

Federal digital guidelines

The Federal Agencies Digitization Guidelines Initiative, which began in 2007, is a collaborative effort of a dozen federal institutions to develop a common set of guidelines for digitizing historical materials.

The guidelines are intended to increase quality and consistency of digitized public documents, streamline workflows, reduce costs, promote collaboration and exchange of research across agencies, and provide benchmarks for service providers and manufacturers.

The initiative has formed two working groups, one for still images and one for sound and moving images.

The Federal Agencies Still Image Digitization Working Group will focus on books, manuscripts, maps, and photographic prints and negatives. The participating agencies include the Library of Congress (LC), National Agricultural Library (NAL), National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), National Gallery of Art, the National Library of Medicine (NLM), National Technical Information Services, National Transportation Library, the Smithsonian Institution, U. S. Geological Survey, and the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO).

The Federal Agencies Audio-Visual Working Group will focus on sound recordings, video, and motion picture film. The participating agencies include the Defense Visual Information Directorate of the Department of Defense, LC, NAL, NARA, NLM, the Smithsonian Institution, GPO, and the Voice of America.

The initiative opened its Web site to the public on September 30, 2008. The URL is www.digitizationguidelines.gov/.

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Conservation and digitization

LIBER Quarterly, vol. 18: no. 2, contains

Asking the Right Questions: The Role of the Conservator in Digital Projects by Jan Paris, conservator for special collections at Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. In the article, Paris explains how she determines whether vulnerable special collections materials can be digitized. She evaluates the condition of each item and the purpose and scale of the digitization project in order to weigh the risks to the item against the benefits to institutional goals. Once the decision to digitize has been made, Paris determines if the material requires conservation pre- or post-scanning and how the material should be handled safely during scanning. The article also includes three examples illustrating her decision process.

The full text of the article is available as a free PDF at liber.library.uu.nl/publish/articles/000245/article.pdf.

Katrina redux

The Library of Congress has mounted online

Learning from Katrina: Conservators First-Person Accounts of Response and Recovery; Suggestion for Best Practice. After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the Heritage Emergency Assistance Recovery Teams (HEART) Assessment Program sent two mobile units to assess damage to cultural institutions and collections. In 2006, ten of the conservators who participated in the assessments recorded their experiences. Interviews with Gary Frost and Randy Silverman, Susan Duhl and Jill Sterrett, Kathy Ludwig and Hilary Kaplan, Karen Pavelka, Theresa Voellinger, Barbara Moore, and Lois Price are available online as short audio clips.

The URL for the interviews is www.loc.gov/preserv/emergprep/katrinarespond.html. *JH*