





INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTIONS ADVISOR

A RESOURCE FROM IHS LOCAL HISTORY SERVICES

[LOCAL HISTORY SERVICES](#) | [INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY](#) | [PAST ISSUES](#) | FOLLOW LHS ON:  

Issue 84 | November 2018

SO SOMEONE WANTS A COPY OF A DIGITAL IMAGE

By Karen DePauw, coordinator, IHS Local History Services

As institutions of the 21st century, digitizing our collections is high on the list of priorities. The reason for digitization is multifaceted, from providing off-site researchers access, to creating a digital surrogate if disaster strikes. However, it is easy to forget that with the digitization of materials comes the desire from the public for use of these images in publications, educational presentations, advertising, and more. So, how do we set ourselves up for success when someone asks to use our image? We create policies and procedures in advance that guide the use and associated costs.



[Brown Showcase Camera Equipment](#). (Emmett I. Brown, Jr. Photograph Collection, Indiana Historical Society)

The first step to setting up policies and procedures dealing with digital images, is to gather some necessary information. Look online to find out what similarly sized institutions, as well as geographically neighboring institutions currently do for photo reproductions. Most institutions post their policies, request forms, and fee structures online. After doing a bit of research, there are some key questions to ask in order to get started:

- Will we place our images online? If so, will we water-mark them or simply use low-resolution images to deter un-credited, commercial use (i.e.: 72 dpi images rather than 300 dpi)?
- What is the fee structure for providing the digital copy of the image? Is the fee different for images already digitized versus items that will require new scans or new photography?



ONLINE RESOURCES

[Indiana Historical Society Policies](#)

[Indiana State Library Policies](#)

[Connecticut Historical Society Policies](#)

UPCOMING TRAINING AND PROGRAMS

[Legal Issues in Museums](#)

Nov. 5 -
Association of Indiana Museums at the Indiana State Police Museum.

[Making a Good End: How to Close a Museum](#)

Nov. 13 -
Connecting to Collections Care webinar.

[Looking at Plastics: An Introduction to Caring for Plastics](#)

Nov. 27 -
Connecting to Collections Care webinar.

What is the standard file format provided if a special request is not made (i.e.: 300 dpi tiff)? Will we provide the image using a cloud-based image transfer program, or by using USB flash drives? What sort of timeline from order to fulfillment can our patrons expect? Will an up-charge be added for rush orders (usually considered less than 5 business days)?

- What will the use fee structure look like? Will it be determined by end use (book, website, movie, educational presentation)? Will the charge be different for commercial use versus non-profit use? Will we charge any fee at all for personal use (such as a patron wishing to have a reproduction photograph of their home from 1880 hanging in their living room)? Will we even have a use fee? Under what situations might we be willing to waive the use fee?
- What will our use policy look like? Do we have a local lawyer we can ask for help or are there templates we feel comfortable using?
- What is the required credit line for images?

Consider how your mission might affect the way you structure your photographic reproduction policies and fees. For instance, perhaps your organization heavily focuses on educating the public, so you might charge a lesser fee (or no fee at all) for the use of your digital images in educational presentations, history features in the local paper, or even use in masters or doctoral theses. All of these things might be seen as an extension of the organization itself because they continue the direct work of the institutional mission. Plus, if these presentations or features are local, then the institution is getting some advertising through the use of their images (as long as you lay out a required credit line!). If images are used in a book, it can be a good idea to request a copy of the book especially if the book is on a topic of interest to the organization's visitors. This is fairly standard practice and it is likely the author is anticipating that such a request would be made.

When determining fees for the creation of images, especially if the item was not high on the priority list of digitization until someone requested it, keep in mind all of the time and associated costs wrapped up in the digitization of items in the collection. There is staff time to create the digital file, process it and save it. Equipment costs in scanners, cameras, computers and software. There is nothing wrong with charging for digitizing services in the same way you charge for admission or programs. Do not undervalue what you do and the service you provide.

Once you have created your fee structures and forms, place them online. Let potential users of your digital items know up front the associated costs and expectations that go along with using digital images created by the institution of items held at the institution. This can help cut down on any possible confusion about the process. For samples of institutional policies posted online or previous Collections Advisor articles regarding digitization, check out the resource list to the right.

This is a free publication. Anyone may subscribe.

[Local History Services](#)

Indiana Historical Society, 450 West Ohio Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202
(317) 232-1882 | [\[email protected\]](#)

**WE DO
HISTORY.**
[INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY](#)



Smithsonian Affiliate



PROUD MEMBER OF THE
International Coalition of
SITES of CONSCIENCE

Indiana's Storyteller™, Connecting People to the Past