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THE DIGITIZATION, DIGITAL RESTORATION AND PRESENTATION OF VINTAGE PHOTOGRAPHS (THE DIGITAL RESTORATION LAB PROJECT)



The digitization, digital restoration and presentation of vintage photographs presents both opportunities and risks for archivists and librarians. The digitization of vintage photographs by archives and libraries globally has long been a common practice and allows for unique collections to be made accessible via different digital discovery platforms. There is no doubt that digitization enhances the user experience and allows for continued access to archival material and library resources that would otherwise not be widely accessible, to be enjoyed by many. The digitization of Hürrem Sultan's love letter written in the sixteenth century to the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, and the

Domesday Book, a record of a survey of English lands and landholdings in the period of William the Conqueror in the eleventh century, suffice as extraordinary examples of the digitization of historical records. Vintage photographs are no different in that the digitization of photographs gives access to old photographs in different photographic styles, and from different historical eras. However, the digitization of photographs in the digital age also carries risks and challenges that the archivist or librarian needs to be equipped to deal with. In addition to the actual process of digitizing, the following factors also need to be considered: the use of adequate metadata for digital objects, managing the complex copyright landscape of altered digitized copies of older images, and what the use of artificial intelligence software on vintage digitized photographs means for the authenticity and context of the photographs as archival material. The Digitization, Digital Restoration and Presentation of Vintage Photographs (known as The Digital Restoration Lab project) is a project co-funded by the European Union that aims to address the challenges faced by cultural institutions in preserving and digitizing their photographic collections within the scope of cultural heritage. It seeks to increase the competence of archival specialists and librarians in the digitization and preservation of photographs through training and resources. Thus, ensuring the long-term survival of these important cultural and historical artifacts

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(Digireslab – Digital Restoration Lab)¹. The project has six partner organizations from Bulgaria, Latvia, Romania, and Turkey, who are working together to ensure that information professionals have audio-visual and written resources available in several languages on issues involving the digitization of vintage photographs. The digital restoration of historical artefacts is a current and fast-changing specialism that should be included in the curricula of information science and archival studies university courses, to ensure that future archivists and librarians have the skills necessary to preserve the records and artefacts of the past.

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¹ <https://digireslab.eu/>