

Shooter Profile



David McKnight

David McKnight is defined by his role in the world of academia, and is therefore

dedicated to assuring the integrity of his work. With a background in humanities and librarianship, David got his start in the cultural institution arena in 1977. Currently he is the Director at the Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text and Image (SCETI) at the University of Pennsylvania, and is expertly trained in the stewardship of collections.

“Digital Transitions Division of Cultural Heritage understands the goals and problems of dealing with a broad range of collection types.”

David’s primary objective is to provide academia and the research community access to rare and unique collections. As superior image quality is imperative, David uses a Phase One P 45+ in order to provide users the details necessary to explore and compare these electronic replicas even at extreme magnification. That accelerates resource discovery, which, in turn, enhances the way researchers work.

For David, utilizing digital images provides the user with many more opportunities in the realms of research, integration, and access. It also increases exposure to collections, thereby creating increased awareness.

David cites the high quality reproduction of the 1623 King James Bible as an example of the wonders of digital. He states, “The notion that someone wants to download an entire bible is amazing. With this quality of reproduction, the scholar can go beyond the text and into context.



A General System of Horsemanship In All It's Branches” (Source: Fairman Rogers Collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, University of Pennsylvania Libraries).

Images are courtesy of the Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text and Image (SCETI) at the University of Pennsylvania.



“Kitab Al-Salamat” (Source: Center for Advanced Jewish Studies Library, University of Pennsylvania Libraries).

“I was impressed by Digital Transitions’ foresight to have someone with Peter Siegel’s experience tasked to serve the academic community.”



The London Magazine, or, Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer” (Source: Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, University of Pennsylvania Libraries).

DIRECTOR David McKnight
STYLE Cultural Heritage
HARDWARE PHASE ONE P 45+
Hasselblad H2
Arca Swiss M
SOFTWARE Capture One PRO
CONTACT David McKnight
University of
Pennsylvania
SCETI 3420 Walnut St
Philadelphia, PA
19104
www.library.upenn.edu

We are raising new questions to images that were unfathomable in the past. The digital medium is changing the way we work.”

What helps this mission is a Phase One P 45+ from Digital Transitions Division of Cultural Heritage. In addition to Phase One’s technical prowess, David was also impressed by Digital Transitions’ foresight to have an entire division – headed by Peter Siegel – dedicated specifically to the academic community. Peter’s experience with archiving collections is absolutely unparalleled. David noted, “Digital Transitions understands the long term goals and day-to-day issues when dealing with a broad range of collection types.”

David has told us that his P 45+ investment has paid off well. In the summer of 2007, David and his students captured over 30,000 digital images of their collection at the highest quality. They completed so many in such a short time that they had to reassess their back-end storage systems. Peter Siegel and the Division of Cultural Heritage team counseled David and developed a custom workflow solution that optimized their capture rate and quality.

“Our Phase One digital workflow transformed the workplace, including user attitudes and the entire nature of the scanning operation. It added a level of dynamics to the work environment: students no longer have long delays between scans!”

And now that he is well versed in the world of digital, David would advise any photographer who is considering buying a high-end digital system to assess a vendor’s resources, relative knowledge and expertise, and more specifically, their knowledge of community and collections types. We’re thankful that David values his relationship with us, and puts his trust in our experience and responsiveness.

According to David, “This is the beginning of an excellent partnership.” And here at the Digital Transitions Division of Cultural Heritage, we absolutely agree.



Detail illuminated initial from a single leaf manuscript from “De Casibus Illustrium Vivorum” (Source: Lawrence J. Schoenberg Online Collection, University of Pennsylvania Libraries).

About the Division of Cultural Heritage

As the country’s leading integrator of digital imaging systems for collection-based materials, the Division of Cultural Heritage helps institutions develop comprehensive solutions and strategies that preserve and extend the reach of their collections. This specialized area of Digital Transitions is headed by Peter Siegel, who has been working with museums, libraries, archives, and cultural institutions for over 15 years.



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877-F/ORTLESS • WWW.DIGITALTRANSITIONS.COM • INFO@DIGITALTRANSITIONS.COM
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