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# SI 675 Digitization for Preservation



Week 1 - Definitions and Issues

# Today's Outline

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## Outline

- ▶ Preservation and Digitization
- ▶ Theoretical issues
- ▶ Why not just do it?
- ▶ Course logistics

*“... the ability to define the essential characteristics of originals at a very high level allows us to determine whether the digital copy could truly ‘stand in’ for the original.”*      **Puglia/Rhodes (2007)**



# Digitization and Preservation

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1 Outline

2 **Digitization and preservation**

3 Theory

4 Just do it?

5 Logistics

- ▶ Is digitization a preservation strategy?  
**DISCUSS**
  - ▶ ARL's policy perspective
  - ▶ Puglia & Rhodes' review
  
- ▶ Pros and Cons
  
- ▶ Challenges from various perspectives (technical, administrative, conceptual, etc.)

# ARL Policy Statement

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1 Outline

2 **Digitization and preservation**

3 Theory

4 Just do it?

5 Logistics

- ▶ Is digital reformatting copying?
- ▶ Consensus on best practices
- ▶ Progress on metadata
- ▶ Lots of action at various levels
- ▶ ARL will act as catalyst

***“The time has come to adopt digitization  
as a reformatting strategy for preservation.”***

**ARL , June 2004**

# Challenges and Issues

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1 Outline

2 **Digitization and preservation**

3 Theory

4 Just do it?

5 Logistics

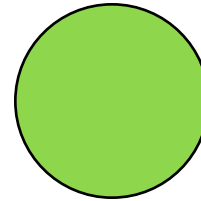
- ▶ What are essential characteristics?
- ▶ Relatively low bar
- ▶ Fixed approaches
- ▶ Device independence
- ▶ Relationship to preservation

***“It is a little humbling to look back and admit that we are still asking many of the same difficult questions that we were asking over a decade ago.”***  
Puglia/Rhodes (2007)

# Sources -- Technology -- Purpose

## Source Characteristics

- Condition
- Visual complexity
- Size
- Format

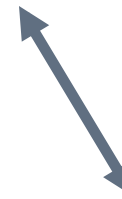
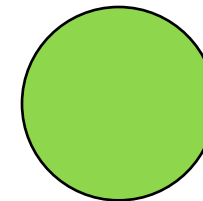
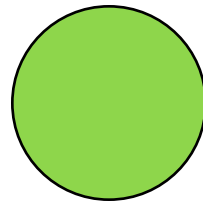


## Product Uses

- ▶ Protect
- ▶ Represent
- ▶ **Transcend**

## Technology Capabilities

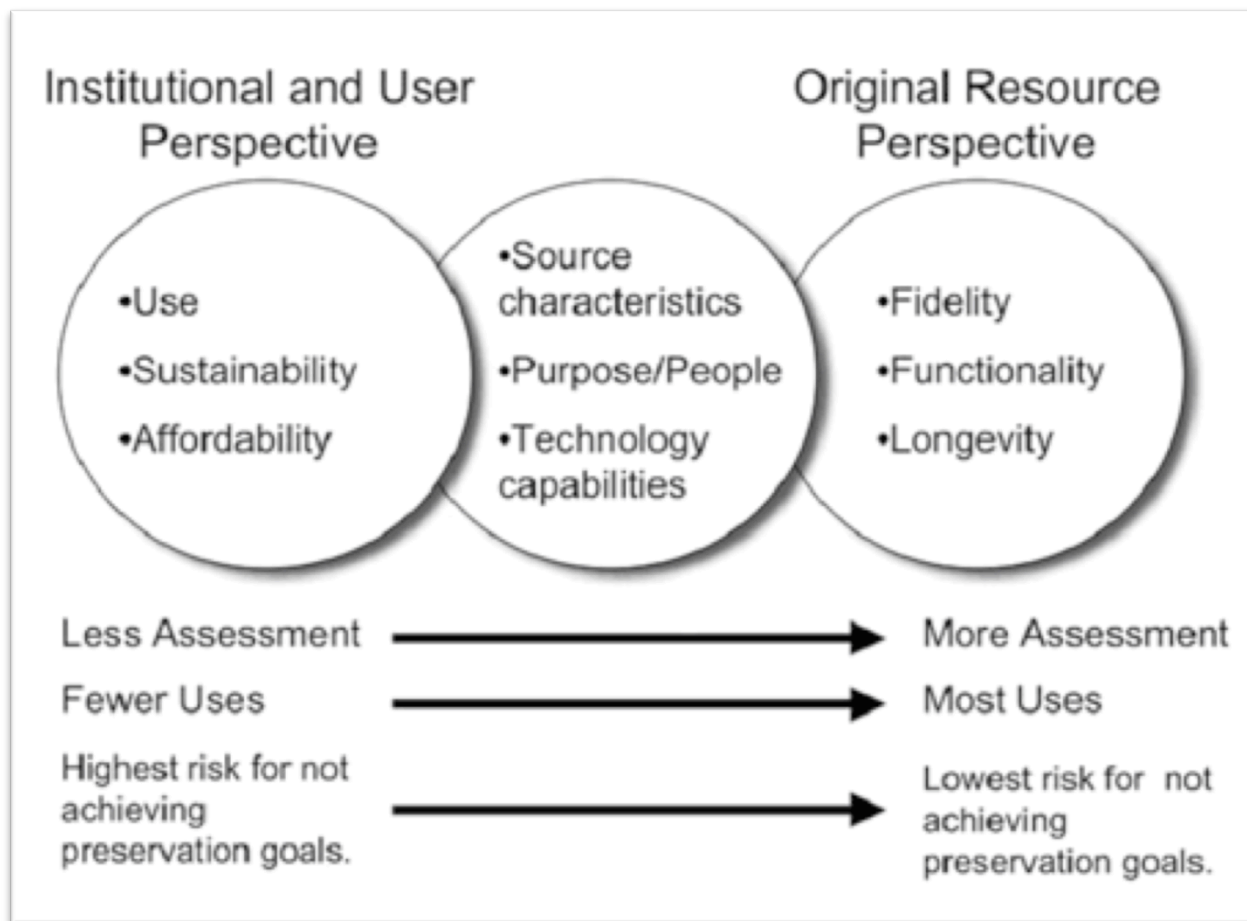
- Engineering rigor
- Sensory quality
- Software support
- Processing speed



