



Digitization Providers and Equipment Vendors

Choosing a Digitization Provider

Large institutions with several archivists and manuscript curators, as well as smaller repositories, often look to outside companies when planning a digitization project. These companies usually possess the technical staff, equipment, and resources necessary for large-scale media reformatting that many cultural organizations cannot afford to maintain. When considering which provider to work with, it is important to remember that companies will specialize in providing digitization and microfilming services either for corporations or historical repositories. A vendor experienced performing high-volume records management scanning for a company might offer cheaper rates, but they may not be familiar with the specific preservation and descriptive requirements of historical documents. These vendors may use automatic feed devices, drum scanners, and handheld scanners that can damage or destroy fragile documents and photographs. Moreover, staff used to handling business records may treat materials in a manner that is completely acceptable for corporate records, but improper when working with historical documents. As the caretaker of your institution's collections, the onus is upon you to select a digitization provider who will properly handle the materials, and has significant experience with historical and rare items. [The National Archives and Records Administration has published a draft set of guidelines on digitizing historical materials, and a link to this document is provided below.]

Quality Control and Onsite Visits

Once your organization has decided to request work proposals from outside vendors, you will need to consider which standards are required for both the well-being of your collection as well as those of the Digital Highway project. One method of simultaneously protecting your historical materials while ensuring that the end product meets your needs is to require a quality control program in the project proposal. Typically, quality assurance procedures require the contractor to document and report on all inspections before a set of images are digitized and sent to the originating institution. Once you have received a batch of files, you should give yourself at least one week to review the images for testing and accuracy. A sample from each set should be checked for defects such as incorrect size and resolution, wrong file format, incorrect coloration and brightness, incorrect image orientation, and improper naming. Unacceptable batches should be returned for rescanning and inspection.

Any contractual arrangement with digitization providers should also include provisions for onsite inspections. Whether or not you plan to visit the facility where the work will be completed, you may want to reserve the right to inspect the company's equipment, work

areas, document handling procedures, as well as observe their project team in action. Special preservation or handling requirements should be clearly articulated before any actual work is done, and you may want to supervise the scanning of any fragile materials. Such provisions are standard practice among organizations dealing with collection objects, therefore, the company should not object.

Resources for Digitization Projects

The following online resources should help you decide which questions to ask potential vendors and formulate contractual obligations on both sides. Furthermore, additional help and suggestions are always available by contacting the Digital Providers, Standards and Processes Workgroup at 973-596-6622, or jmoy@newarkmuseum.org.

Central New York Library Resource Council (CLRC) Digitization Plan, <http://www.clrc.org/1stadigital/sept10digiplan.shtml>

Library of Congress Digital Preservation Program,

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

National Archive and Records Administration (NARA), www.archives.gov

NARA's Guidelines for Digitizing Archival Materials (PDF file), www.archives.gov/research_room/arc/arc_info/guidelines_for_digitizing_archival_materials.pdf

National Initiative for a Networked Cultural Heritage (NINCH) Guide, <http://www.nyu.edu/its/humanities/ninchguide/>

New Jersey Digital Highway, Main Page, <http://www.njdigitalhighway.org/>

Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), Main Page, <http://www.oclc.org/>

OCLC, Research Publications, <http://www.oclc.org/research/default.htm>

Society of American Archivists (SAA), Main Page, <http://www.archivists.org/>

SAA Online Resources, <http://www.archivists.org/publications/free.asp>

Digitization Providers

The following is a sample of the many companies that provide digitization services. Not all providers will have experience working with the types of historical collections specific to your institution; therefore you must contact them directly for information and decide which company, if any, is most suitable. Although many participating institutions have contracted services through these providers, this list is by no means authoritative, nor is it an endorsement of any one company.

• **Companies that specialize in scanning historical materials**

Access Imagery
1180 South 800 East
Orem, VT 84097
800.687.1265
www.access-imagery.com
info@access-imagery.com

Luna Imaging, Inc.
3542 Hayden Ave., Bldng One
Culver City, CA 90232
800.452.5862
www.lunaimaging.com
sagles@lunaimaging.com

Northern Micrographics
P.O. Box 2287
La Crosse, WI 54602-2287
608.781.0850 x222

www.normicro.com
sales@nmt.com

Preservation Resources
9 South Commerce Way
Bethlehem, PA 18017
610.758.8700
www.oclc.org/presres
presres@oclc.org

Princeton Imaging
14 Wall Street, Research Park
Princeton, NJ 08540
800.764.7668
www.princetonimaging.com
info@princetonimaging.com

VTLS 1701 Kraft Drive Blacksburg, VA 24060 800.468.8857
www.vtls.com weimers@vtls.com

• **High-Volume Business Scanning, Reformatting, Digital Conservation**

ByteManagers, Inc. 700 North Green Street, Suite 100 Chicago, IL 60622 312.604.4604
www.bytemanagers.com
fsemancik@bytemanagers.com

Future Tech Systems, Inc. 440
Route 17 North, Suite 8
Hasbrouck Heights, NJ 07604
201.727.9370

www.futuretec.com
info@futuretec.com

Hudson Microimaging
P.O. Box 640, Route 9 West Port
Ewen, NY 12466 845.338.5785
www.hudsonmicroimaging.com

PMI Technologies 528 Fellowship
Road Mount Laurel, NJ 08054
800.242.7486
www.pmitechnologies.com

PTFS, Inc. 7315 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1200W Bethesda, MD 20814 301.654.8088
www.ptfs.com info@ptfs.com

Smooth Solutions 300 – 2 Route 17
South Lodi, NJ 07644 973.249.6666
(x107)
www.smoothsolutions.com
kathy@smoothsolutions.com

Equipment Vendors

Finding the equipment necessary for an in-house digitization project has become increasingly easy with the growing sophistication and affordability of consumer electronics. A state-of-the-art personal computer, which may have sold for over \$3,000 in 1998, would today cost less than half as much and come equipped with far more features. Your local retail electronics store should carry most of the equipment necessary to conduct a digitization project. The following list represents a few of the retail chains with stores in the New Jersey region. Of course, you will need to decide which equipment best suits your organization's needs, as well as negotiate prices, delivery fees, and installation services. Before buying, it may be worth asking if the company offers discounts to non-profits, schools, or libraries.

• Desktop and Laptop Computers

Dell
www.dell.com
800.917.3355 -Small Business Sales
800.274.7799 – Educational
Institution Sales

Apple
www.apple.com
800.MY.APPLE – General Sales
800.800.2775 – Education
Institution Sales

Gateway Computers
www.gateway.com

888.888.1094 – Business Sales
800.211.4952 – Educational
Institution Sales

- *Scanners, Digitization Equipment, and Software*

Best Buy
www.bestbuy.com
888.237.8289 – General Customer Service

Circuit City
www.circuitcity.com
800.843.2489 – General Customer Service

Staples
www.staples.com
800.378.2753 – General Customer Service

Office Depot
www.officedepot.com
888.463.3768 – General Customer Service Comp USA
www.compusa.com
800.266.7872 – General Customer Service

Jeffrey V. Moy, Archivist The Newark Museum