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DIGITAL DELICACIES



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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In February 2001 Auckland University library created the post of 'Digital Projects Librarian'. This was in response to the rapidly expanding pathway of digital technology and resources. The University saw a need to co-ordinate and structure its development along this pathway and centralise knowledge and expertise. Auckland is the first University Library in New Zealand to appoint a person with this responsibility. However other overseas Universities have Digital Projects Departments, which are often a joint venture between the library and computer science department. I was appointed and I work within the Networked Information Department of the General Library. Initially I am forming a digital strategy and policies for digitisation. An inventory is being carried out to identify potential digital projects within the University and initial projects will be carried out using external companies until the University has the technical equipment and expertise to complete all stages of projects in-house. We are also in discussion with the National Library with the aim of setting up a national digital inventory and register of expertise (outlining what other projects are being planned, underway and completed), which may form part of a National Framework. Other countries such as Australia already use a similar model.

What is digitisation?

Digitisation is converting a physical item into a digital format. A digital format is basically in a computer readable form and most commonly consists of digital images e.g. bitmaps, PDF's, JPG's, and/or digital information i.e. information that can be searched, manipulated, or distributed in a way that the original physical item could not be. A good example of this is a book that has been scanned and the text is indexed (using OCR) so you have the ability to search on a keyterm. In this way many people can be using the same item at once and retrieving information in a new and quicker way than by using the physical item. They may also be able to see an image of the physical item page by page, or just the cover.

Why might I want to digitise?

- For preservation (old books and manuscripts that are well used)
- To promote access to valuable under-used resources (items that are on closed access, in storage or hidden)
- To enable higher usage of unique valuable materials
- To create a collection of high academic/ research value
- To build on existing projects or complement other collections (nationally or internationally) e.g. thesis collection
- To create a 'virtual collection' i.e. there is no physical collection but you have identified a resource gap.

Who is doing the digitisation?

The Digital Projects Librarian has responsibility for planning and developing digital projects. Ideas forwarded to her will be discussed in detail with relevant staff. The technical side of digitisation will be the responsibility of the Networked Information Department and Library Systems e.g. database design, development, and maintenance; image management; adhering to technical standards. The cataloguing department will be closely involved in selection and use of metadata schemas. Subject knowledge is required from library and departmental staff. Private companies may be used for scanning work.

WEB ADDRESSES OF DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

USA

American Memory Collections (7 million digital items from 100 collections)

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ammemhome.html>

Irving Fine Music Collection (photographs, scores and sketchbooks)

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ifhtml/ifhome.html>

AUSTRALIA

Picture Australia (images from many libraries in Australia)

<http://www.pictureaustralia.org/> (Try out trails)

Australian Digital Theses (from 9 Australian Universities)

<http://adt.caul.edu.au/>

Scholarly Electronic Text and Image Service, University of Sydney (SETIS)

<http://setis.library.usyd.edu.au/oztexts/>

SCOTLAND

Scottish Resources Network (SCRAN) 1 million images from many institutions

<http://www.scran.ac.uk/homepage> (Try out pathfinders)

UNITED KINGDOM

Forster Collection (Pacific Artefacts from Cooks Voyages)

<http://projects.prm.ox.ac.uk/forster/home.html>

HUNGARY

Web Gallery of Art (8000 European Art Images from 1150-1800)

<http://www.kfki.hu/~arthp/welcome.html>

NEW ZEALAND

Time Frames - New Zealand Historic Photographs from Turnbull Library

<http://timeframes1.natlib.govt.nz/> (Password: timeframes User:images)

Papers Past - Historic Regional Newspapers from National Library

<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>

Heritage Images On-line -Photographs of Auckland from Auckland Public Library

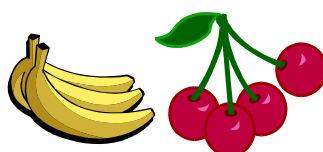
http://www.akcity.govt.nz/library/spec/about_the_database.html

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND DIGITAL INITIATIVES

Exam Database (Netaccount required if not accessing on library premises)

<http://www2.auckland.ac.nz/lbr/>

This is a trial project to be reviewed at the end of this year. The objective is to make available past official University of Auckland exam papers from 2001 onwards in electronic format to enrolled University of Auckland students and staff. The database currently contains Summer School, Trimester 1 and 2, and Semester 1 exams, which have been converted into PDF format. ExamBase is searchable by course code, department and keyword. We have had a positive response from students who are now able to access the exams from any location (authentication required if not on library premises) 24 hours a day 7 days a week. The University generates 3500 exam papers each year and past copies of these are heavily used by students and staff.



New Zealand Electronic Poetry Centre

<http://www.nzepec.auckland.ac.nz/>

This pilot project is a joint venture between the University Library, the English Department and Auckland University Press. The website is an electronic gateway to poetry resources in New Zealand and the Pacific Region - the first of its kind in this country. It is accessible internationally. The project was developed in co-operation with the Electronic Poetry Centre at SUNY, Buffalo, who offered advice and help on how to model our site on their excellent service example. The site currently contains information and full-text poetry from 8 poets.



Art History Image Database (Netaccount required if not accessing on library premises)

http://www.auckland.ac.nz/lbr/connect_pages/faid.htm

This long-term project is a partnership between the Art History Department and the University Library. Academic staff in the Art History Department use 140,000 slides to illustrate lectures and these are gradually being converted into electronic format. So far 5000 images are available to enrolled University of Auckland students. Students find it extremely useful to be able to refer back to slides used in lectures and also to be able to access these from home. Slides are being converted as each course uses them and are searchable by course code or keyword.



DIGITAL PROJECT FLOWCHART



"Some books are to be tasted, others to be
swallowed, and some few to be chewed and
digested."

Francis Bacon 1561-1626