These relationships define quality, cost, and usefulness.



# Perspectives on Products



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[Puglia & Rhodes 2007]

# Perspectives on Transformation

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## 1. Copying

- ▶ Contrast with photocopying and microfilm

## 2. Faithful reproduction

- ▶ Quality and integrity

## 3. Representation

- ▶ New media communication

*“The trick ... is to produce a new artifact which preserves those features of the original that are essential to the purposes for which the copy is being made.”*

[Levy 1998]

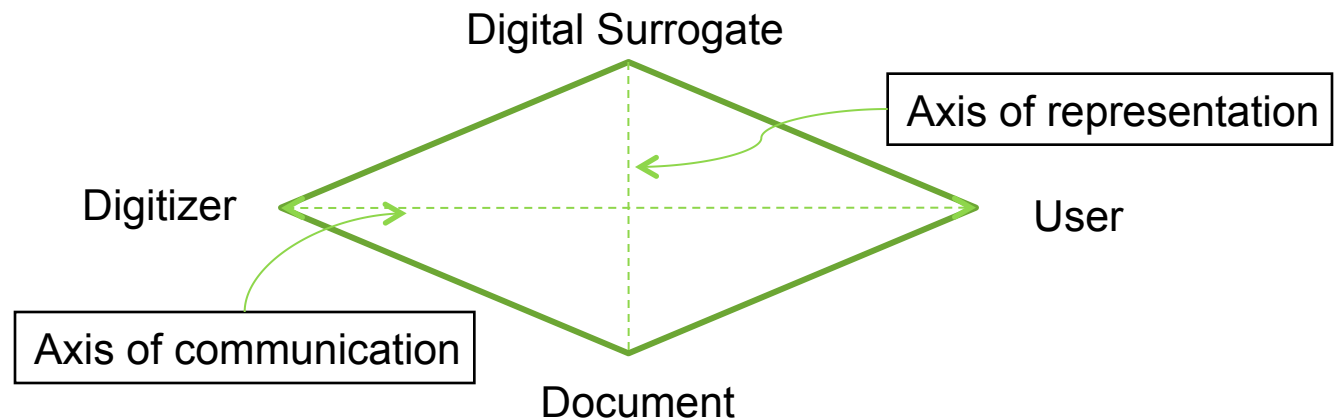


# Representation

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“...representation is always *of* something or someone, *by* something or someone, *to* someone.”

