

JPEG 2000 a great step forward for the archival community

By The National Archives

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The Digital Preservation Coalition has examined JPEG 2000 in a report published today, www.dpconline.org/graphics/reports/index.html#jpeg2000. The report concludes that JPEG 2000 represents a great stride forward for the archival community. The format now allows for greater compression rates and a recompression rate that is visually lossless.

The findings come as the Digital Preservation Coalition launch its latest 'Technology Watch Report' written by Dr. Robert Buckley, a research fellow with Zerox 'JPEG 2000 – a practical digital preservation standard?'. The report looks in-depth at the new format and the challenges it has to cope with. JPEG 2000 is widely used to collect and distribute a variety of images from geospatial, medical imaging, digital cinema, and image repositories to networked images. Interest in JPEG 2000 is now growing in the archival and library sectors, as institutions look for more efficient formats to store the results of major digitisation programmes.

The report is aimed at organisations involved in the management and storage of digital information. The in-depth report will help archives, libraries and other institutions make informed decisions about JPEG 2000 format and their future storage needs.

JPEG 2000 can reduce storage requirements by an order of magnitude compared to an uncompressed TIFF file. Dr. Buckley, says, "This new format has come at a time of heightened awareness about access to digital documents. Any format that can assist archives and libraries to do this is welcome."

The format will also enable users to open as much of the file as they need at that time. This means a viewer, for example, could open a gigapixel image almost instantly. This is achieved by retrieving a decompressed low-resolution display sized image from the JPEG 2000 codestream. Coupled with this, the users ability to zoom, pan and rotate an image has been enhanced.

Adrian Brown, head of digital preservation, The National Archives said: "This is a very timely addition to the DPC's Technology Watch Report series as many organisations are themselves reviewing the JPEG2000 format. This concise, comprehensive and clear guide will be of interest to practitioners across the digital preservation community."

The report concludes that JPEG 2000 offers much more flexibility and features than JPEG, but at the cost of greater complexity. It is however a great stride forward, and of major significance for the information management community.

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Notes for editors:

The National Archives, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk, is a government department; and also an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The National Archives brings together the Public Record Office, Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Office of Public Sector Information and Her Majesty's Stationery Office. See also www.opsi.gov.uk

The National Archives is at the heart of information policy – setting standards and supporting innovation in information and records management across the UK, and providing a practical framework of best practice for opening up and encouraging the re-use of public sector information. This work helps inform today's decisions and ensure that they become tomorrow's permanent record.

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About The Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC)

The Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) is a cross sectoral member organisation established in 2001 to foster joint action to address the urgent challenges of securing the preservation of digital resources in the UK and to work with others internationally

For further information, see www.dpconline.org or contact Frances Boyle, fb@dpconline.org

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