

Ambitious mass digitization project in the German National Library

Historical address books efficiently digitized



Maximum productivity, high image quality and gentle handling: The specifications for electronic capture of extensive stocks of address books and business directories in the German National Library in Leipzig presented a major challenge. When put into practice, the importance of selecting the right scanning system for this was thrown into sharp relief.

Historical address books and business directories have great value, both in terms of socio-historical work as well as family and genealogical research.

Not only do they contain personal details on the occupation and property of householders, they also give general information on leisure activities as well as the goods and services on offer during the respective era. It is also possible to determine the year of death or departure of individuals by comparing several consecutive years.

In 1935 alone, 575 German cities and municipalities issued address books, which included 350 specialist address books of standings, occupations and industries.

One of the largest collections of around 14,000 books up to the publication year 1955 can be found at the German National Library in Leipzig.

Over the next two years, a large-scale digitization project will scan, catalog and ultimately make this collection available on the Internet.

The MIK-Center GmbH in Berlin, a specialized service provider for electronic capture of valuable cultural assets, is taking on the in-house digitization.

The contractor and cooperation partner of the German National Library is Ancestry, with the world's largest online platform for genealogical research.



No room for compromise

“The great challenge of this project is achieving a high level of productivity, without compromising the image quality,” explains Anke Steier, Project Manager for the MIK Center GmbH and locally responsible for implementation.

What makes matters worse is that many of the books are in a fragile condition. “The address and business directories are sometimes printed on very thin newsprint, so they have occasionally taken quite a battering,” explains Anke Steier.

Four of Zeutschel's Advanced Plus versions of the OS 16000 with motorized book cradle and glass plate form the heart of the scanner infrastructure.

According to Anke Steier, the advantages of the latest Zeutschel machine in the A2 sector start in the very design. “The height of the room in the digitization center is just 1.96 m. So, the compact dimensions of the OS 16000 machines are an advantage.”

The book cradle takes optimum care of the originals and is able to gently process books up to a thickness of 20 cm. The book spine can be left free, which greatly reduces the stress on the cover and spine.

“Endurance runner” for large-scale projects

An absolute must in the digitization project is a high throughput. In concrete terms this means: “A total of 14,000 books need to be digitized, which is a total of 4.8 million scans,” says Anke Steier.

The OS 16000 is designed for the highest productivity demands. The motorized book cradle makes the workflow largely automatic. The book cradle also comes equipped with a self-opening glass plate, the book plate lowers automatically and a very fine contact pressure can be electronically set.

The Zeutschel book scanner is simple and fast to use – for example, it features programmable function keys, an intuitive control panel and a built-in monitor for immediate review of the image quality – so a high throughput is easy to achieve.

“In practice, the OS 16000 has proven itself to be an endurance runner and also produces excellent results in image quality. This scanner meets all project requirements perfectly,” says Anke Steier emphatically.

The German National Library

The German National Library is located in Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig and is the central archival library and national bibliographic center for Germany. The German National Library is uniquely entrusted with the task of collecting, permanently archiving and fully documenting all German and German-language publications from 1913. It is also responsible for bibliographically indexing these works and making them accessible to the general public. The German National Library holds a total of around 29.7 million units at the start of 2015, 17 million of these are stored in Leipzig.

Über Zeutschel:

Mit seinen Scan- und Mikrofilmsystemen leistet die Zeutschel GmbH seit mehr als 50 Jahren im Bibliotheks- und Archivwesen, aber auch in Industrie-Unternehmen und der öffentlichen Verwaltung einen zentralen Beitrag zur Digitalisierung und Langzeitarchivierung wertvoller Dokumente. Das Unternehmen ist Weltmarktführer bei Buchscannern. Mit dem mehrfach ausgezeichneten Aufsichtsscanner zeta macht Zeutschel die Vorteile des ‚Scans von oben‘ jetzt auch im modernen Büro nutzbar. So einfach, effizient und umweltfreundlich war es noch nie, Seiten aus Verträgen, Aktenordnern oder Bilanzen zu digitalisieren. Ein umfangreiches Sortiment an Software und begleitenden Dienstleistungen unter der Dachmarke ‚OSCAR‘ unterstützt Bibliotheken und Archive beim Aufbau digitaler Sammlungen im Internet und bei der Umsetzung digitaler Services. Das 1961 gegründete Unternehmen beschäftigt 65



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