Experiences with the archive scanner in municipal archive Waldkirch

Interview with Juliane Geike

Please introduce yourself

The municipal archive Waldkirch provides the documents of the district town of Waldkirch and of five former villages which have been incorporated. The municipal archive belongs to the department culture, education and social affairs. The head of cultural management has also the lead in the archive. The daily business is carried out by two full-time equivalents, one archivist in full-time, one assistant of media and information services and a person who absolves a voluntary social year, both part-time employed in the archive.

Which experiences have you made with digitization in the past?

In our small municipal archive especially the preservation is important. Frequently asked documents, mainly minute books and cadastres as well as regional newspaper from 1900 onwards, have been externally digitized and long-term secured on microfilm. The originals are now protected against excessive use. This indicates a digitization of several shelf-meters in one go.

Which problems, tasks and requirements lead to introduce a scan workstation in the archive?

External service bureaus hardly offer microfilm digitization, a very important reason to outsource services to external forces cease to exist. Furthermore, it was our wish to digitalize important documents in small quantities by ourselves (away from picked-up shelf-meters up to individual file digitization).

Why did you choose the camera based archive scanner and what are the advantages in your daily work?

At first, there was the wish to purchase a book scanner with which I already gained experience in the university library of Freiburg. But however, the town council would have difficulties in accepting the

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The archive scanner

cost. In addition, there were fundamental concerns that, in case of a component failure of the compact system means a complex and expensive total repair. With the knowledge that your company also offers a single component solution with software and freely extended and for the camera optimized parts, it soon became obvious which system will be taken into consideration. Basically, the funds for external digitization were already available and with the possibility of dividing the costs of the system into two households made it easy to convince the municipal council of the acquisition. Requested was a system for A2, also with regard to non-digitized plans and oversized images. This would not have been affordable to us with the book scanners, which were then available on the market, and could probably not have been implemented with our spatial possibilities. The current system reproduces formats slightly above A2 and is ideal for our most important documents - as well as unfold newspapers in Berlin format. The adjustability of the camera also allows macro shooting, even if it has not yet been used sufficiently.

How do you use this system today and what are your perspectives for the future?

Mainly we use the archive scanner for the following work:
· Digitization of newspapers from 1945 on
· Digitization "on demand" for archive users – archive employees or the users themselves
· Conversation of single plans, files, books and images
· Digitization of loans for exhibitions
· Other urban facilities can also use the scan working place. The museum for example made antiglare copies of historical, framed pictures so that they do not have to been opened.

In future we would like to extend the usage by further new applications:
· Make high resolution images of seals with the light table
· Try macrodigitization of slides
· Digitisation of the whole document stock (probably with the use of a glass plate to treat the book fold with care)
· To enable the paid usage for external users. This new service must first be added into the administration fee. Finally, we will launch a press release to inform the citizens about this new offer.