Applications are due in June 2020. Funding can cover up to 50% of project expenses.

Virtual Museum of Canada

The Virtual Museum of Canada Investment Streams cover small, medium, and large projects to build virtual exhibits on topics related to Canadian history. Applications usually open in June, so this could be applied for as early as June 2020. Small projects are built using the VMC's in-house web hosting and exhibit platform; medium ($50,000-$150,000) and large ($150,000-$200,000) projects can use a platform of the applicant's choice. The OAC may not be eligible for this funding as it is not a "heritage organization" but may qualify once it starts doing heritage programming. Projects must create "products that provide a complete online experience for users, where content can be consumed in any location, without specialized equipment. Examples include virtual exhibits, virtual tours, web-based games, web applications, educational resources, and more."

Library and Archives Canada Documentary Heritage Communities Program

This funding stream is for eligible organizations with a heritage component. The OAC would not yet qualify for this funding until the program was already started, then could apply for small single-year projects up to $25,000 or multi-year funding up to $50,000 per year. Applications are usually due in early January, so this would be applicable in Years Two and Three. Applicable projects include digitization, virtual exhibits, and digital collections management.

Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ)

Canada Summer Jobs funding can be used to hire any person between the ages of 15 and 30. It will supply up to 100% of the provincial minimum wage. Applications must be filed in February for the coming year; the earliest the position can start is May and the latest it can run is the end of August. Because the OAC has funded positions through CSJ before, there is a high likelihood of receiving this funding again.

This funding would allow the OAC to hire staff for four months of full-time work each year, which may be useful in the case of the oral history component. The OAC can hire two staff - a videographer and an oral historian - for approximately 16 weeks at 35 hours per week, which more than meets the desired time allotment.

In order to ensure the recruitment of skilled workers, the OAC may need to supplement the minimum wage and may need to extend the contract out of other funds, both of which are desirable by the standards of the CSJ program ("your job placement may invest in youth by

paying above the minimum wage in your province or territory, or by committing to retain the youth as an employee beyond the period of the Canada Summer Jobs Agreement").

If the CSJ contributed $14.00 per hour for 35 hours per week for 16 weeks, each position may be funded up to $7,840. Assuming a wage of $25.00 an hour, the OAC would then contribute an extra $11.00 per hour: $6,160 per contract.

The CSJ funding would not be suitable for the digitization technician position, as the summer will have reduced availability for time-sharing the digitization equipment of the OHS.

Young Canada Works for Heritage Organizations

Young Canada Works for heritage organizations may find the Oakville Arts Council eligible for funding as "an educational or cultural institution that has distinct objectives, programs and budget related to heritage" or as "a non-profit organization under a provincial, territorial, regional or municipal government, that has distinct objectives, programs and budget related to heritage" (Young Canada Works 2019-2020 Employer Guide). If the OAC is eligible once it has begun this archival program, it can apply for funding for summer students (6-16 weeks) or for internships in heritage (4-12 months) in Years One, Two, and Three.

YCW funds 25%-50% of a position's salary, up to $8,000 per summer position and up to $10,000 per internship. Application deadlines are usually in January for summer positions and February or March for fall internships.

This funding would be appropriate to supplement work in oral history, for summer work, and all of the project components, for internships. As this funding does not cover a full position and would come after other grant determinations were already made, it may be used to increase an hourly wage or to extend the length of a position partially funded by other sources.

For example, were the OAC to fund its digitization technician for 8 months under the internship program, the YCW would contribute $10,000 starting in September of Year One through August of Year Two. Assuming a wage of $20.00 an hour, the YCW funding would cover 500 hours of work; the OAC would need to supplement an equivalent $10,000 at minimum, for a total of 1,000 hours. This would ensure 20 hours a week of paid work for this position.

Student practicums and cooperative placements

The Town of Oakville contains Sheridan College and is in close proximity to McMaster University and Mohawk College in Hamilton. It is reachable by transit from the Universities of Toronto, Ryerson, and the Ontario College of Art and Design, and from the Colleges of Humber and George Brown. These institutions provide skilled students looking for workplace experience, who can either provide work in exchange for school credit or can be eligible for workplace funding and supplements. These must be assessed on a case-by-case basis according to the school, program, and distance.

We have elected to analyze the most likely opportunity: students from Sheridan College. Sheridan offers a number of applicable programs, such as [Media](), [Corporate Communications](), and [Interactive Media](), which could supply skilled students for our oral history component and for our communications needs.

