

Born Digital Photographs: Cataloging Samples

June 2004

Prints & Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20540-4730

Electronic photographs taken by digital cameras need physical description just like their paper, film, glass, metal, and cloth counterparts. Digital cameras began to take hold in the 1990s, and the resulting “born digital” photographs already dominate in news and staff photography work. Library and archival description techniques can handle this new kind of photography.

- Describe as ‘photographs’ not ‘computer files’ to highlight their pictorial nature.
- Add durable electronic addresses to finding aids to provide easy viewing. The address can point to a whole collection of digital photographs as well as individual photos.

Example: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ppbd.00078>

- Use the formal index heading ‘digital photographs.’
- Mention the type of file in the physical description.

Example: 23 photographs (digital) : JPEG, color

- Open the file’s header to check for descriptive information such as capture date, file type, photographer’s name, and even a caption title.

Born Digital Photo File Header Example

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Record version : 0002
Title : US NEWS ATTACKS-PENTAGON 21 KRT
Category : A
Special instruction : NC KD BL
Taking a picture day : 20010911
Photographer : CHUCK KENNEDY
Photographer's title : STF
Place of dispatch : WASHINGTON
Administrative divisions name : DC
CountryName : USA
Photograph number : KRT
Subtitle : KRTTERROR11 TERRORISM PLANE CRASH MILITARY STRUCTURE BUILDING
DAMAGE CRIME VIOLENCE
Credit : KRT
Original owner : KRT
Caption : KRT US NEWS STORY SLUGGED: ATTACKS-PENTAGON KRT PHOTO BY
CHUCK KENNEDY/KRT (September 11) WASHINGTON, D.C. --Emergency vehicles and helicopters
line the Pentagon after an airplane crashed into the building following similar attacks
on the World Trade Center Towers on Tuesday, September 11, 2001. (KRT) NC KD BL 2001
(Horiz) (gsb)
Caption manufacturer : GEORGE BRIDGES
Thumbnail Information
NewSubFileType : 1
ImageWidth : 512
ImageHeight : 341
BitsPerSample : 8,8,8
Compression : Uncompressed
PhotometricInterpretation : RGB
StripOffset : 9671692
SamplesPerPixel : 3
RowsPerStrip : 341
StripByteCounts : 523776
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Catalog Record for the Same Photograph

TITLE: Emergency vehicles and helicopters line the Pentagon after an airplane crashed into the building following similar attacks on the World Trade Center towers on Tuesday, September 11, 2001 / Photo by Chuck Kenndy, KRT.

CALL NUMBER: Unprocessed [item] [P&P]

REPRODUCTION NUMBER: LC-DIG-ppbd-00078 (digital file from original)
Publication may be restricted. For general information see "Copyright and Other Restrictions..." (http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/print/195_copr.html)

MEDIUM:

1 photograph : digital, TIFF file, color.
1 photograph (digital print) : inkjet, color.

CREATED/PUBLISHED: 2001 Sept. 11.

CREATOR: Kennedy, Chuck, photographer.

NOTES:

Title from item.
Digital camera photograph printed by inkjet at the Library of Congress, 2002.

SUBJECTS:

Pentagon (Va.)--Disasters--2000-2010.
September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001.
Ambulances--Virginia--Arlington--2000-2010.
Fire fighting--Virginia--Arlington--2000-2010.

FORMAT:

Digital photographs Color 2000-2010.
Inkjet prints Color 2000-2010.

REPOSITORY: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540
USA

DIGITAL ID: (original) ppbd 00078 <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ppbd.00078>

CARD #: 2002719384