

Workplace visits to the State Library of Victoria and DatacomIT

On 30 January 2019, the Digital Collections team of RMIT University Library, Victoria, made visits to the Digitisation Department of the State Library of Victoria and to RMIT's digitisation vendor, DatacomIT. The tour was planned and scheduled by Anna Clatworthy, Digital Collections Librarian, to meet specific learning outcomes and gain insights into new digital technologies in the sector. The tour was an interactive set, introducing the RMIT digital collections team to the fascinating advance capturing and digital technologies on a guided tour of SLV and the DatacomIT. Amongst the participants of this tour were: Anna Clatworthy; Amelia Rowe; Prodip Roy; and Pinipa Nawala Kankanamlage.

NINETY MINUTES AT THE STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

At the State Library of Victoria (SLV), we met Monika McIntyre, the Collection Digitisation Program Coordinator. She gave us a one and half hour tour introducing us to the SLV digital collections and services, a unique opportunity to look behind the scenes at the methods they use.

During the tour, the Collections and Access team demonstrated the equipment and technology they use on an everyday basis while highlighting the core activities and services they provide to the library patrons. SLV began digitising their collections in 1993, quite early in the digital age. Since then, they have digitised more than 770,000 library items, including photographs, maps, pamphlets, glass plate negatives, and rare artworks on paper.

The SLV staff then took us around the different areas of the special collections including their Imaging and Photography Studios. It was an exciting and informative tour where we came to know about digital transition history, from analogue video cassettes and flatbed scanners to today's megapixel cameras. They demonstrated how technology equipment and processes have changed over the past 20 years to totally transform their collection and catalogue. The

library's photographic work is now entirely digital. From tiny to the large scale, paper-based to 3D realia. The SLV team shared their insights into the specialised lighting and equipment that has enabled the team to digitise glass plate negatives and lantern slides. They also showed us scanners that have the scanning capability with large maps and charts and demonstrated their jobs and responsibilities in ensuring the quality of materials remain high and the metadata complete so the items are discoverable.

DATACOMIT SUPPORTING DIGITISATION SOLUTIONS

Later on the same day we visited [DatacomIT](#) located on Albert Road in Melbourne. We had an opportunity to meet the company within the imaging and digitisation industry in Australia. RMIT University have several digitisation projects with the company. The director of DatacomIT Richard Wilson demonstrated some of the technology and equipment they use to digitise different formats of old collections. This included lab equipment and other machinery, computer and robotic scanning systems. Richard started his guided tour demonstrating a scanning machine called Eclipse that is used for scanning microfilms of maps, plans, newspapers, and engineering drawings. Gradually he took us to various operation areas and showed us different tools, machines and features. During the tour, we were introduced to other specialist staff in different sections, and people who are involved in the business operations. DatacomIT has proven itself to be a reputable business partner offering clients the benefits of confidential and secure solutions.

At the end of the tour, the director discussed with us how the business started 30 years ago, and how the current operation has earned long-standing credibility within the imaging and digitisation industry and collaborating with many clients including, the National Library of Australia; the National Archives; the State Library of Victoria; the High Court of Australia; the Parliamentary Library of Victoria; the ACT Legislative Assembly; the Federal Reserve Bank; and many leading universities. The director answered our questions including the most challenging aspect of operating the business and advanced digital technologies in the industry.

We were very impressed with the day as we got to see some of the magnificent works at the SLV digital collections and had many learning opportunities. These tours were very supportive and allowed us to see how SLV and DatacomIT work and improved our skills and delivery capability of digitisation projects we will work on in the future. 📧

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