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Resources for Digital Imaging QC Auditing

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Inspection Is Essential!

By Ann Flowers, Bentley Historical Library

Having just come through two projects that consisted of digitizing microfilm, I want to share some of my experience with colleagues who might be dealing with similar projects.

My principal work is in conservation, but, since 1987, I've also been in charge of microfilm projects for manuscript collections and published materials. I was part of the team that assembled the Research Libraries Group (RLG) standards, and I followed those standards in all the projects under my supervision. I prepared the materials for filming, sometimes with student assistance, so that they would arrive at the vendor camera-ready; then I was available for questions or consultation with the vendor and did my own quality control inspection when each project was complete. I had experience with a variety of

vendors and loved working with the good ones, who had high standards of quality themselves and were eager to correct their mistakes.

Digitization is wonderful for access, as all of us know. Our director initiated a project to digitize some of our microfilmed manuscript collections, with the goal of mounting them on-line so that researchers can readily use them. Because this was a rather large project, the University of Michigan required that we get bids. Several vendors submitted bids, and, not surprisingly, we went with the lowest, which was significantly lower than the others.

Since I had been so involved with the microfilming of these collections, it was natural to get involved with their

(Continued on page 28)

Resources for Digital Imaging QC Auditing

By Sara Holmes, NARA

All digitization projects should be regularly and promptly checked for problems during the course of a project. Whether the work is completed in-house or contracted out, the sooner a problem with equipment or handling is identified, the sooner it can be corrected. These sources can help you to know what to look for when auditing your projects:

- Puglia, Steven, Jeffrey A. Reed, Erin Rhodes. "Common Imaging Problems." *Digital Repository at the University of Maryland*. <http://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/1903/12953/1/Common%20Imaging%20Problems.pdf>.

Provides examples and brief discussion on recognizing and understanding the causes of common imaging problems, including tone reproduction, clipping, color balance, channel registration, resolution, bit depth, noise, sharpening, and compression.

- Stanford University Libraries, Digital Production Services. "Quality Assurance—Image Defects." <http://lib.stanford.edu/digital-production-services/quality-assurance-image-defects>.

Shares information developed for the Stanford University Libraries staff who perform imaging and image QC auditing. For each type of image defect, provides

images of the problem, descriptions, possible causes, and remedies. Image defects covered include improper cropping, banding, blocking, compression artifacts, noise, poor color rendering, dirt, hairs, and many more instances of less-than-acceptable images.

- Stanford University Libraries, Digital Production Services. "Quality Assurance—Cropping Guide." <https://lib.stanford.edu/digital-production-services/quality-assurance-cropping-guide>.

Demonstrates, with a variety of examples, proper cropping with both narrow and wide margins. Also includes examples of inappropriate cropping and how to crop in special cases, such as bound materials or flat items that are irregularly cut.

- Stanford Media Preservation Lab and New York University. *AV Artifact Atlas*. http://preservation.bavc.org/artifactatlas/index.php/AV_Artifact_Atlas.

Covers a wide range of defects that can occur in the digitization of video and audio, both analog and digital. Assists archivists without formal audio and video training in identifying whether an error is inherent to the original recording or the result of an imperfect transfer, so archivists can better inspect a vendor's product.