
Thomas J. Watson Library

Digital Collections Development Policy

Thomas J. Watson Library

The Met Fifth Avenue
1000 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10028

metmuseum.org/watson
[@metlibrary](https://twitter.com/metlibrary)

I. MISSION

Watson Library Digital Collections provide access to The Metropolitan Museum of Art's rare and unique research materials through developing, supporting and promoting a distinctive digital collection.

II. SCOPE

Materials digitized under this policy include Metropolitan Museum of Art publications, early printed books, early trade catalogs, exhibition catalogs, decorated publishers' bindings, Japanese illustrated books, fashion plates and sketches, illustrations, photographs, manuscript documents, current auction catalogs, maps, architectural drawings, and audio recordings. Items may come from the library's collections or other departmental collections.

III. SELECTION CRITERIA

The following factors determine how the library selects and prioritizes candidates for digitization:

Significance

- Items with intrinsic research value;
- Items not already freely accessible in digitized form;
- Items with an anticipated high use; or
- Items relating to the history of The Met, including press releases, exhibition catalogs and other archival material.

Priority is given to Metropolitan Museum of Art publications and to items identified by museum research staff.

Condition

- Digitization should be minimally intrusive and not compromise the condition of the original work.
- Brittle and fragile items are digitized to provide greater access and to minimize handling.

Copyright

The library digitizes and makes accessible materials for research purposes in the following circumstances:

- they are in the public domain;
- the rights are owned by The Metropolitan Museum of Art;
- we have permission to make them accessible;
- we make them accessible under Section 107 of the US Copyright Act ("fair use"); or
- there are no known restrictions on use.

To learn more about access to digitized content, see <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/libraries-and-research-centers/thomas-j-watson-library/using-the-library/image-reproduction-services> and <http://www.metmuseum.org/information/terms-and-conditions>.



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IV. SCANNING, METADATA, AND STORAGE SPECIFICATIONS

The Watson Library Digitization Initiative adheres to the digitization standards set in *A Framework of Guidance for Building Good Digital Collections* (NISO). All items are scanned at a minimum resolution of 300 dpi at a bit depth of 24. A master uncompressed TIFF and a production JPEG are generated from all items scanned.

Master uncompressed TIFFs are stored in The Met's digital asset management system, NetX, along with technical metadata. Production JPEGs are hosted in CONTENTdm, along with descriptive metadata created in Qualified Dublin Core, and are stored on an internal network share drive. Items must be described and/or cataloged prior to digitization; some items may be minimally cataloged in the interest of more rapidly providing online access.

In addition, representative images of library materials loaned for exhibition, and selected Special Collections items, are created for associated records in TMS, The Met's object database, and in turn appear on the Met's website. These are uncompressed master TIFFs and are stored in NetX.

Selected journals and our collection of historic auction catalogs are digitized by the Internet Archive according to their specifications and workflows, with data provided from library catalog records. The resulting files are permanently hosted on their platform and may be downloaded in several formats.

We have published all of our documentation, including data dictionaries and instructional manuals, on the [Thomas J. Watson Library Office of Digital Projects Google Site](#). All documents are available for download; please contact us if you have questions.