



# Preparing Collections for Digitization

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## Description

Most libraries, archives and museums around the globe are now confronting the challenges of providing digital access to their collections. As digitization becomes more widespread, there is huge demand for detailed guidance on best practice. While much has been written on the theory, these practical aspects have often been neglected, but they are significant not only in safeguarding the collection during image capture but also in ensuring that projects run smoothly and the resulting digital collection is of high quality.

This practical guide fills that gap, offering guidance covering the end-to-end process of digitizing collections, from selecting records for digitization to choosing suppliers and equipment and dealing with documents that present individual problems. As such, it can be used as a 'how-to' reference manual for collection managers who are embarking on a digitization project or who are managing an existing project. It also covers some of the wider issues such as the use of surrogates for preservation, and the long term sustainability of digital access. Key areas covered are:

- digitization in the context of collection management
- before you digitize: resources, suppliers and surrogates
- the digital image
- the process of selection
- surveying collections
- equipment for image capture
- preparation of document formats and fastenings
- preparation of damaged documents
- setting up the imaging operation.

**Readership:** A clearly-written guide to a complex process, this book is an essential resource for all collection and project managers who have responsibility for the preservation of archival collections, as well as all industry professionals whose role touches on the digitization of collections.

## Contents

1. Digitization in the context of collection management

- Introduction
- The impact of new technologies
- Collection management
- Access to content and context
- Planning and processing with minimal risk
- The four phases of digitization
- Fitting digitization into collection management
- Chapter summary
- Bibliography

## **2. Before you digitize: resources, suppliers and surrogates**

- Introduction
- Impact on the institution
- Choosing to outsource
- The role of microfilm
- Chapter summary
- Bibliography

## **3. The digital image - *Ross Spencer***

- Introduction
- Basic concepts
- Post-processing
- Image specification
- Setting a standard
- Chapter summary
- Bibliography

## **4. The process of selection**

- Introduction
- A strategy for digitization
- The principles and process of selection
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- Chapter summary
- Bibliography

## **5. Surveying collections**

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- Why do a survey?
- Conducting a survey
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- Chapter summary
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## **6. Equipment for image capture**

- Introduction

- Risks during imaging
- Features to consider
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- Bibliography

#### 7. Preparation of document formats and fastenings

- Introduction
- Preparing formats and fastenings
- Fitting preparation into the workflow
- Chapter summary
- Bibliography

#### 8. Preparation of damaged documents

- Introduction
- Is conservation work always needed?
- Treatment options
- Documentation
- Fitting conservation work into the workflow
- Chapter summary
- Bibliography

#### 9. Setting up the imaging operation

- Introduction
- Working environment
- Workflow and document tracking
- Staffing
- Chapter summary
- Bibliography
- Conclusion

#### Further reading

- General guidelines
- The digital image
- Equipment for image capture

#### Author

**Dr Anna E. Bulow** is Head of Preservation at The National Archives. She is editor of the *Journal of Paper Conservation* and has written and presented on a wide range of subjects including degradation mechanisms of paper, environmental monitoring and control, risk assessment and digitization.

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