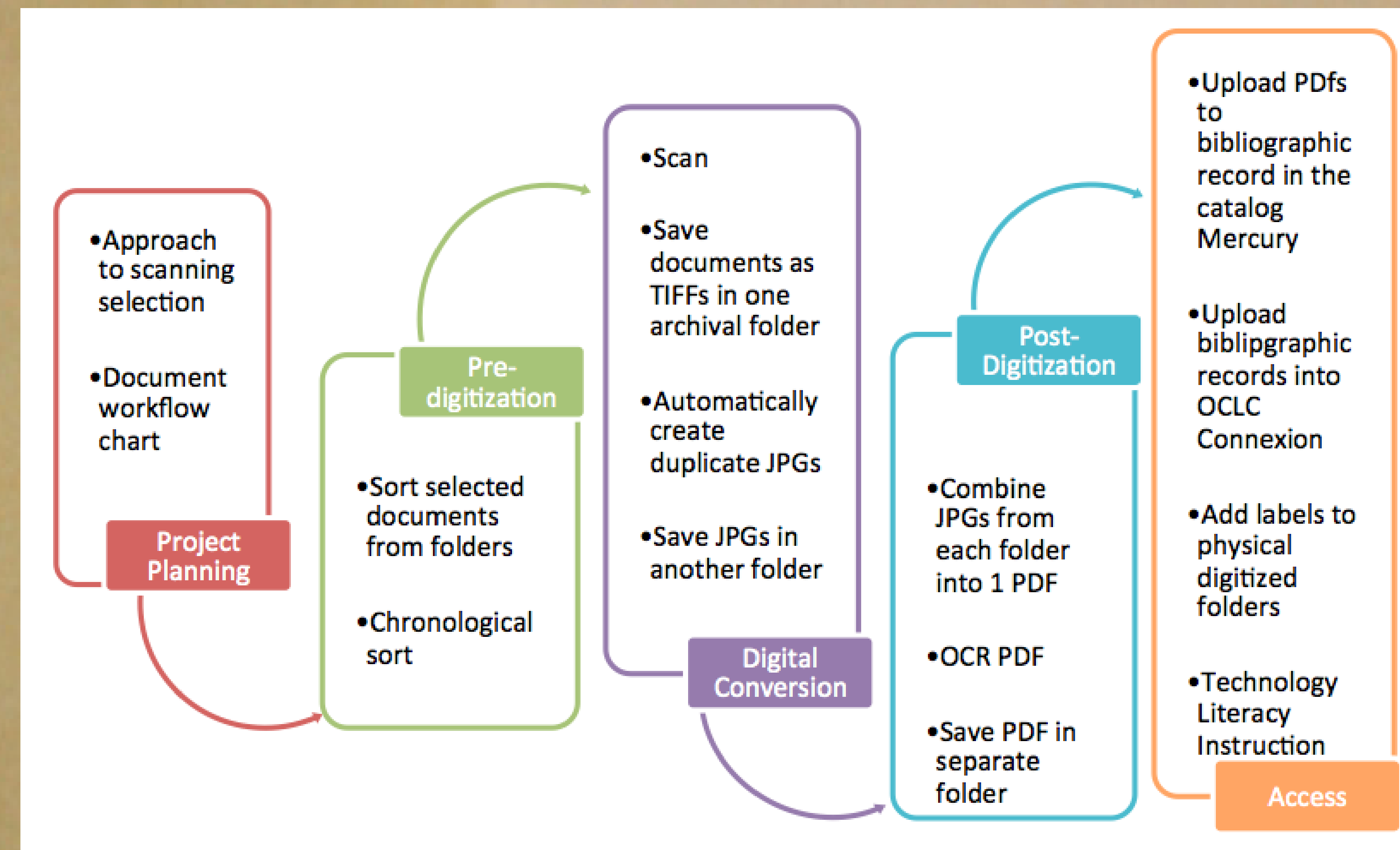


Digitizing Ephemera: A Case Study for the National Gallery of Art Library's Vertical Files

Research, Strategy, and Implementation of a Digitization Plan

Kai Alexis Smith, ARLIS/NA Wolfgang Freitag Internship Award, Summer 2013

Proposed Workflow Process



Introduction

A valuable component of the National Gallery of Art (NGA) Library's monographs and serials holdings are the Vertical Files (VF). The VF serve the research needs of the Gallery's staff members, fellows, visiting scholars, researchers and interns. The collection of exhibition catalogues and ephemera are especially useful for researchers of modern and contemporary art and under-recognized artists.

Project Purpose

Why Digitize the Vertical Files?

Providing digitized versions of the library's holdings furthers its mission to support the curatorial and research needs of the gallery's staff. In addition, as per the Institutional Technology (IT) Strategic Plan 2020, digitizing the VF collection takes a step toward developing the Gallery's intranet, which makes documents available internally.

