



Digitisation Toolkit

Digitising in-house or using vendors

State Library of Queensland digitises heritage collection materials both in-house and via vendors. The following information may help you to make decisions if you decide to set up an in-house process or want to use vendors for digitisation/reformatting of your historical collections. A combination of both works as well.

Tips for digitisation processing of Queensland heritage materials

The following points provide areas for you to consider when undertaking a digitisation process for Queensland heritage materials:

- Digitise using best capture practices and standards for long term access/preservation
- Do you have an inventory and a plan for digitisation?
- What is your budget?
- Have you checked to see if your material is digitised elsewhere?
- Do you have copyright permission to digitise/place online?
- Have you set up file naming for your material?
- Do you have a way to make content accessible?
- Do you have a way to store/preserve digital files with backup?

Digitisation in-house

To digitise in-house means there are certain requirements before carrying out the work. This includes equipment which if not readily available means budget must be allocated towards purchasing these items.

Equipment

Some basic equipment including an **overhead copy stand**, a **reliable digital camera** and **book cradle/pillow** to support materials will allow you to digitise books, registers, volumes, documents, maps, plans, files, illustrations, photographs, negatives and transparencies. At the bare minimum, these items should be included in your range of equipment.

Digitisation standards

In addition to equipment, this process should follow digitisation standards in keeping with the highest quality output. For more about digitisation standards, refer to other info guides in our Digitisation toolkit or the website listed in 'Additional Resources' at the end of this document.



Accessibility

One of the key components for text-based digitisation content is making it accessible for all, so keeping that in mind is important. Also think about providing access to digitised text-based content with a .pdf derivative. For increased searchability, you can also apply OCR (Optical Character Recognition) software to .pdf files to create keyword searchable documents. University of Melbourne's, University Digitisation Centre have compiled a list of OCR comparisons digitisation.unimelb.edu.au/project_planning/image_processing/ocr.

Digitisation in-house or vendor: what to consider?

When deciding whether to digitise in-house or use a vendor there are some points to consider that can favour either one of these options. We've listed some below:

Digitisation in-house

- items are physically and chemically stable and the risk of damage from digitisation is low
- digitisation of the collection requires minimal special instructions and thereby ease of workflow
- items require minimal conservation oversight and if necessary the vendor is open to manual handling training of documentary heritage collections by State Library conservators
- inventory using catalogue/accession records is available to minimise the cost of recording of items sent to vendors

Vendor

- vendor has purchased and maintains specialist and expensive equipment not available internally
- level of expertise in digitisation of a format is not available in-house
- vendor presents a more cost effective option and capacity to provide large quantities of digitisation within a prescribed period

Outsourcing collections Do not outsource collections:

- which are fragile or politically/security sensitive
- where specialised handling is required for preservation of the material
- of large monetary value or of exceptional significance
- which are one-offs or minor quantities
- which are not standard and require major special instructions
- that require major conservation oversight and controls
- which are complex, have minimal inventory or are not well arranged and require major reorganisation
- where reality checking of all real costs including contract management, more than reasonable consultation with vendor, administration, and transportation are likely to result in a questionable cost benefit



Using external vendors

If you wish to pursue using a digitisation service provider, you will need to provide the vendor with a list of specifications. This should include:

- File naming
- Request masters, derivatives and checksum at point of capture
- Ask for a sample, especially with large or complex jobs
- Request file transfer upload or delivery process that works for your organisation
- Quality control / review of work completed to ensure specs have been met

Vendors for most heritage collection formats

Below is a list of vendors you may wish to consult with for digitising your heritage collections. This is not an exhaustive list, more of one that highlights services that are available to the community. If you have other items to digitise (letters, post cards, photographs, etc.), you may wish to consult with local vendors.

