An Introduction to Digitization Projects Conducted by Public Libraries: Digitization and Optimization Techniques

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\section*{I. Introduction}

With the introduction of the Internet, most public libraries have started to provide electronic resources such as electronic books, electronic journals and multimedia content. This trend has led to a transformation of them into digital libraries. Library automation systems have helped in the transformation by providing access to available collections through the use of digital catalogues (IFLA, 2013). However, this transformation requires a high-cost and complex digitization project.

Digitization can be defined as the process of converting traditional library materials to digital formats for electronic use and distribution (Witten and David, 2003). In this way, the traditional library materials can be stored in computers and manipulated easily. Most digital libraries are built in the following order (Cornell University Library/Research Departments, 2000), (Alhaji, 2009).

- Selecting documents to be added to the digital library collection and digitizing them to an appropriate digital form,
- Assigning the metadata to the documents being added to the collection,
- Indexing and storing the documents and metadata for efficient search and retrieval,
- Developing a web-based interface to enable browsing, searching, retrieving and viewing the contents of the digital library.

In this paper, we propose optimization techniques that can be used in the daily operation of digital libraries. The techniques can greatly improve the efficiency of a digitization process especially in massive digitization projects.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section II reviews hardware and software components of digitization projects. Section III presents several optimization techniques for digitization projects. Finally, the paper is concluded in Section IV.

\section*{II. Digitization Projects}

Setting up a digital library mainly requires sources of content in digital form, whether digitized or born digital content. In most applications, a digital library becomes an integral part of the services of a library. Different from the traditional library services, it provides access to digital collections and is built, managed and made accessible to make readily and economically available for use.

Digitization addresses three main needs of libraries as follows:
- Preserving the documents,
- Making the documents more accessible,
Proofreading and formatting and producing the Final Scanning, Optical Character Recognition (OCR), generally accomplished in six stages: Registering, developed by public libraries.

Components of digital library software packages make searchable PDF’s the ideal format to store digitized paper. Mass adoption of PDF in most digital software packages, they are destructive to text and other data on a document image. Therefore, color document images need to be handled using specific smoothing filters for both lossy and lossless compression.

OCR translates images to a document format that indexers already know, but it causes to lose the layout, images and color of the original image. In a searchable PDF, the textual content extracted via OCR is put behind the image so search indexers can see it and Acrobat Reader allows selecting it as text. Mass adoption of PDF in most digital software packages make searchable PDF’s the ideal format to store digitized paper.

Automatic classification of scanned images reduces the time spent for each image.

RAW formats retain image information that is normally lost when capturing to common lossy image formats. They allow post-processing with minimal loss of quality. The problem with them is that they cannot be viewed by most imaging applications and require much space than the common image formats, making them difficult to transmit over networks or e-mail. They can be preferred for rare and valuable documents.

For multi-site distributed digital libraries, encrypted file sharing solutions that use digital certificates can be used to provide security.

IV. Conclusion

Digital libraries allow users to work with the electronic versions of full text documents and their associated images. They bring significant benefits to the users. However, setting up a digital library requires a complex digitization project.

This study reviews the steps involved in digitization projects and proposes solutions to improve the efficiency of digital library software packages. Considering the fact that digitization projects take a lot of time, effort and money, the solutions proposed in this paper may prove to be useful source of reference for both the librarians and the practitioners.

References


Authors’ Biographies

Gürcan Tuna serves as an Asst. Prof. at Trakya University, Edirne, Turkey. He received his B.S. degree in computer engineering from Yıldız Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey, in 1998, and his M.S. degree in computer engineering from Trakya University, Edirne, Turkey, in 2009. He received his Ph.D. degree in electrical engineering from Yıldız Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey, in 2012. Tuna has authored several papers in international conference proceedings and refereed journals, and three book chapters. He has been serving as a reviewer for international journals and conferences. His current research interests include smart grid, ad hoc and sensor networks, robotic sensor networks, multisensor fusion, energy harvesting, and energy-aware routing.

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