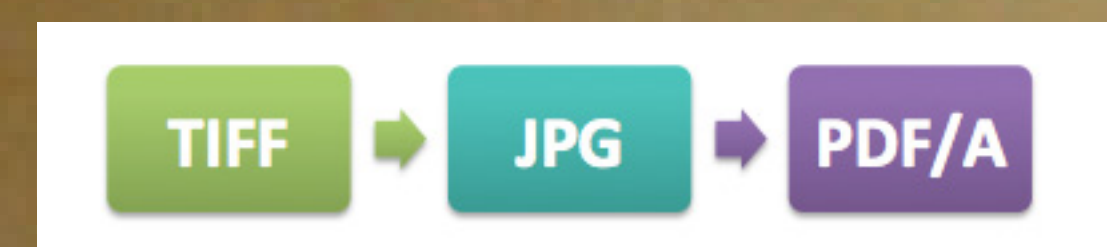
Digitized content will be available through the Library catalog Mercury, allowing for an increased level of access to the collection, while preserving originals by reducing wear and tear. Currently, there are 12,000 vertical files. Only 4,400 folders are cataloged and findable in the catalog. This digitization plan will increase access significantly.

While increased access to the digitized materials will benefit the collection, the originals will not be de-accessed, moved off site, or destroyed after being scanned.

Approaches to File Creation

There are two ways to approach the digitization of the VF collection.

Approach 1: This involves the creation of Preservation Master files (TIFFs), surrogates (JPGs), and PDF/As. This approach will ensure archival versions of items in the files for future use.



Approach 2: Scan the items into Adobe Acrobat and create compressed PDF/As. This method skips creating archival files and simply creates PDF/As for direct access.

Prioritization

Policies for prioritization efforts are divided into three tiers:

Tier 1

- Identify frequently requested or checked out folders.
- Identify missing items returned.
- Identify any folders recovered from curator's offices.
- Identify new acquisitions. If the folder the new acquisition belongs to has not been scanned, then whole folder should be scanned.

Tier 2

- Identify folders of modern and contemporary artists in up and coming exhibits.

Tier 3

- Identify folders that will demonstrate a need to one or more curators, staff, or fellows.

Digitization General Principles

The following are general principles to be followed through the digitization process:

- Document the digitization workflow.
- Achieve the best quality scans within the projected use and size.

[Approach 1]

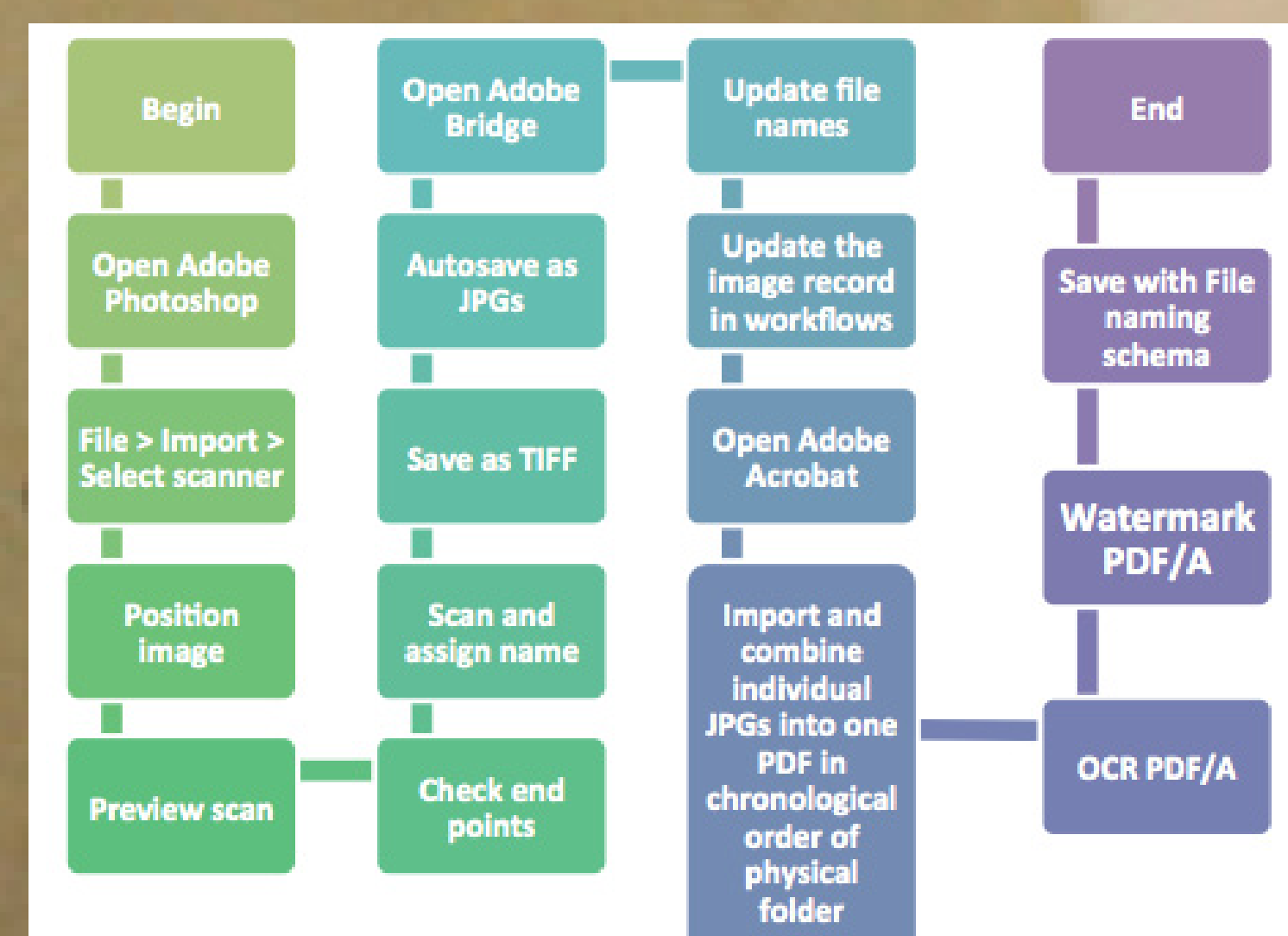
- o Scan full images without compression as TIFFs Preservation Masters (PM) for preservation.
- o All PMs will be stored on a server separate from the JPGs Surrogates.
- o JPGs will be created from TIFFs.
- o Combined PDF/As will be created from JPGs.