- **CAVAL** – automated Kirtas book scanner service
- **SALMAT** – Overhead Book Scanner – manual (more suitable for fragile collections)
- **Scan Conversion Services** www.scanservices.com.au
- **Spectrum Digital & Photographic** www.spectrumcolour.com.au

List of vendors for audio, video and film digitisation

Below is a list of vendors specialising in audio, video and film digitisation:

- **Crystal Mastering**
77 Newman Street, Thornbury, Victoria 3071
Telephone: (03) 9484 8814
Website: www.crystalmastering.com.au
Type of transfer offered: digitisation of audiotapes and videotapes
- **DAMsmart**
32 Essington Street, Mitchell, ACT 2911
PO Box 81, Mitchell, ACT 2911
Telephone: (02) 6242 6456
Fax: (02) 6255 4236
Email: joe@damsmart.com.au
Website: www.damsmart.com.au
Type of transfer offered: digitisation of audiotapes, videotapes and 16mm and 35mm films



- **DVD Infinity**

PO Box 86, North Sydney, NSW 2059

Telephone: (02) 9906 6383

Email: info@dvdinfinity.com.au

Website: www.dvdinfinity.com.au

Type of transfer offered: transfer of Super 8, Standard 8mm, 9.5mm and 16mm, video (broadcast, professional and domestic formats), photos, 35mm slides and negatives. Digital via frame-by-frame film scanning system.

- **FATS Digital**

318 Montague Road, West End, QLD 4101

Telephone: (07) 3846 4582

Email: mfatsqld@fats.com.au

Website: www.fats.com.au

Type of transfer offered: video and audio transfer duplication and digitisation. Broadcast transfer facility that uses a Rank-Cintel 'flying-spot' (continuous motion) scanner.

Transfer of Standard 8mm, Super 8, 16mm and 35mm.

- **Nano Lab**

36 Grant St, Daylesford, VIC 3460

Telephone: 0400 748 864

Email: richard@nanolab.com.au

Website: www.nanolab.com.au

Type of transfer offered: telecine service to transfer processed Super 8 or Standard 8 films to digital via frame-by-frame film scanning system. Output to digital computer file only – not to tape. Uncompressed digital files also offered.

Before digitising in-house or with a vendor

- Use/provide [digitisation standards](#)
- Decide what you want the end product to look like and how you will deliver online
- For most digitisation projects, you will need to have consistent description of the material.
- You will need to be able to provide technical information for in-house services and for vendor contracts
- Decide on file naming protocols. Be consistent in your file naming strategy
- Decide on long-term storage/preservation
- Set up a spec sheet/job sheet with your staff or vendor that outlines expected outcomes. This should include numbers, deadlines, delivery methods
- Check with staff throughout your organisation about expectations. Many people will need/use digitised material
- Provide training on scanners, digital cameras, computer software, file storage and how to handle an archive



When you are ready to digitise in-house or with a vendor

- Ask staff/vendor for a sample
- Know how you are going to make your digitised materials accessible online
- Have all staff involved check samples for compatibility with expected outcomes
- Ensure that your staff/vendor is able to deliver digital files that meet expectations on time – note specific deadlines
- Determine method of file delivery both to and from – will you receive files on a portable hard drive? Or with file uploads to a designated area on your server?
- Determine points of quality control both for in-house and with vendor

Upon receipt from staff/vendor

- Do quality control upon receipt. Request corrections as needed.
- Provide pre-determined level of access/method of access to stakeholders
- Use excerpts of content to tell your story, blog, newsletters, presentations
- Share with SLQ and others in distributed collection via the Queensland Memory enewsletter – contact qldmemory@slq.qld.gov.au
- Provide online access to content
- Have a preservation method for digital files, with backup

How to store digital files upon receipt

- Upon receipt of digital files from a vendor or in house, you will need to have a way to store files. Best practice is to have a server, backed up and secure.
- Also, have a preservation policy that ensures your files are accessible into the future. If you cannot afford or do not have a server, you may backup your digital files on a portable hard drive, portable USBs or portable DVDs.
- Best practices recommend several backups in different locations. Just remember, as technology progresses, some of these options may not be accessible in the future.

Additional resources:

- *SLQ Digitisation Capture Standards*
www.slq.qld.gov.au/about-us/corporate/policies/protocols-and-standards

Need further information?

(07) 3840 7666 | qldmemory@slq.qld.gov.au



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