APPENDIX B: Collections Policy

With the exhibit in early development, we felt proposing a collections policy would be useful. This is intended to be a working document, suggesting ways in which to handle contributions to the collection. When the exhibit materializes it will likely be met with an insurgency of suggestions for what to include; this document suggests ways to determine which stories to include, while remaining true to the museum's mission. As with other aspects of the museum, it is our hope that this document will evolve along with the project.

B.1 Nature of the Objects

Because this museum aims to exhibit and preserve stories rather than material objects, "object collections" must be carefully considered. These museum acquisitions are not singular objects or accounts, but rather series of collected examples that are amassed with the intended purpose of exhibition.

B.2 Collections Criteria

What follows are some initial guidelines for evaluating the quality of a proposed acquisition. While there will most certainly be exceptions, the following are criteria which, ideally, all new acquisitions should meet. A story chosen for accession:

1. Encompasses multiple perspectives
2. Includes a physical component
3. Makes significant contributions to exhibit goals
4. Contributes to an interpretive module
5. Is relevant to the museums audience
6. Contributes to the building and preservation of technology history

Multiple Perspectives. To prevent the exhibit from becoming a showcase for the most vocal contributors, it is important that each story include multiple perspectives. Both developers and users made significant contributions throughout the history of technological development at Michigan. Therefore, it is important to include accounts from instructors, students, University staff, and professional developers. This type of inclusion will also ensure that visitors to the exhibit can identify with the stories presented

Physical Component. In keeping with our construction of the "virtual" for this exhibit, there are two important reasons why each story must include a physical component. The first is that is to establish virtual objects with the same presence as physical objects. The second is to engage visitors with physical experiences—ensuring that participation with the collection goes beyond the computer screen. Physical exhibit components may include, but are not limited to: public lectures or events, pieces of hardware, photographs, archival records, print documents, other exhibits and significant sites.

Significant Contributions to Exhibit Goals. This virtual exhibit exists to remind visitors of Michigan's contributions to IT development, and to teach our audience about this history. It also serves to commemorate the efforts of leaders in the field. Acquisitions must meet be able to be used in a manner that supports all three of these goals.

Contributes to an Interpretive Module. To keep the larger narrative of the exhibit intact, each initial story acquisition should fit within one of the three interpretive modules. Within each module, story acquisitions should provide evidence of the exhibit's overarching interpretive goals: first, to demonstrate accomplishments made through technology and second, to show the impacts and risks of pioneering in technology. We anticipate that more modules will be added as this project progresses; new acquisitions will have to fulfill the interpretive goals of their respective modules.

> *Module I:* These stories will provide examples of the computer's transition from mechanical object to digital device, and the ways in which Michigan has contributed to such advancements.
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> *Module II:* These stories will come from students and faculty who both helped to design technologies and who were end-users. Each contribution will demonstrate how the University has engaged students with technology, and how such technologies have had impacts beyond the campus setting.
>
> *Module III:* These stories will originate from the IT community, and will portray the significance of Michigan's collaborative contributions to the communication technology legacy.

Relevant to the Exhibit's Audience. Because this exhibit is designed to reach a wide variety of diverse patrons, collections must be acquired with them in mind. Each audience will have different interests, and each new acquisition should meet the education, preservation, and commemoration needs of at least one of the following identified groups:

1. The University community, especially including students and staff
2. Other universities with whom Michigan has partnered in developing information technologies and strategies
3. University of Michigan alumni

4. Prospective students
5. Former participants in IT development at Michigan (retired professors, researchers)
6. Non-University constituents interested in the history of information technology

Building and Preservation of Technology History. Primary acquisition consideration will be given to stories that are in danger of becoming "lost" with current methods of documentation. It is not our intent to collect and exhibit stories that are "common knowledge" both in and out of the technology field; instead we aim to help the IT community at Michigan re-build its unique history.

B.3 Deaccessioning

Because the objects in this exhibit are stories, deaccessioning will naturally occur when stories are absorbed into larger narratives, or are replaced by more relevant or more complete stories. Because this project is not designed as a repository for information, stories that are removed from the virtual exhibit will no longer be considered part of the collection. Stories should be removed from the collection if it is determined they no longer meet the criteria above.