

ION History: Digitization Best Practices

1. **Determine your file name structure before starting any projects.**
 - a. Two letter library code and underscore should be accompanied by an appropriate title to match the collection or item being scanned.
 - b. Examples:
 - i. OW_oral_history_John_Smith_WWII (Owen, oral history, John Smith, World War II)
 - ii. AL_disco_contest_fall_festival_1976 (Any Library USA (*fictional*), images from a disco dancing contest from 1976)
2. **Evaluate** item candidates for digitization.
 - a. Does the item get regular use?
 - b. Does the item have mass appeal?
 - c. Is the item important to a national event, local history, genealogy...
 - d. Is the item fragile and regularly used?
 - e. Or is the item important to a specific user (old family photos, letters etc.)?
 - i. If the item is very important to a user but does not necessarily need to be included in the library's digital collection, the library can choose to scan the item and email the file to the person and not include it in the digital collection.
3. **Digitizing should not be viewed as preservation.**
 - a. Digitization is a method for encouraging access and exposure of the item and the knowledge of where the item lives.
 - b. Items should be preserved with methods appropriate for the format.
4. **Item preparation.**
 - a. Remove staples, paper clips, rubber bands, etc.
 - b. Organize and sort so similar items are grouped together and multi-part objects are in the correct order (front cover or first page should be scanned first). Do not scan a mess!
5. **White gloves.** Wear white gloves while handling pictures or film to prevent the transfer of skin oils onto the film.
 - a. Gloves are not necessary when working with books. If you wear gloves and cannot feel the pages of a book the risk increases that you may rip or damage the pages.
6. **Get to know your scanner.** Practice scanning formats you will digitize regularly (photos, yearbooks). Practice using the adjustment tools provided by the scanning program.
7. **Clean scanner.**
 - a. Clean the scanner with a dust cloth before every scanning session.
 - b. Clean the scanner with a digitization approved cleaner at the end of every scanning session to make sure the scanner is dry and clean for the next session.
8. **File types.**
 - a. Scan items in and save as TIFF
 - b. **Multi-part objects should be scanned in as TIFF, saved, then combined into a PDF A before importing into the ResCarta Metadata Creation Tool. This way, you will not need to re-add the same metadata to every single item's metadata fields.**
 - i. Example: Enter in the high school, year, and metadata once for many pages of a yearbook
9. **Determine how much time is appropriate** to spend on scanning items. How much time per item are you willing to spend?
10. **Subject headings.**
 - a. Use consistent language when entering in the Subject or Subject Heading for an item.
 - i. Create a record in a notebook or spreadsheet of common terminology used for a collection.
 - ii. Local terminology may be more accessible than Library of Congress subject headings.

Resources

1. Copyright Rights Statements: <https://rightsstatements.org>
2. Library of Congress: Materials that May be Excluded from the Digitization Process: <https://www.loc.gov/preservation/care/scan.html>
3. Library of Congress: Preservation Guidelines for Digitizing Library Materials: <https://www.loc.gov/preservation/care/scan.html>
4. The ResCarta Foundation: <https://www.rescarta.org/>