[Approach 2]

- o Direct scans will be created and saved as PDF/As.

Digitization Workflow

Below is a recommended workflow to accomplish the scanning of physical materials proposed of the VF collection for Approach 1.



Cataloging Addition

Working with the Institutional Technology (IT) department would be essential to get the catalog records updated.

The 583 – Action Note field would need to be added to the catalog file's MARC record. This is because currently there is no MARC field that describes attached PDF/A. The information below has been drafted to include in the field:

583 The collection was scanned in the order in which it was filed in the original folder. The entire collection was scanned in [INSERT YEAR].

If funding is acquired for the project use the example below:

583 The collection was scanned in the order in which it was filed in the original folder. The entire collection was scanned in [INSERT YEAR] with funding provided by [INSERT SOURCE OF FUNDING].

Technology Literacy

Researchers and curator's levels of familiarity with technology may vary. A technology literacy class teaches users how to find, download, and view the PDF/As in a browser. Also, since the PDF/As are Optical Character Recognition (OCR)ed, instructors should teach curators and researchers how to search downloaded content or browse PDF/As as if they were browsing the physical folder item by item in chronological order.

Caveats

- Copyright prohibits sharing with other institutions.
- It will be hard to find funding with no sharing component.

Access the digitization plan:

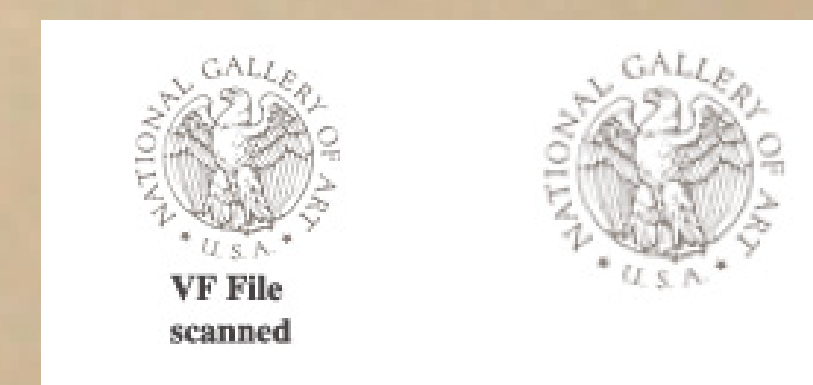
www.kaialexis.com/portfolio/arlis-na

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- Martin Kalfatovic, Associate Director, Digital Services & Program Director and staff, Smithsonian, Biodiversity Heritage Library
- Anna Brooke, Librarian, Hirshhorn Museum Library
- Doug Litts, Head Librarian, and Anne Evenhaugen, Reference Librarian, Smithsonian American Art Museum/National Portrait Gallery Library
- Heather Slania, Director, National Women in the Arts

Folder Labeling and Curator/Researcher Buy In

After the scanning process has been completed add the NGA designed labels to the folders indicating that the folder was scanned and is available in the catalog. Here are two examples of the NGA seal that could be made into a sticker:



In an effort to increase awareness of the project, a poster of any size should be created to let curators know about the NGA seal on the folders indicating that they are scanned and invite them to request folders for scanning. Language on the poster is suggested below:

