

Digital Archiving and Preservation Basics

History & Genealogy
St. Louis County Library
genealogy@slcl.org
314-994-3300 ext. 2070

Digital Archiving Process:

1. Identifying
What do you want to keep?
2. Deciding
How many copies do you need?
3. Saving and Exporting
What file type will you use?
4. Organizing
How will you name your files?
5. Copying and Managing
Where will you store the preservation and access copies?

Scanning and Digitization

1. Prepare scanner and any documents or photos you would like to scan
2. Select settings:
 - Bitonal: printed and handwritten text
 - Grayscale: b&w photos, music, and handwriting
 - Color: photographs, maps, diagrams, illustrations, and docs.
 - Resolution: measure of an image's sharpness

- DPI or PPI (Scan documents and photos (4"x6" and 5"x7") at 300 dpi. To enlarge 4"x6" and 5"x7" photos to 8"x10" or greater, scan at 400 or 600 dpi.

3. Saving Files

- Tiff, jpeg, pdf
- Bitonal: save TIFF files
- Grayscale: JPEG files (medium quality)
- Color: JPEG files (medium quality for single copies, high quality for re-printing and enlarging photos to 8"x10")

Access and Storage

Preservation Copy

- High Resolution
- High Bitrate
- Little or no compression
- Open/non-proprietary formats

Access Copy

- Copy for sharing
- Use well-supported formats
- Reduced resolutions can save storage space
- Low bitrate
- Compressed

Organizing:

- File names
- yyyyymmdd
- folder-within-folder directory/folder structure:

\My Documents

\School

\Science

20201105-project-001.jpg

20201104-quiz-001.jpg

Copying and Managing

- Create backup copies
- Store copies in at least 3 different places
- Update and transfer scans to updated storage medium every 5 to 7 years

Online Resources:

Library of Congress: Digital Preservation/ Personal Archiving

<http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/personalarchiving/>

Library of Congress Recommended Formats Statement- 2019-2020

<https://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs/>

Northeast Document Preservation Center

<https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preserving-private-and-family-collections/caring-for-private-and-family-collections>

National Archives:

<https://www.archives.gov/preservation>

Best Practices from the American Society of Media Photographers

<http://dpbestflow.org/>

Suggested Readings:

Condron, Melody. *Managing the Digital You: Where and How to Keep and Organize Your Digital Life*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017.

Call no. 929.1 C746M

Leggett, Elizabeth R., *Digitization and Digital Archiving: A Practical Guide for Librarians*.

Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.

Call no. 025.84 L513D

Taylor, Maureen Alice. *Preserving Your Family Photographs: How to Organize, Present, and Restore Your Precious Family Images*. Cincinnati, OH: Betterway Books, 2001.

Call no. 771.46 T244P



St. Louis County **Library**

www.slcl.org