history-today
Institute of
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Guideline:
Digitalisation

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Digitalisation of Photos and Documents

When digitalising photos, postcards and papers, a conventional **scanner** generally suffices if the resulting digitalisation[1] does not have to fulfil any "higher requirements" regarding resolution. Media that are larger than standard A4 or A3 scanners should be digitalised by an expert service provider.

Firstly, the **technical settings** of the scanner need to be configured. Saving in "raw" or "tif" format is preferable to saving in "jpg" format. To avoid having to repeat scanning several times and to ensure an optimum result, as **high a resolution** as possible should be used. In addition to high resolution we recommend using the **colour** preset, even for black and white scans. The various black, brown, grey and white shades form a very individual composition which can be reproduced only badly if at all by a black and white scan. The same is true for documents that are reproduced much more "naturally" by a colour scan. This does however also produce larger files!

Preparation

The next step entails the **preparation** of the **originals** to be scanned. We recommend numbering original images and photos. If they are already archived it makes sense to use the signature as the file name. If the objects are not yet labelled, this should be done with a soft pencil on the back, e.g. using continuous numbering.
If you want to scan an album with several photos on one page, the pages of the album should be numbered first, followed by the individual photos. Only then can the ***scan process*** begin.

It is important to ensure that both the scanner and the originals to be scanned are free from dirt. This should be checked repeatedly when scanning numerous pages or photos. The use of cotton gloves is recommended. Anti-static cloths and a brush can also be helpful.

Scan process

The items to be scanned are first placed on the surface of the scanner. Avoid placing the image or the paper entirely in the corner of the scanner, as the edges of the images are then often not scanned. It must also be ensured that the items are as flat as possible. Once the preview mode displays the image, the **area** to be scanned is determined. It is important that the image is scanned with a sufficient border and a certain "room for manoeuvre". That way the scan can also be used to reconstruct the original state, to calculate the size and, in the case of a copy, to reproduce a largely "authentic duplicate". If the image was not lying entirely straight on the scanner, with the border you then nevertheless do not lose any elements when editing - rotating - the image!

If the photo is very detailed, for example showing a large group of people or if particular objects are of interest, those sections of the image should be scanned specially with the highest resolution possible.

Saving

Upon completion of the scan process, the files then have to be correctly **saved** with an appropriate file name and label. To enable a search by date as well as by keyword whilst also ensuring that the saved files can be sorted according to date, the following allocation of a file name is **recommended**:

Year_Month_Day_Place_Keyword (e.g.: 2014_08_15_Cologne_Digitalisation)

Special characters and spaces should **definitely not** be used because they are not always recognised by all systems and when overwriting or recovering data the file names may become "jumbled".

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[1] The result of digitalisation.