

## **Digitization project – Socioeconomic Area Libraries, Università di Padova**

An overview

The project started in 2001, when the Department of Economics “M. Fanno” and the Faculty of Political Science “E. Ancieri” started to think about creating a Digital Repository for its historical journals with the double aim of

- freeing some space in the library and
- experimenting with a digitization project.

We received funding for purchasing software and hardware and the required equipment. In the meantime, the studies on digitization all over the world kept progressing more and more, so we had to undertake a very thorough survey of the existing guidelines (mostly international, at the time) and equipment before purchasing any material.

This very interesting investigation led us to experiment with several possibilities for the image capturing software and equipment, and for the web publishing software.

The result of our investigations led us to specific choices, according to the available budget: the face-up scanner Minolta PS7000, and a server and a workstation.

During the experimental phase the Project was further enlarged to all the libraries of the Socioeconomic Area of our University, with the aim of digitizing an array of historical journals, in order to

- build an online repository with the hardware and software purchased during the first phase
- check procedures and costs for a further enlargement of the digitization project.

We included the possibility of extending the project to different materials, such as maps and statistical data.

The experimental phase was very useful to test the specifications included in the international guidelines, about the file format, the scanning software, the image processing software, the archiving software (metadata, web interface for search), the backup processes and strategies.

We have produced user manuals for the scanning and digitizing process.

After experimenting with old journals, we found out that the PS7000 (the best bet with our available budget) is not a very versatile scanner for digitization: it can only deal with new and thin books, whereas originally we were supposed to digitize tightly bound journals with a lot of pages. The PS7000 is not suitable for that kind of material.

We therefore decided to choose our material according to those requirements.

Another set of issues we had to deal with is the problem of copyright. The situation is ever changing and still very unclear, especially after the Google Prints case. Digitizing journals is too hectic when it comes to tracking down the copyright holders.

Because of the above reasons (and because nowadays most projects involving copyrighted material are handled on a national or international scale), we decided to shift the focus of our project towards the conservation and the conditioning of an existing collection of autograph papers and drafts by Marco Fanno (the Economics professor our Department is named after). The project is particularly interesting because the collection has been indexed by two Historians of Economics and is included in the Archivio Storico

degli Economisti, an online database of historical material related to Economics. Therefore the aim of the Project shifted towards preserving the materials by digitizing them, filing them and storing them in proper acid-free containers. At the end of the project, the community of scientists will have a ready storage of virtual manuscripts to study.

As most of the material is subject to the Italian privacy law, we will have to examine each request one by one in order to authorize their consultation. For the same reason, in most cases it is not possible to allow the public dissemination of the material, by means of the Internet and the like. We are examining the existing laws in order to find a suitable way to make the material available.

STATE OF THE ART: The conditioning is almost complete. The digitization process includes 44 boxes of papers (32 of which to be digitized, 6 of them completed). Due to lack of staff, it is very unlikely that the digitization will be completed before the next 3 to 6 years, according to the available resources.

Anna Mioni, co-ordinator of the Project, September 2006.