





# INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTIONS ADVISOR

A RESOURCE FROM IHS LOCAL HISTORY SERVICES

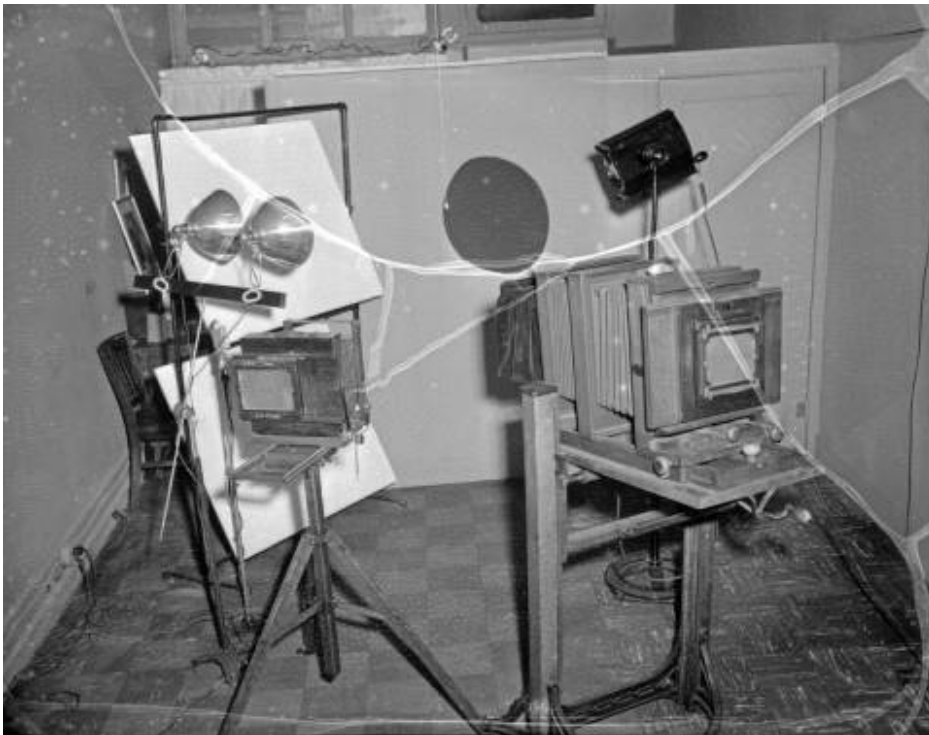
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## DISSECTING DIGITIZATION: PART I

By Karen DePauw, coordinator, IHS Local History Services

In the wake of our recent Dissecting Digitization Projects workshop, we are doing a Collections Advisor mini-series on the topic. This week's Collections Advisor will focus on getting familiar with the language and setting standards.



[Brown Showcase Camera Equipment](#). (Indiana Historical Society)

### THE LANGUAGE

When it comes to new-to-you technology, one of the hardest parts can be understanding the language. Sometimes conversations about TIFFs, metadata and PPI might as well happen in a foreign language for as much as we understand them. To help make sense of some of these terms, check out the list of words and definitions below. Granted, not all of the terms you could possibly run into during a digitization project are listed here; these are just the main ones used during digitization projects that will not be covered in depth later in our Collections Advisor series. So, if you do not see a term on this list, stay tuned, it might just be explained later. If you do not want to wait, head over to [TechTerms.com](#) or [Merriam-Webster.com](#) for all of your tech-definition needs.

**Archival Quality:** a high quality digital file that comes with the responsibility of preservation, including migration to new digital formats when necessary. Usually saved as a TIFF.

**Born Digital:** a digital file created in digital form and not previously existing in another form, such



### ONLINE RESOURCES

[Technology Dictionary](#)  
(TechTerms)

[Dictionary](#)  
(Merriam Webster)

[What's the Deal with Image Size and Resolution?](#)  
(PicMonkey)

### FROM OUR LENDING RESOURCE CENTER

[Digitization and Digital Archiving: A Practical Guide for Librarians](#)  
(Elizabeth R. Leggett)

[Management: Innovative Practices for Archives and Special Collections](#)  
(Kate Theimer, editor)

[Preservation Management for Libraries, Archives and Museums](#)  
(G. E. Gorman and Sydney J. Shep, editors)

### UPCOMING TRAINING AND PROGRAMS

[Preserving Removable Digital Storage Media](#)  
April 4 - Northeast Document Conservation Center webinar.

[Preservation Week Road Show](#)  
April 22 - Indiana Historical Society.

[Introduction to Legal](#)

as a photo taken with a cell phone, or an email.

**Cloud/Cloud-based:** a way of storing information based on the internet and sharing computing resources, rather than using local and personal computers or servers. The information in "the cloud" is still stored physically somewhere else, just not at the exact location of its creation. For example, information may be entered on a computer in Indiana and stored on a server in Connecticut.

