



Conway Hall Digitisation Policy 2016- 2019

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CONWAY HALL

HUMANIST LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

DIGITISATION POLICY 2016-2019

Introduction and context

Conway Hall Humanist Library and Archives holds a unique collection of material relating to humanism, ethics, rationalism and philosophy. The Library also holds the archives of the South Place Ethical Society and the National Secular Society.

Digitisation of library and archive materials has benefits beyond creating online access and helping to preserve the original items. There is the potential to exploit these resources to support formal and informal learning programmes and projects, to increase community engagement, and to support the creation of physical and online exhibitions, and marketing and fundraising.

The Conway Hall Centenary Strategy 2016 is committed to,

'Increasing the quality, volume and reach of digital cultural content'

This policy aims to set out Conway Hall's approach to this strategic priority in terms of our library and archive collections and to create a framework for its digitisation activities in the short to medium term. This document builds on lessons learnt from the completion of an initial pilot project digitising selected materials from the collections. From this pilot the processes and procedures required to digitise have begun to be formulated and explored.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Digitisation Operational Manual 2016.

Scope

This policy applies to digitisation of materials held and managed by Conway Hall Humanist Library and Archives.

Digitisation objectives

- Open up access to Conway Hall Humanist Library & Archives collections for researchers and the public.
- Increase the visibility and use of our collections on both a local and global scale.
- Increase public engagement activities through facilitation of interpretation of digitised content by members of the community.
- Enhance the user experience with increased digitised content.
- Increase the discoverability of our collections.
- Preserve fragile and rare items through creation of digital reproductions.
- Prioritise digitisation of items based on feedback from our audiences and associated research.
- Work internally (with marketing team) and externally (with our partners) to find ways of promoting our collections to a wider audience.

Selection for digitisation

Conway Hall Library will work closely with library users and other stakeholders to establish priorities for digitisation. Consultation will be undertaken with users, staff and volunteers through evaluation forms/surveys about our digitisation plans. This will be used to direct and inform future plans, projects and funding opportunities.

Digitisation activities currently take place within the context of a project. Selection of the materials to be digitised is therefore influenced by the needs and scope of the project, but will also comply with the objectives above. Additionally consideration will be given to:

- the potential demand from users.
- the condition of the materials to be digitised (including potential conservation costs and activities).
- material is eligible for public access (i.e. no sensitive information subject to data protection).
- material is owned by Conway Hall Ethical Society, is in the public domain, or we have permission to digitise and make the material available online.

The same considerations should be given for any digitisation taking place outside of the context of a project.

Standards and good practice

The physical process of scanning for digitisation will be carried out by the most cost-effective method and, in most cases, will be outsourced to reputable companies.

Technical standards, processes and guidelines for digitisation projects will be developed and followed. Open file formats will be used as preference however the choice of format will in part be influenced by preservation requirements. There should be no need to digitise any item a second time for a different purpose.

Appropriate administrative metadata, including technical, rights and preservation will be created as part of the digitisation process and associated with the digital objects, to support both access and preservation. All such metadata will be standards-based.

Copyright will be cleared for works we intend to digitise that fall within copyright. Where rights holders cannot be identified or found we will make use of the EU Orphan Works Directive (2012/28/EU) where appropriate or the UK Orphan Works Licensing Scheme.

Each digitisation project will be managed by Conway Hall Library staff who understand the project's content and users, with digitisation vendors and partners being responsible for relevant deliverables.

Formal guidelines will be in place to cover all aspects of handling and transporting library and archive materials and they will be integrated into any contracts with external suppliers.

Digitisation will capture, preserve and provide contextual information about the digitised records to ensure their future discoverability and re-use.

Conway Hall Humanist Library & Archives will work with peers, partners and the community to raise awareness and encourage use of the created digital resources.

Presenting digitised content online

Digitised items and content should be suitable for the widest possible range of potential users and for groups/individuals wishing to use it for a variety of purposes (dependent on restrictions under the digital rights of items).

Discovery tools should be straightforward to use and allow users to find the information they want quickly and easily.

Descriptive metadata should conform to international standards where possible and should be associated with each digitised item (refer to Digitisation Operational Manual/Metadata document). Much of the digitised content would benefit from additional information (for context/interpretation) and will lend themselves to good community engagement opportunities.

Optical character recognition (OCR) should be used to make digitised text searchable. Transcripts or contextual information may be required for some items to interpret and make the content more useable.

All digitised content online should include a clear statement of copyright, including end-user rights. Wherever possible a Creative Commons licence should be used to allow free use.

All digitised content will be made as visible as possible to external search engines, cultural heritage portals and other specialist aggregators.

Sustainability

We will advocate for core funding for digitisation and look at developing external funding proposals to increase our capacity to digitise our collections. We will also look to develop partnerships with other specialist or academic libraries to co-create digitisation projects.

Success factors

Feedback from users and regular evaluations will be carried out on digitised content and measured against performance indicators (appendix 1). Online feedback forms, surveys and usage statistics will be used to measure the amount and type of usage, and the degree of user satisfaction. Evaluation will include both qualitative and quantitative measures which will be used to create an end of project report.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by Library & Learning Manager and modified as needed to reflect current strategic priorities and infrastructure.

Appendix 1

Performance indicators

- Numbers of digitised items created
- Number of times digitised items accessed online / downloaded
- Number of visitors to online and physical exhibitions of digitised materials
- Remote user satisfaction in using online digitisation platforms
- Number of people who have taken part in community engagement activities related to our digitised content.
- Number of materials conserved to aid digitisation.