A large number of [Sheridan programs]() are eligible for the Ontario Co-operative Education Tax Credit (CETC). The credit can total as much as $3,000 per student per paid work term, based on 25-30% of eligible expenses. It is unclear whether this tax credit can be applied to the portion of a total salary that OAC would pay alongside a grant, but it seems unlikely that it would apply to grant-funded expenses.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Strengths of the project

1. Our survey and consultations resulted in near-unanimous approval of the project and interest in participating. This approval ranged across sectors and disciplines, from amateur choirs to professional orchestras, from long-standing guilds to newly-founded initiatives.
2. No other potential repository, collecting institution, or government program exists to undertake this or a similar project.
3. Evidence of the need for this resource has been collected by the Oakville Arts Council for years, through fielding questions by phone and email about artists who are practicing or have practiced their art in Oakville.
4. The digital-first approach to this archive presents a unique opportunity for wide reach, a large audience, and unlimited access for students, researchers, artists, and community members. It also reduces operating costs and makes long-term sustainability easier, compared to a physical archival collection housed in an expensive space.

Strengths of the organization

1. The Oakville Arts Council is ideally positioned in its community to undertake this work. The OAC can provide this service to members, non-member arts organizations and

individuals, and the residents of the Town of Oakville. 100% of respondents to our survey felt the Oakville Arts Council was the right organization to tackle this project.

2. The Oakville Arts Council has the right contacts & relationships to work collaboratively and collegially with organizations and individuals who wish to contribute to this project. Responses to our calls for discussion were largely positive, except for organizations who were unable to make time or overcome scheduling conflicts.
3. The Oakville Arts Council can provide this service as an added benefit to our membership and as an added service to the Town of Oakville, which provides funding to the organization.
4. The Oakville Arts Council has extensive existing assets to contribute to a digital archive, which will both provide a proof-of-concept for the project, lay groundwork for further contributions, and provide a large amount of high-value content:
    a. The *Arts About Town* magazine, which was published in print, for which the OAC has digital design documents, PDFs, and related photographic assets.
    b. The Cultural Grants program, which brings with it a variety of contributed documents from applicant organizations, as well as contacts and relationships with community groups.
    c. The Volunteer Project, which created video footage of significant individuals who contribute to the fabric of cultural life in Oakville, as well as community consultation documents and other assets.
    d. Assorted organizational documents and projects spanning back to 1978.
5. The Oakville Arts Council, as part of its strategic planning, does surveys that are relevant to this project and help plan activities relevant to the community. From the Strategic Plan 2017-2019:
    a. Almost 40% of respondents identified as senior citizens
    b. 55% of respondents attend arts and culture activities/events/performances
    c. 35% are hobby artists; 13% identified as full-time professional artists or owners of an arts business
    d. 40% volunteer for an arts group or an arts organization
    e. 80% practice their art in Oakville
    f. 20% do not practice in Oakville primarily due to lack of affordable space

The results of our 2020 survey for this feasibility study were similar: almost 60% of respondents were over 61; 60% were hobbyists, while 28% were professionals; 40% volunteer in the arts; 64% attend arts and culture events.

These results show that Oakville has a strong community of hobbyists, volunteers, and audience members who are involved and engaged in the arts community with great passion, regardless of financial gain. These data support our conclusion that people who have been involved in the artistic community of Oakville for many years are aging and that our project needs to happen soon to capture as many memories and stories as possible.

Weaknesses

The Oakville Arts Council:

1. Does not have the relevant technological infrastructure or expertise in-house; it relies on the Town of Oakville's Information Technology department for most of its server and back-up services.
   Mitigation: Work with Oakville Historical Society, Oakville Public Library, and other agencies who have existing digital collections to share services and infrastructure.
   Mitigation: Develop a low-cost system that can be maintained and kept in-house, or at a preferable rate.
2. Does not have a surplus of office space or storage to undertake digitization work.
   Mitigation: Partner with the Oakville Historical Society to time-share their digitization equipment in their offices.
   Mitigation: Explore the potential for the OHS to move their digitization equipment to their storage space at Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre, to maximize the ease of use for the OAC and storage of materials in the OAC offices, and to minimize the disruption to OHS's activities.

