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Title

Tracing your ancestors in the digital age: the digitisation of collections at the State Library of New South Wales.

Summary

Digitisation projects improve the discovery of collections and there are many benefits for family history researchers. The State Library of New South Wales digitisation programs, including the current Digital Excellence Program (DEP), are making accessible the nation's most iconic and historically significant documents and objects. In the past few years, the DEP has digitised thousands of newspapers and also the library's collection of World War I personal diaries, and these projects can add valuable information to the search for your ancestors as well as paint a picture of the world they lived in.

Abstract

Digitisation projects improve discoverability of collections through the online environment, and the many benefits for family history researchers will be examined.

The State Library of New South Wales' Digital Excellence Program (DEP) is a mass digitisation project of the nation's most iconic and historically significant documents and objects. In the past few years, the DEP has digitised 4.5 million pages of historical New South Wales newspapers, a particularly rich source for family history researchers, and more recently the library's collection of World War I personal diaries. The latter project is proving a boon for the great number of Australians touched by the Great War and researching their family's heritage throughout the World War I centenary commemorations.

Manuscript and pictorial collections are a key element of the high quality mass digitisation and can be a great source of social context for family historians. This talk will also discuss a past digitisation project creating greater access to emigrants' shipboard experiences through the digitisation of personal diaries, sketches, published ships' newspapers and ephemera from the vast collections of the State Library of New South Wales. In addition, it will touch briefly on how the family history team at the State Library is highlighting these digitised collections through social media.

Audience

All levels

Targeted to family historians/ genealogists but relevant to librarians, archivists, local historians, students (secondary/tertiary) and professional researchers.