Digitization Advice from SJSU Special Collections and Archives, Spring 2017

Rebecca Kohn, Interim Director and Diane Malmstrom, Digitization Coordinator

**Resources on best practices:**

<http://www.digitizationguidelines.gov/> The current and developing policies of the Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative (FADGI) include all types digital media.

<http://dashboard.diglib.org/> The Digital Library Federation also has resources on digitization projects including a costs calculator

**Distilled advice:**

If multiple people are working on a project, you need to come up with a file naming convention before scanning begins. See handout from Stanford on File Naming Best Practices. https://library.stanford.edu/research/data-management-services/data-best-practices/best-practices-file-naming

Decide on the file resolution desired before beginning and make sure the equipment you are using supports it. For example, are TIFF files required or will JPG/PDF suffice?

Decide where the digital images files will “live” and make sure to back up the collection in a separate location.

Decide on your metadata template. What common words or phrases will be assigned to each image if the images will be searchable in a database?

Examine some of the project planning advice in the resources from the FADGI and DLF websites for advice on how to map out a timeline for your project.

If you are going to make your images accessible online, consider applying a Creative Commons license to foster open access use: https://creativecommons.org/choose/

**Scanning of materials:**

Use standard archival handling of materials: clean hands and work slowly and carefully handling one item at a time.

Use props like foam wedges and weight links to hold items but never force pages to open. If items are very tight they can be left weighted to open up slowly. Many cameras and scanners also have an “adjust for skew” that will fix the page curvature digitally.

Review image quality as you scan.

**Contact us for more advice:**

Rebecca.Kohn@sjsu.edu Diane.Malmstrom@sjsu.edu