Opportunities

1. No physical archival collection is currently dedicated to serving this community. Physical archives, such as the Oakville Historical Society, are often running out of storage space and are unable to accept large collections.
2. No other digital collection currently serves this need. Digital archives that borrow-to-digitize, rather than digitizing solely out of their own physical collections, are still developing in terms of best practices and standards.
3. This project presents an opportunity to:
   a. build a digital-first research collection that can be accessed worldwide at any time
   b. provide access to and preservation of materials from multiple organizations
   c. build the case for further collection development in this area based on usage and interest
   d. create interactive digital resources for use in classrooms and in educational assignments
   e. replicate similar projects from around the world, and provide an example that can itself be replicated by similar jurisdictions with similar budgetary or space constraints
4. This project can offer arts groups and individual artists in the community something that the OAC doesn't otherwise provide at this time:
   a. An online profile & small portfolio of their accomplishments
   b. Exposure for their many activities and creations
   c. Prestige
5. This project will, in the course of assessing, transferring, digitizing, and returning community materials, involve a trained archivist working one-on-one with community members. This archival expertise can help build community capacity for archives and records management, which in turn makes arts organizations and individual artists more prepared fiscally and legally. Building records capacity creates stronger organizations

through stronger succession planning and better procedural potential. Learning from past efforts helps future work become stronger and more likely to succeed.

Threats

1. Copyright: With most collected materials in-copyright, the OAC will require permission from the supplying organizations to digitize and share. Some organizations may not be able to identify the original copyright owner (such as a photographer of an image, or a designer of a poster) because of volunteer and staff turnover, and because of the ad-hoc and informal nature of many arts groups.
   Mitigation: Canada has a relatively liberal copyright legal framework governing the use of materials online - commonly referred to as "takedown-and-takedown." The OAC is at no legal risk if it complies with takedown requests as received after materials are shared online.
   Mitigation: The OAC, as part of this project, will solicit as fully as possible identifying information from organizations and the public to both provide complete metadata about materials and identify copyright holders who may no longer be with organizations.
2. Privacy: Some groups work with children, the elderly, or people who are unable to consent to having their creations or their likenesses shared.
   Mitigation: All of the groups we spoke to who worked with vulnerable populations, such as children, said they required waivers from all students or participants (or their parents) consenting to, for example, appear in photographs, or have their creations documented and shared online.
   Mitigation: The OAC may be able to arrange for some materials to stay "dark," that is, in the digital preservation system and fully described and organized, but not shared in the online platform, until a certain date, or until consent can be acquired from people of-age.
3. Partners' organizational capacity: Organizations may not have time or the audience required to supply the volunteer labour required to aggregate, organize, preserve, or digitize their materials.
   Mitigation: The OAC can offer organizations honouraria to encourage prioritizing the project. Organizations who work with us as "pilot" organizations (the first test subjects, where the process may take longer) can be eligible for larger honouraria.
   Mitigation: Almost all organizations will be able to contribute some materials to digitize, however small. We may supplement these by working with individuals (such as retired staff or former volunteers) who have more time, or by working with the public to collect and curate user-submitted materials, such as event photographs or souvenirs in their collections.
   Mitigation: The OAC may be able to increase collected material by making it a Cultural Grants requirement.
4. Sustainability: The OAC may find that ongoing maintenance, such as moderating comments and user submissions, or updating and securing the online platform, is more work than can be performed as part of its operating procedures and budget.
   Mitigation: The OAC, once it starts this project, will become eligible for specific funding for heritage-trained staff (e.g. Young Canada Works in Heritage Organizations) who can

perform this maintenance work yearly, and may even be able to solicit and capture more materials or undertake new project components and promotions during their contracts. **Mitigation:** The OAC may partner with Sheridan College to find a class-credit practicum that creates student time for this work, perhaps yearly or every semester. The OAC may also partner with the OHS, OPL, or other heritage-minded organizations to do this work.

5. Scope: The range & diversity of materials this project targets may become expensive - for digitization equipment & skills acquisition, and for metadata & findability. **Mitigation:** The OAC has identified a number of available tools, such as large-scale photography equipment owned by the Oakville Museum, that can assist us in a variety of documentation practices.

Recommendations

1. That the Oakville Arts Council contract with a third-party vendor for remote hosting of their digital collections, rather than self-hosting or contracting with the Town of Oakville's technology department.

   a. Reliance on a third-party vendor with digital collections expertise will ensure greater security, preservation, and access for the collection, and mean less downtime, better maintenance, and higher-quality technical support.
   b. It is possible to self-host the project if vendors cannot meet all the required specifications of the project, especially in terms of grant eligibility.

2. That the OAC use a vendor (or find a hosting service) with servers located within Canada to avoid complications of international data governance and privacy laws.

   a. OurDigitalWorld (makers of the VITA Digital Toolkit) and AndOrNot (who supply managed hosting of Omeka and other digital tools) are two examples of Canadian service providers.
   b. Thus, the OAC should consider either the Omeka open-source web-publishing platform or the VITA Digital Toolkit collections management platform for its digital archive.

3. That the OAC provision the yearly cost of hosting and support for the digital collection ($1300-$2700 CAD) in its core operating budget.

4. That the OAC also provision for ten years of hosting and support in advance.

    a. This ensures long-term access and maintenance of the digital collections regardless of organizational status.

5. That the OAC develop an agreement with the Oakville Historical Society for use of their digitization equipment and laboratory, as well as for associated staffing needs (such as kitchen and bathroom access) for the duration of the project.

    a. While the Oakville Historical Society has shown disinterest in charging the OAC rent, the OAC should offer a monthly honourarium to cover infrastructural costs.

6. That the OAC continue to explore further partnerships with other organizations to expand the reach and capacity of this project.

7. That the OAC contract with a like-minded organization to plan for transfer of project assets and responsibilities in the future.

    a. The Oakville Historical Society, the Oakville Public Library, the Town of Oakville, and the Oakville Museum may be potential partners in assuring long-term sustainability of the digital collections.
    b. There may also be institutions outside the Town, such as the Archives of Ontario, who can help assure long-term sustainability.

8. That the OAC apply for the following funding opportunities, in order of deadline:

    a. Canada Council for the Arts Public Access to the Arts: 2020 (date TBD)
    b. Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grant: August 12, 2020
    c. Young Canada Works and Canada Summer Jobs: January/February 2021
    d. Canadian Internet Registration Authority Community Investment Program: February 2021 (eligibility TBD)
    e. Virtual Museum of Canada: June 2021 (eligibility TBD)
    f. Documentary Heritage Communities Program: January 2022 (eligibility TBD)

9. That the OAC pursue the core project components of digitization and the creation of an online digital collections platform as a priority, and consider pursuing the oral history component separately, through separate funding sources.

    a. Both of these projects can stand independently or together and will benefit from staff working under the same supervision, but the reality of funding structures is that both initiatives are more likely to be approved as separate projects.

    b. It is inadvisable to delay either project as there is a risk of losing access to both materials and memories over time.

10. That honouraria be supplied to participating community organizations and individuals wherever possible.

11. That the project manager of this project, when funded, work closely with participating organizations to more clearly identify and plan for anticipated volume of materials available for digitization or digital capture, including on-site visits and detailed measurements.

12. That this project continue in the vein of this feasibility study and continue to provide capacity-building efforts with community individuals and organizations, to improve recordkeeping habits and skills and to give organizations greater understanding of digital and physical preservation and organization.

13. That, in order to create further access points into history and increase the audience of the project, the OAC pursue creative and research products based on the digital collection, especially including curriculum-based educational resources for local schools.

    a. This may include: short films or documentaries created from video footage collected in this project; podcasts or audio series created from audio recordings collected in this project; research essays or books; remix contests or other artistic creation contests that require use of the collections; student essay or artistic creation contests.

Appendix A: Digital Archive Design Examples

Cooper Hewitt Museum
https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/
A bold and cheerful front page with random items displayed each time you load it.

https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/420777947/with-palette-css4/
An item record display that's simple and bold, not unnecessarily technical or cluttered. Image loads small (to fit within your browser window) and then goes full-size when you click on it. Metadata display is in full sentences, which is very readable ("This is a Drawing. It is a part of the Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design department. It is credited Gift of Anonymous Donor.").

Building History (Illinois Institute of Technology)
http://buildinghistory.iit.edu/
Interactive map with a timeline function that allows you to explore built heritage over the years. Going to "Browse" allows you to see the collection items individually and to search or filter for the things you want to focus on.

http://buildinghistory.iit.edu/items/browse
It's built in Omeka and uses the Neatline timeline/map plugins.

New Roots
https://newroots.lib.unc.edu/
Good colours & graphics.
https://newroots.lib.unc.edu/explore offers a variety of ways to explore the collection.

