

Update on Digital Print Preservation Research: What We Have Learned So Far About the Permanence and Preservation of Digitally Printed Books

ABSTRACT

Many contemporary books and periodicals are now being created with digital printing equipment. These devices use colorants, and often papers, that are different from those used in traditional offset lithography. This raises a question for collections caretakers: Will these materials need a new preservation approach? For the last five years the Image Permanence Institute has been studying the preservation of digital hardcopy materials and developing strategies to maximize their useable lives in cultural heritage collections. Potential deterioration factors for the materials include heat, humidity extremes, air pollutants, light, enclosure materials, handling, and exposure to water (e.g., during floods). In the last two years the Image Permanence Institute has added bound volumes to its studies, in addition to individual prints. Bound pages have been found to behave similarly to individual prints in some ways, but in other ways their construction and use positively or adversely impacts their long-term stability. This is a review of the work to date.

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