



Spigraph

**ARCHIVES
NATIONALES**
Fontainebleau - Paris - Pierrefitte-sur-Seine

ARCHIVES NATIONALES SIMPLIFY ACCESS TO DIGITISATION

ISSUES



Equipping an Archives Nationales site with a scanner capable of:

- Smoothly processing major registers containing several hundred pages without damaging the binding
- Capturing the textures of parchments and seals
- Delivering scanned documents in TIFF format
- Managing a wide range of formats (from A4 registers to A1 plans)
- Conserving fragile documents

BENEFITS



The chosen solution has:

- Reduced processing times for complex digitisation requests
- Obtained high quality digitisations without damaging the originals
- Brought down reproduction costs
- Simplified the request management process

SOLUTIONS



Setting up of a book scanner for A1 formats

- Scanner SupraScan Quartz A1 HD 600 dpi by i2s
- Installation and training by Spigraph



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In charge of centralizing French national archives and ensuring their free access to the population for over 200 years, the Archives Nationales collect, classify and conserve old documents, many of which are several centuries old. Communication is probably the most fundamental aspect of this institution's remit. It is entrenched in the following declaration, "society has the right of requesting account from any public agent of its administration", set out in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.

Very early on, the Archives Nationales therefore set up reading rooms to give access to the documents in their keeping. With the help of technological progress, it is now possible to ask for photocopies or scans of documents in such situations as the justification of people's rights, documentation for scientific research or to assist history lovers and genealogists. In order to improve the quality of reproductions but also to optimize the process, the Archives Nationales have acquired a new scanner for its Paris site, the SupraScan Quartz A1 600 dpi HD made by the French company, i2s, a solution recommended and implemented by Spigraph.

CONSERVING ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS AND OPTIMIZING QUALITY

The Parisian Archives Nationales site includes two buildings separated by around 300 metres, linked up by underground passages. The former scanner was located in the library whereas most scanning requests are processed on the consultation site. It was therefore often necessary to take precious and delicate documents through the passages, which was neither practical nor recommended for archive conservation. It was thus decided to equip the consultation

site with a scanner adapted to the type of documents processed.

Rapid digitisation is not really a key decisive factor for the institution, as the consultation only scans about a dozen documents per day. Document handling however is fundamental. Many of the documents handled by the Archives Nationales are heavy registers with fragile bindings, old parchments or plans with dimensions exceeding the traditional A4 format. Using state-of-the-art technical processes, they are kept in premises specifically designed to preserve paper. Digitisation therefore involves careful handling with minimum interference from excessively strong lighting or exposure to heat. With this in mind, the Archives Nationales opted for a scanner model designed to protect originals and deliver high quality reproductions.

The SupraScan Quartz A1 600 dpi HD book scanner therefore naturally caught the institution's attention. It is motorized and has an opening system that adapts to different angles: 100, 120 or 140° to scan books without flattening them. It also takes good care of bindings and obtains high quality digitisations without the inevitable deformation caused by conventional scanners. An additional lighting system, specially designed to minimize contact with documents, completes the original document preservation process. At the same time, it optimizes the quality of textures, a characteristic that is particularly relevant when digitising parchments featuring seals kept by the Archives Nationales.

REDUCTION OF COSTS AND LEAD TIMES

Before, Archives Nationales staff had to use photographers to copy documents not compatible with the old scanner, either because the flat system could not be envisaged or because the format requested or document size exceeded capacity. The Archives Nationales in fact received requests for TIFF-format copies which they could not process with the old scanner, limited to JPEG format, or for plans which they could not scan in one go. In all cases, the process was long and costly for the person requesting the copy. Today, staff is much more reactive and processes practically all requests with the new scanner as the A1 format offers many more possibilities. On average, when it used to take a month to process complex requests, the Archives Nationales now take only one day. The user-friendly functionalities of the software also contribute to this success. Deformation linked to the digitisation of documents is automatically corrected, images are adjusted and conventional retouching is done more easily.

ABOUT ARCHIVES NATIONALES

An administration founded in 1790 during the French Revolution, the Archives Nationales were set up to conserve documents produced by the new administrations, group together the administrative funds of the Ancien Régime and take charge of archives seized as national property (Church, Aristocracy, etc.). Nowadays, its role is to centralize the nation's archives and ensure their unhindered access to citizens. Distributed

over three sites, Paris, Fontainebleau and Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, the institution hosts 300 km of archives and communicated 122,664 documents in 2012.

www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr