



# National Science Digital Library (NSDL) Collection Policy January 30, 2013

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## **1.0 NSDL Educational Mission**

The National Science Digital Library (NSDL) strives to advance teacher practice and student learning by providing access to high quality Open Education Resources (OER) in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

This policy details NSDL's requirements for collection building, accessioning, and deaccessioning resources and collections in NSDL.

## **2.0 Collection Scope**

NSDL focuses on aggregating open educational resources and collections of resources that address the content and skills important to STEM teaching and learning. These resources are intended to support:

- Understanding concepts central to a STEM discipline
- Understanding how concepts build upon one another across grade levels and interrelate across disciplines
- Understanding and using educational materials that support STEM learning
- Developing curricular materials
- Assessing learning of concepts or skills
- Research on teaching and learning

NSDL resources are characterized by descriptive information (metadata and annotations). This means that NSDL is a *metadata repository*, not a content repository.

That, is, NSDL does not own or hold the resources themselves, but provides access to resources held by others, via NSDL.org, and/or services that deliver those metadata to other sources.

**Geographic coverage and languages.** All geographic areas are included in the scope of the collection. The majority of NSDL resources are in English, although resources in other languages are accepted and encouraged, as long as the metadata describing the resource is provided in English, with an indication in the metadata that other language versions are available.

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

### 3.0 Communities Served

NSDL collections serve the needs of the **K-16 education continuum**:

- K-12 educators and students
- Faculty and students at colleges, universities, and technical schools
- Independent learners
- Those who teach and learn in informal educational settings such as museums, science centers, and public libraries

### 4.0 Collection Types

**4.1 Resource collections** - resources designed for teaching and learning in STEM education. Collection developers should refer to NSDL's [Resource Quality Checklist](#) for quality criteria in identification and selection of resources most likely to meet the needs of educators and learners.

Resource types may include:

- **instructional materials**, including classroom activities, laboratory experiments, demonstrations, models, case studies, courses, simulations, tutorials, curricula, modules, field trips, problem sets, teacher guides, lesson plans, interactives, projects
- **audio/visual materials**, such as animations, videos, maps, graphs, images, illustrations
- **pedagogical resources**, including teaching techniques, online professional development courses, educational evaluation

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- **assessment materials**, such as exams, quizzes, questionnaires, self-assessments, answer keys, rubrics, portfolios
- **reference materials that support teaching and learning**, such as relevant background material and content-related professional development material
- **datasets that support teaching and learning**, including visual, factual, and numeric information, remotely sensed and observed data, trials, databases
- **tools and products**, such as open source software, models, or applications for interacting, accessing, manipulating, or viewing resources and data

**4.2 Annotations collections** - the NSDL provides additional contextual information to describe the utility of, and user experience with, resources by using annotation metadata. The content of these metadata may include (but is not limited to):

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

## 5.0 Access

The NSDL embraces the principle of open access and favors open resources in its collection. However, some resources from collection providers may require registration, a log-in, or a subscription fee.

## 6.0 Selection and Accessioning

*Accessioning* refers to the process by which new collections are accepted and integrated into the library. Accessioning criteria, and the groups involved in selection and approval of NSDL resource and collection accessioning, are detailed here.

Prospective *collection* contributors are encouraged to [contact the NSDL](#) about their interest in submitting a collection. The NSDL also welcomes user suggestions for adding *individual resources*. Users who wish to suggest individual resources may complete the [Recommend a Resource](#) form to provide basic descriptive information about the suggested resource.

In reviewing eligibility of new collections for inclusion in the library, the NSDL uses the following criteria:

- Relevance to NSDL's goals to increase quality and accessibility of digital resources and services for STEM education
- Fit with NSDL collection scope

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- Scientific accuracy and currency of content: the material is appropriate to the state of the art of the field
- Alignment to the principles outlined in the [NSDL Resource Quality Checklist](#), when appropriate to the nature of the resources
- Agreement with the [NSDL Terms of Use](#)
- Adherence to the criteria in the [Resource Metadata Rubric](#) and [Annotation Metadata Rubric](#)
- Relevance to needs defined in the [NSDL Collection Development Blueprint](#)

Specific procedures for contributing resources and collections are described in the [NSDL Technical Documentation Wiki for Metadata and Collections](#).

## 7.0 Deaccessioning

*Deaccessioning*, or weeding, is the process of removing materials from a library. Deaccessioning of resources and collections is occasionally necessary for the maintenance of a useful and reliable repository.

**7.1 Criteria for Deaccessioning.** NSDL uses the following criteria when considering items for deaccessioning:

- Resources are outside the scope of NSDL (e.g. collections of journal or scholarly articles focused solely on research)
- There has been an official finding of plagiarism or copyright violation concerning the resource
- Scientific or other content is no longer accurate, relevant, or appropriate without further documentation or explanation relating the content in question to currency of the state of the art in the field
- The person or organization that contributed the resources or collections has requested their removal from NSDL
- The resource is no longer available (e.g. broken link)
- The resource is not directly accessible (e.g. goes to a landing page where it is difficult to follow the link to the actual resource)
- Lack of robustness as a digital resource (resource is very difficult to interact/navigate or requires old software that is no longer available)
- The annotation or paradata shows a deliberate attempt to misrepresent information about a resource either positively or negatively
- Metadata can no longer be updated from the provider
- The resources are not specific to classroom use or the concepts and principles of [Learning Application Readiness](#)

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

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