

University Libraries Digital Projects

Standard Practices for Digital Reproductions

Alterations, Enhancements, Citation and Fair Use

The Digital Projects Department creates and provides access to digital materials in support of the University Libraries mission to provide excellent research collections and expedite access to knowledge.

Alterations and Enhancements

Our general goal for digital reproductions of comprehensive archival collections is to use current technology to reproduce an audio-visual or textual experience for the user that is as close as reasonably possible to the reality they would experience with the original book or object in hand.

Images and other digital files are usually not altered or enhanced to correct flaws in the original, for example, foxing, ink stains, paper tears. However, images are corrected to overcome any inaccuracies of scanning and other reproductive technology, for example straightening or improving color fidelity, attempting in all cases to match the original document or object.

Some digital projects (usually not as part of comprehensive and permanent digital collections) may use altered or enhanced images for instructional purposes so that the flaws of the original do not detract from the learning process. In those rare cases, the methods and practices for alterations will be described on the web site, with a link to information on how to obtain an unaltered image.

Citing Original Sources

When the image (or other digital content) is part of a database, then the appropriate metadata field(s) for describing the original source should always be used. If the image is apart from a database and appears separately on a website, a textual citation to the source of the image should appear on the same page as the image. A standard bibliographic format should be used for this information.

Copyright and Fair Use

Best practices will be followed regarding copyright and intellectual property, and all legal requirements will be met. For historic materials out of context we will try to determine sources and provenance. Furthermore, we will always ask for permission, or a release statement, before using another institution's digital content, even if there is no question about the copyright of said content. The only exception is when the digital content has already been released by the institution with a written statement of allowable and fair use that clearly applies to our intended use.

Unless exceptions are clearly noted, all digital content on University Libraries web sites, including images, macromedia files, and portable document format (PDF) files, may be downloaded, provided that the intended use is for educational and research purposes, not commercial purposes, and provided that citations to the source are given. We encourage anyone creating presentations or other educational materials using content from University Libraries sites to share their content with us. We provide our contact information on our web sites and encourage inquiries.