

Getting Started with Image Collections Online

Is my collection suitable for Image Collections Online?

The first step is to determine whether or not your photo collection is suitable for inclusion in Image Collections Online.

First, take a look at the variety of collections currently available in Image Collections Online. The site currently includes many different sorts of collections. Although it was originally conceived for documentary photographs, digitized from print, the ICO includes both born-digital photographs and images of cultural artifacts (see for example the [Slocum Puzzle](#) and the [Sage](#) collections).

Collections in ICO may be quite large (thousands of images) or quite small. There is no set limit on the number of items a collection must have in order to be included in ICO.

Most collections in ICO have only one image per item (and thus per metadata record), although ICO can support collections that require multiple images for each item in that item's metadata record (for example, scans of the front and back of a print photo, or photos of an object taken from multiple angles).

ICO supplies many fields that can be used to describe items including a set of [core fields](#) to support cross-collection searching. See the section "[Deciding on Fields](#)" for more information.

Essentially, many different types of image collections will be suitable to be included in Image Collections Online. Contact Michelle Dalmou (mdalmau@indiana.edu) for a consultation.

Who will do the work?

Work required for a successful Image Collections Online collection can be divided into three broad areas:

Project Management

There needs to be one person who is primarily responsible for ensuring that all the work of the project progresses at the expected pace, and that all the work is done accurately. This person is called the Project Manager. For Image Collections Online, the Project Manager should be someone affiliated with the collection, typically this will be the collection manager. This person will also normally be the main point of contact between the IU Libraries and the collection staff and will be responsible for working with the IU Libraries on configuring descriptive fields for cataloging the images, and for configuring the ICO site with information about the collection. This person will normally be the project representative on the Image Collections Online Working Group.

Digitization

Digitized content is required for Image Collection Online. If you already have digital content, you will need to contact IU Libraries staff to discuss the current specifications and how existing content can be best ingested into a new ICO collection. If your content needs to be digitized, you may choose to do it yourself, or you may contract with the IU Libraries or with an outside vendor. See the section "[Scanning and Ingest](#)" for more information.

Metadata Creation / Description

Finally, digitized content must be described. If you already have existing metadata, in the form of a database or spreadsheet, you will need to contact IU Libraries staff to discuss how to automatically apply it to the objects in your collection. If your metadata needs to be created by hand, either because it doesn't exist or because it is not yet in an electronic format, you can use Photocat to enter the metadata. Photocat is an image cataloging tool developed in the IU Libraries specifically for the description of photographs, although it has been used successfully to describe other cultural heritage objects as well. See the section "[Using PhotoCat](#)" for more information. Metadata creation takes a lot of time and energy, and much thought should be given to how this work can be done most effectively.

How do I start?

To start your collection for ICO, contact Michelle Dalmou (mdalmau@indiana.edu) to make an appointment.