DP3 digital print preservation portal
Newsletter
IMAGE · PERMANENCE · INSTITUTE
Issue: 2

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RECOMMENDED LINK

"A Pixel of Imaging Science"

Alan Hodson has a blog at the Royal Photographic Society. The postings can be filtered by topics. Click here for the image permanence postings.

Alan is an imaging scientist with 25 years experience in the photo industry. Most of this time was in R&D and Technical Services roles with a long term interest in image quality. During this time the photo industry made the transition from silver halide to digital imaging and Alan worked extensively on materials for both technologies. He is now active in The Royal Photographic Society in image science and the Institute of Physics in printing technologies. In his spare time he plays with telescope and camera optics, documenting his projects and writing his blog.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SAA, Austin, TX
August 11-14, 2009

IPI will be at SAA at the research forum on August 11th and at the trade exhibits in Booth 13 on Thursday August 13th and Friday August 14th. Come by and ask your digital print preservation questions.

AASLH, Indianapolis, IN
August 26-28, 2009

IPI will also be at AASLH in the trade exhibits in Booth 46 on Thursday, August 27th and Friday, August 28th. Drop in and see us!

IS&T, Louisville, KY
Septemer 21, 2009

IPI research scientists will be reporting their results on print brittleness, blocking, and mixed digital-traditional collections at The Society of Imaging Science and Technologies Non-Impact Printing Conference this September 21st in Louisville, KY.

Summary of the DP3 Project Survey of Digital Print Experience within Libraries, Archives, and Museums

A report on IPI's survey of institutional experiences with digital prints is now available for download.

Abstract

In order to quantify the experience cultural heritage institutions have had or are having with digitally printed materials in or entering their collections, the Image Permanence Institute (IPI) conducted an online survey. The survey gathered data relevant to the collecting of digitally printed materials, deterioration of those materials, preservation policies regarding the care of those materials, and the use of digital printers in house.

The results indicate that most institutions are receiving digitally printed materials but that their staff does not possess the necessary information and skills to identify or develop policies for the care and handling of these materials in their institutions.

Unfortunately, the data also indicates that digitally printed materials in many institutions are already decaying and doing so by a variety of mechanisms. In addition to collecting digitally printed materials from outside sources, institutions are relying on digital printers to produce their own institutional publications, work copies, exhibition signage, etc. While some of this material is intended for short-term use, others, such as conservation documentation, may be needed for extended periods of time.

The full report can now be downloaded from the DP3 Project website. Click here for the PDF.

Terminology

Image Permanence vs. Print Permanence

These two are not synonymous. ***Image permanence*** is only concerned with maintaining the pictorial content of the image. The colors may fade over time or change in hue, and the paper may discolor, turning from white to yellow. Image permanence ratings attempt to quantify the potential for these changes and extrapolate those results into years of life expectancy.

Original Image



Faded Image

On the other hand, ***print permanence*** is concerned not only with the stability of the image but the physical integrity of the object as a whole, including its resistance to cracking, abrasion, and layer delamination. For example, the image may be relatively unaffected by light, humidity, and pollution, but the ink easily smeared by light rubbing.

Delaminated Print



Manufacturers of digital print materials often tout their image permanence test results while ignoring potential problems with the physical stability of the material. It is important to understand that just because a material (paper, ink) has a permanence rating of 100 years, it doesn't mean that the print won't degrade over time or be very sensitive to damage by handling.