**PATTON — Why Can’t You?**

<0 figures>

**Why Can’t You Just Whack It on the Photocopier? A Workshop on the Digitisation of Heritage Collections in Large Collecting Institutions**

Neville, R., Patton, M. and Wajon, S.

**Facilitators**

Richard Neville—Mitchell Librarian, State Library of New South Wales

Maggie Patton—Manager, Research and Discovery, State Library of New South Wales

Scott Wajon—Manager, Digitisation Services, State Library of New South Wales

**Outline**

This workshop aims to unpack and discuss the challenges and complexities of digitising heritage collections. The discussions will be based on recent projects undertaken by the State Library of New South Wales, including

• Digitisation of over 180,000 pages of diaries and letters written by over 500 servicemen and women from the First World War.

• A pilot project to digitise 4,500 books (1.35 million pages) from the iconic David Scott Mitchell Collection.

As a large collecting institution the State Library has an obligation to preserve and provide access to a significant collection of over 5 million items, including a vast collection of manuscripts, photographs, and printed books. A key priority is to also ensure that these heritage collections and the cultural heritage data contained within millions of pages is accessible and able to be interrogated and reinterpreted using contemporary digital technologies and research practices.

The workshop will cover a range of issues experienced through these large-scale digitisation projects, including project scoping and funding, complex contractual agreements required for external partners, metadata creation, equipment, digitisation and quality assurance specifications, conservation and object handling skills, and the format and variety of outputs.

In working through a range of decisions, the workshop will highlight key aspects of any digitisation project: why is this material significant, what elements of the object are essential to be maintained, when is the content more significant than the container itself, and when are compromises acceptable?

**Audience**

Colleagues from cultural institutions and practitioners planning large-scale digitisation projects. Researchers working on the use and interrogation of historical data, including manuscripts and printed books. Students interested in understanding the complexities of preserving and digitising cultural artefacts.

**Length**

Three hours.