

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW DIGITIZATION CENTRE IN THE NATIONAL SZÉCHÉNYI LIBRARY



The resources necessary for IT system stabilization and development in the national library were provided by the Government according to the Decree 1605/2016. (XI. 8.). One of the items of the NLS (National Library System) established based on the decree is the renewal of the digitization activity of the NSZL aiming at its serviceability and maintaining the approach of preserving the collection, simultaneously planning and implementing a new Digitization Centre.

During the planning phase we had to take into account those legislative provisions that dedicated central role to the NSZL in the digitization of public collections. The decree 30/2014 (IV. 10.) by the EMMI (Ministry of Human Capacities) appointed the NSZL as the keeper institution of the digital content for long term. As a direct consequence of this, the government decree 1404/2017 (VI.28.) formulating the Digitization Strategy of Public Collections, appointed the NSZL as the aggregator of the library sector. Therefore, we had to make the Digitization Centre serviceable in order to serve as national centre of methodology and competences.

The already existing tools of digitization, and the new equipment meant to be received during the development, workstations for post-processing and the tools for collection preservation, and the logistical background required a significantly large space. An open space suitable for this was only available on the 8th floor of the library. On this 1500 m² space was planned to be the Digitization Centre, which would be separate from the other spaces but necessarily connected according to the work processes.

Designating this space was decisively influenced by the fact that the collection of the national library is part of our national heritage, therefore it is subject to museum conservation: all the documents are subject of strict regulations of collection preservation. In the central building, the logistical infrastructure could be realized with a direct contact with the repository, so the quantity of movements of the material and the point of entering and exiting could be lowered.

In the NSZL, the forerunner of digitization was the microfiche technology with the aim of collection preservation established in the 1960s. So it is not incidental that these

spaces previously used for microfiche production and collection preservation photography have been gradually transformed into digitizing workshops. This technological change already came about at the beginning of 2000, but the project-based operations and the resources provided to financially ensure the sustainability of them has been only realized by now. During this period, the market-based digitization of the documents found in public collections was carried out in a dynamic manner. Unfortunately, this approach did not support the long-term preservation of neither the paper-based documents, nor their digital formats.

During the planning, we formulated the minimal requirements of the long-term preservation of digitized public collection and its reproduction in print quality. We defined the minimal technical requirements of digitization of visual materials, and we put down the aspects and formal requirements of recording in a form of a recommendation starting from the preparation of the original document up until the completion of the Submission Information Package (the package of information from the maker of the digital content).

In order to prepare the process for the public procurement, we formulated and specified what kind of equipment we would like to furnish the Centre with. By eminently validating the collection preservation, we aimed at obtaining a wide variety of digitizing tools, especially emphasizing gadgets that offer copying solutions that favour the preservation of the documents. According to this, we ordered many high-performance planetary scanners, that are able to digitize various documents (ambrotypes, bound newspapers, maps) even larger than A/o. The manuscripts, codices and other rare documents of high value needing specific protection during digitization received a dedicated photography workstation, including among others a medium-sized photo studio. Moreover, more specific digitizing tools have been put in operation, for example poster scanner and filmstrip and microfiche scanner. For books needing less protection, we acquired high-performance robotic book scanners. Additional flatbed and sheetfed scanners are available for simpler digitization processes.

During the planning of workflows, we have organically built into the process of digitization the collection preservation part. We have successfully launched the acquisition of such high-performance equipment that helps the preventive and conserving collection preservation. Starting from the mid-19th century, the newspapers and posters were printed on



paper of low quality that acidifies easily. In many cases, these would not even survive a document-saving copy. Therefore, we acquired a high-performance deacidification equipment that prevents the further deterioration of the paper through chemical processes and assures the long-term preservation of the document.

Previous to the digitization, comprehensive state description of the documents will be made in the phase of bibliographical preparation. The annual restoration plans can then be composed based on these. Right after digitization, those documents that request it will be placed in a collection protection storage up until the restoration in order to prevent their further deterioration. These storage boxes will be made by a special computer-controlled box designing and producing machine that has been put in operation on the 8th floor.

In order to assure operation under normal conditions and track the workflow, during the process of the public procurement we ordered the development of DTK (Digitization Support Framework System) software. As basic requirements towards the system, we formulated the overall support of the digitization processes, from scanning until the preparation of electronic versions ready to be serviced, and assuring contact with the preparation processes of collection preservation, library systems providing bibliographical information, the order management database, the digital storage providing long-term preservation and the e-library systems. The system shall provide the traceability of the related processes and the supply of statistical data.

The public procurement tender for the acquisition of the digitizing equipment and the development of the DTK software was closed successfully in May 2018, the equipment was received and put into operation. However, the tender for the reconstruction of the 8th floor lost multiple times, so as a makeshift, the General Reading Room had to be closed down starting with the summer of 2018, the Digitization Centre being temporarily set up here. Unfortunately, the circumstances prevent us from setting up all the equipment and engage the necessary number of colleagues.

During the preparation of reconstruction plans we faced the fact that asbestos contaminated the attic. The functional reconstruction of the space did not affect these parts, however, the leadership of the library decided that, in order to go against the culmination of the confusion generated by the media, they would finance the removal of asbestos from the fund for the IT development. The removal process on the 8th floor, in the attic above the Digitization Centre was completed in the summer of 2019. After this, the interior reconstruction could be launched in September. The 35 years old fitted carpet was replaced with an antistatic, highly-chargeable PVC flooring. The electronic and IT circuit necessary for the operation of the hardware was set up in suspended form, built on a steel-framed scaffolding above the space. The air conditioning system set up above the barred structure and the hanging led lamps carry modern and industrial notes, complementing the functions of the space. The simple, minimalist grey and red furniture was also adjusted to this atmosphere.

According to the plans, the new workspace will accommodate 80 people. This is the number of employees necessary for the full-time operation of the machines and for the digital post-production, planned to be filled during 2020. The reconstruction was finished in December 2019. The furniture and the machines from the General Reading Room will be moved here presumably at the beginning of 2020. The festive inauguration ceremony will presumably take place in March 2020.

When working on full capacity and maintaining the planned mass digitization, the Digitization Centre will be capable of producing 10 million digital objects per year. According to the surveys prepared during the planning phase, 3 million documents should be digitized in order to convey the whole spectrum of the Hungarian written cultural heritage. This can only be realized provided the digitizing works from the other libraries will be synchronized, the parallel activities will be ended and the tasks will be divided up accordingly. The KDS (Digitizing Strategy for Public Collections) has set an



aim to synchronize these works. As nowadays fundamentally every printed publication is produced digitally, the new decree regarding the legal deposit already specifies that the publishing houses have to send in the digital copies of books. In this manner they put an end to the anomaly that meant the repeated digitization of materials printed from digital formats.

The Digitization Centre will also operate as centre of competences that provides reference to digitization and the activities related to this, methodology, traditional and electronical educational material, regulations and tools. It will work out a cooperation with the institutions responsible for developing the educational system and also with libraries from abroad that are keepers of hungarika documents.

The first group of documents appointed through the digitization strategy of serviceability and collection

preservation approach consist of the representative part of the NSZL's collection. Firstly, only those documents will be digitized that have metadata in online databases at disposal. Such units of the collection were included in this digitizing plan, whose content or uniqueness is especially important from social and cultural perspective, and due to the high demand from them, their protection is indispensably necessary.

We hope that the new Digitization Centre will be operating with all its equipment, at maximum capacity and number of employees by the end of 2020.

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