Cleveland Historical
https://clevelandhistorical.org/
This collection uses Omeka to show a map with pinned items, recent additions, featured items, and some collections on the front page. They have an app too, so you can use the stories as a walking tour.
They present each "topic" (a collection) with a short research essay, and then associated images and audio excerpts from oral histories, and references to other sources. They don't provide transcriptions for the oral histories, but the way each topic is presented is very intuitive and user-friendly. They also use both subjects and tags as a way to explore the collection.
My only criticism with this project is that the images should be shown bigger and integrated into the essays, instead of in a small grid at the end (and that the content on each page is a restricted width that could take up the full browser window). Otherwise it's an excellent model.

West Vancouver Memorial Library
http://digital.westvanlibrary.ca/search
Using the VITA Digital Toolkit, the WVML collection has bold accent colours but is still very readable. The fixed width limits the ability to display search results, but the item-record display is good: http://digital.westvanlibrary.ca/3512854/data?g=d

It's very good for presenting newspapers, books, and other multi-page items, especially serialized publications. They need more explanatory text on the front page, and to have larger images and a bigger slideshow.

U Alberta Education and Research Archive
https://era.library.ualberta.ca/
They have a great use of beautiful images. The front page is very simple and features some promoted collections. The materials are not well-organized (and the only way to browse is an alphabetical list of 100+ groups!) and some of the collections are even empty.

Digital Public Library of America
https://dp.la/
This is an aggregate search portal of hundreds of other digital collections. Which means they can pick and choose the best images! Their frontpage features collections, virtual exhibits, educational resources, and a little how-to explainer at the bottom. It has a giant search box laid over historical images right at the top of the screen and offers browsing by collection and topic.

https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/stonewall-and-its-impact-on-the-gay-liberation-movement
The educational sets include teaching guides and historical items to teach with.

They have a little too much content to not organize their exhibits and topics more at
https://dp.la/exhibitions

Their search results thumbnails are too small, and the sidebar too wide:
https://dp.la/search?q=canada&list_view=grid&page_size=50&page=1

And their item-level displays are quite bland:
https://dp.la/item/01da51e2fa4e6e4b195e633d84a718b6?q=canada&list_view=grid&page_size=50&page=1

Houston Public Library
https://digital.houstonlibrary.org/
Their frontpage is clean and simple. The browse-by-media buttons at the bottom are good. It's not totally clear why users would want to browse by one library/collection instead of another; they should add more browsing options & collections, as well as more text about them. However, their frontpage leads to a completely different interface when you dig into the collections - something to avoid.
https://cdm17006.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/search/searchterm/canada
Small images, small text, a lot of empty whitespace in the button bars. And a giant empty header space - that covers useful space as you scroll down. All things to avoid.

Sao Roque Digital Archive

http://www.arquivosaoroque.com.br/acervo/

This is a really beautiful use of Omeka - big wide images, a compact header menu, helpful introductory information on the home page, featured items browsable by format (and in a clean grid) that identify their format when you mouse over them. There's an invitation to participate in the header and lots of statistics and information about how the project works.

University of North Texas Digital Library

https://digital.library.unt.edu/

Other than the green, their layout is easy to understand and helpful. The "by the numbers" section and the grid of different collections (although their images are a bit pixelated) are great. A "Contributing partners" section is a great idea - we want to highlight our collaborators. And having a "Take a Tour" page is another great idea, for students especially.

The same built-from-scratch platform is also being used to support https://texashistory.unt.edu/ and https://gateway.okhistory.org/

Which are both quite attractive. They have a good "This day in history" feature that uses newspaper articles. The Texas platform gives sample searches, which is smart, and offers ways of donating right on the front page, which is something we should consider.

Building Cultural Legacies

https://buildingculturallegacies.ca/

Built on Wordpress, this site has big images with information on mouseover (which isn't very accessible or readable). Good organization by decade or medium - smart access points. Ours would actually go to a collection of artifacts - not just single-person essays.

https://buildingculturallegacies.ca/explore-decades/

This browse-by function is good. The grid rollout is nice but there should be a few lines of metadata under each image instead of on mouseover (at least year and artist). It's impressive that they have a browse-by-colour (assume that's manually entered, not machine-identified). "Arts organization" should not be showing up under "subject" and arts organizations should also not be under "artists" - things seem a bit disorganized. And ideally you could look more closely at one individual item that shows up in search results without having to browse through the whole essay it's attached to. Users can't share a link to a specific image, only the essay.

Brooklyn Public Library

https://www.bklynlibrary.org/digitalcollections/

Simple and straightforward interface with some browsing tiles below the search box.

Appendix B: Digital Collections Tools Comparison

Appendix B can be found here.