- ▶ Intentionality [camera | scanner]
- ▶ Processes [darkroom | Photoshop]
- ▶ Materiality [content | artifact]



[Derived and adapted from: W.J.T. Mitchell 1990]

# Materiality and Meaning

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- ▶ Some meanings not translated into digital form [Koltun 1999]
- ▶ Formerly joined – materiality and meaning now result in ‘ephemeral ghost’ [Sassoon 2004]
- ▶ Photography and digitization share the “illusion of transparency and neutrality” [Schwartz 2000]
- ▶ “Original” is fiction: surrogate may be superior [Mitchell 2003]
- ▶ User behavior and experience are now key defining principles [Cameron 2007]

# Remediation and Re-presentation

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*“Our culture wants both to multiply its media and erase all traces of mediation...”* [Bolter & Grusin 1996]

- ▶ Transparency is goal
- ▶ Hypermediacy: presence of old in new gives a sense of multiplicity
- ▶ Technologies of rendering (making visible) are tools for mediating mediation

*“The materiality of the digital acts as a testimony to its own history and origin, and hence authenticity.”* [Cameron 2007]

# Archival Properties

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- ▶ Continuum of archival values added
  - ▶ Derived from source [significant properties]
  - ▶ Embedded through processes [recordness]
  - ▶ Validated by use [substitution]
  
- ▶ At what point does the digitized become an archive?
  - ▶ Archivisation [Nesmith 2002]
  - ▶ Provenance [Cook 2001]
  - ▶ Integrity [Duranti 1995]

# What is Preservation?

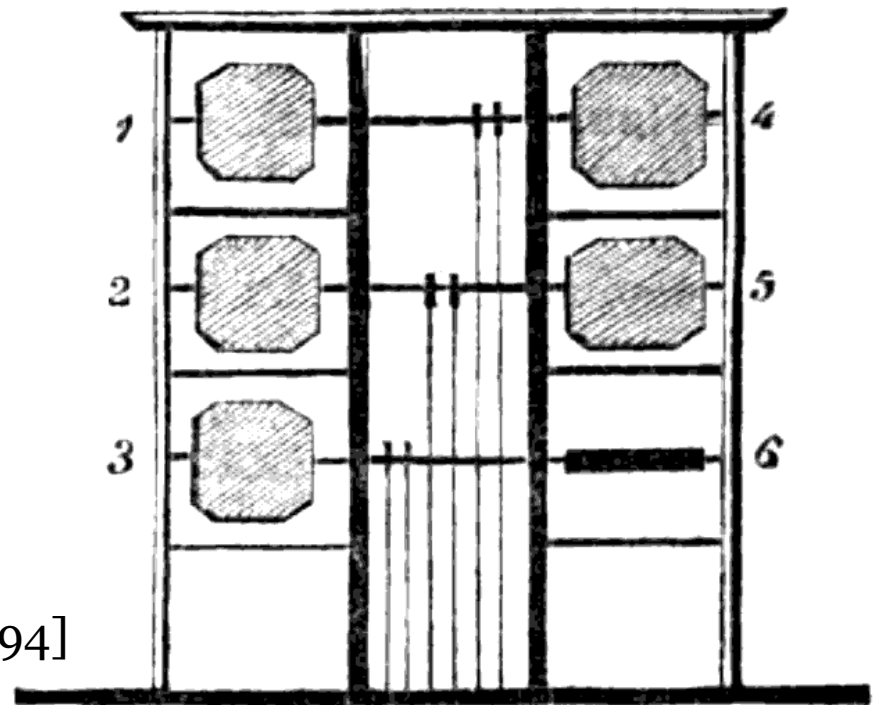
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Preservation is the creation of digital products worth maintaining over time.

## Values

- Transcendence
- Transparency
- Persistence
- Context

[Visual Telegraph, London to Deal, 1794]



© PD-EXP

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Murray\\_Shutter\\_Telegraph\\_1795.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Murray_Shutter_Telegraph_1795.png)

# Why Not Just Do It?

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1 Outline

2 Digitization and preservation

3 Theory

**4 Just do it?**

5 Logistics

- ▶ **Smith, *Why Digitize?***

- ▶ “Much is gained by digitizing, but permanence and authenticity, at this juncture of technological development, are not among those gains.”

- ▶ **Migration is a change process**

- ▶ **Tampering is too easy and not detectible**



# Why Not Just Do It?

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1 Outline

2 Digitization and preservation

3 Theory

**4 Just do it?**

5 Logistics

## ▶ Erway/Schaffner

- ▶ “We must stop our slavish devotion to detail; the perfect has become the enemy of the possible.” (p. 6)
- ▶ Access wins
- ▶ Selection is done
- ▶ Iterative processes
- ▶ Programs not projects
- ▶ Describe chunks
- ▶ Quantity over quality
- ▶ Widen discovery
- ▶ Creative fund raising

# Course Concepts

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1 Outline

2 Digitization and preservation

3 Theory

4 Just do it?

**5 Logistics**

1. Issues at stake with digitization
2. Imaging guidelines
3. Scanning parameters
4. Text digitization (OCR/Markup)
5. Color management
6. Project management
7. Metadata for images



# Course Logistics

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1 Outline

2 Digitization and preservation

3 Theory

4 Just do it?

**5 Logistics**

- ▶ **First assignment**
- ▶ **Other assignments & grading**
- ▶ **Field trip to DCU at UM**



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# Thank you!

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