**Digitization:** the act of creating a digital form readable by a computer of a physical item.

**DPI:** (Dots Per Inch) the output resolution of an image, think printing an image from the printer.

**JPEG:** (Joint Photographic Experts Group) a format for compressing image files; the file is smaller and takes up less space, but does so at the loss of detail. When items are photographed on a JPEG camera setting, the camera automatically compresses the file and provides minimal color correction, altering the file from the start.

**Metadata:** data used to describe other data (don't worry, we'll tackle this one in a later issue!).

**Migration:** taking an artifact in one digital form and making it into a new digital form, such as moving an image file from a computer hard drive to a CD.

**Open Source:** used to describe software that makes the source coding available (for free or very minimal cost) and accessible for redistribution, use and modification. There is no licensing so it can be used on multiple computers without added cost.

**PDF:** (Portable Document Format) a format that basically produces an image of the document readable by various programs regardless of the program used to create the original document.

**PPI:** (Pixels Per Inch) the input resolution of an image, think scanning an image into the computer.

**RAW:** a digital camera file form that captures an image without automatic processing. This produces the most data-rich file and the most accurate depiction of what is being photographed. To create a TIFF image file, the original digital photograph needs to be taken in RAW format. RAW files usually require editing software to read them or software provided with the camera to initially convert the files to TIFFS that can then be read by any number of programs. This basic software usually comes with the digital camera at the time of purchase.

**Reference Quality:** a lower quality digital file made for reference purposes, not intended for digital preservation. Usually saved as a JPEG.

**Resolution:** measures the sharpness of an image, usually expressed as the total number of dots per inch or pixels per inch depending on whether it is referring to something being produced or recorded, i.e. 300 DPI.

**Server:** a computer that provides data to other computers. A server does not utilize keyboards, monitors, or other hardware, but rather just runs specific software and acts as a compact storage device with large amounts of storage capacity.

**Standards:** something established as a model or example, usually determined by a knowledgeable person or group of people and followed by subsequent individuals.

**TIFF:** (Tagged Image File Format) a format used for digital image files that provides for the saving of a large amount of detail.

[Issues in Collections Management](#)

April 12 - Connecting to Collections Care webinar.

[Collections Camp: Textiles](#)

April 24 and 25 - AASLH workshop at the Indiana Historical Society.



[Preparing salad plates in the Kitchen at St. Mary of the Woods.](#) (Martin Collection, Indiana Historical Society)

### THE STANDARDS

Before you embark on a digitization project, it is vitally important to determine some standards. The standards set at the beginning of the project will tell every subsequent person working on the project what is expected of their digital files, and will ensure that every digital file is the same, regardless of who created it. This means that if volunteer A scans ten photographs, and volunteer B comes in a week later and scans another twelve photographs, that all twenty-two photographs will be scanned, saved, and named the exact same way. It avoids the possibility that volunteer A scans items at 72 PPI in black and white, while volunteer B scans items at 300 PPI in color.

These standards outline how you want items digitized. You might decide that all manuscripts should follow one set of standards, while all photographs follow a different set. One way to convey these standards to the myriad of people involved in the digitization project, is through Digitization Standards sheets. These can be kept in a binder near the digitization equipment for easy reference. Below is a sample of a Digitization Standards worksheet both blank, and filled out.

### Digitization Standards

Quality Type: Archival or Reference

Original Item Type: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Scale:</b>  100% 150% 200% Minimum of ___ inches on shortest side	<b>Resolution:</b>  96 PPI 200 PPI 300 PPI 600 PPI
<b>Views:</b>  Front Back Side	<b>File Type:</b>  TIFF JPEG PDF
<b>Color:</b>  Black and White Color Grayscale	<b>Equipment to use:</b>  Book or overhead scanner Copy stand Digital Camera Flatbed scanner Tripod
<b>Notes:</b>	

Digitization Standards worksheet sample, blank.

Digitization Standards

Quality Type: Archival or Reference

Original Item Type: Photograph

<p>Scale:</p> <p><u>100%</u> 150% 200% Minimum of <u>10</u> inches on shortest side</p>	<p>Resolution:</p> <p>96 PPI 200 PPI <u>300 PPI</u> 600 PPI</p>
<p>Views:</p> <p><u>Front</u> <u>Back</u> Side</p>	<p>File Type:</p> <p><u>TIFF</u> JPEG PDF</p>
<p>Color:</p> <p>Black and White <u>Color</u> Grayscale</p>	<p>Equipment to use:</p> <p>Book or overhead scanner Copy stand <u>Digital Camera</u> Flatbed scanner <u>Tripod</u></p>
<p>Notes:</p> <p><u>Only digitize back if it contains information.</u></p>	

Digitization Standards worksheet sample, filled out.

Keep in mind, the filled out worksheet is meant to serve as an example, it is not a suggested set of standards. Each institution needs to discuss their standards as they relate to their individual needs. This will likely take into account things like storage capacity, equipment availability, and even plain old personal preference. A standards sheet should be created for each possible situation, such as archival quality for photographs and reference quality for photographs, archival quality for manuscripts and reference quality for manuscripts, and so on.

Stay tuned next month for Part III!

This is a free publication. Anyone may subscribe.

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