DIGITAL SILVER IMAGING

DSI Founder, Eric Luden, with Instant Image Archive System

Image Archive Services from Digital Silver Imaging

The value of your archive of film, prints, and related documents depends directly on the quality, flexibility and accessibility of that archive. Value can be measured in a variety of ways, financial, informational, historical, and emotional. You don't need to be a famous photographer or museum to justify the digitization of your analog assets. Your archive just needs to show value, and often that value is a personal one.

Digital is today's preferred method for archiving images, but the professional scanning equipment used by most labs and individuals is slow, cumbersome, and expensive. Digital Silver Imaging's Instant Image Archive Service™ and On-Site Image Archive Service™ offer image makers and institutions a swift, seamless, and affordable means of capturing and preserving valuable imagery.

Introducing the Instant Image Archive Service

DSI's Instant Image Archive Service digitally captures your film, print, or artwork at a uniform 150 megapixels, in a fraction of a second. We can safely prepare and quickly make digital files of your work: transparencies/slides, negatives, prints and flat art can all be reproduced with the highest standards of accuracy.

At the heart of the Instant Image Archive Service is a Phase One camera mounted with a specialized flat-field lens that can capture either film or reflective media. The camera and lens are mounted to a custom-made system that allows for re-productions up to 20″×24″. The object being reproduced is illuminated by an LED lighting system that has both a Color Rendering Index (CRI) and a Color Quality Index (CQI) of 98 out of 100 points.[1]

The key to quality is end-to-end image workflow management. The Phase One camera sensor, image processing pipeline, and color profiles are all managed by the Cultural Heritage Phase One software, leaving no uncertainty as to what another manufacturer has done with their sensors or software at any step of the process. Our Instant Image Archive Service is an integrated system of components that all work together perfectly.

Elliott Erwitt negative strip in magnetic film holder.

Offering the Convenience of On-site Archiving Service

DSI's On-Site Image Archive Service brings our equipment and technician to your studio, institution, or home. Our custom-built van is equipped to digitally capture your archive. We can simply pull into your driveway and start working. Alternatively, we can easily move the equipment from the van into your facility. There's no need to put your archive at risk by moving it from its secure location. We can also arrange for additional support to help process and label images. Our On-site Image Archive Service reduces a process that might ordinarily take months or years to days, saving time and significant cost.

Consistently Sharp Edge-to-Edge

The quality of the digitized of your film or print is only as good as the optics used. Unlike consumer lenses, and even many macro lenses, flat-field lenses are designed to render edge-to-edge sharpness. Using a DSLR with a macro lens does not guarantee the best quality, and sensor size does not mean you are going to make a high-quality duplicate of your film or print. Our Instant Image Archive Service utilizes a laser alignment system for precision micrometric focusing. In addition, the supporting structure of our system is precision-machined for maximum rigidity and movement-free

Flat-field lenses used on the Phase One camera for edge-to-edge sharpness.

capture. The Phase One camera is tethered to a calibrated professional monitor, so all images can be reviewed at 100% before the capture is made. Our hardware and software solution allows for fine adjustments in real time. Instant image review is an advantage that cannot be accomplished with a Hasselblad X5 scanner, drum scanner, or most DSLRs setups.

Instant Image Capture, Regardless of Resolution

Digitizing was once relegated to scanners that slowly made pass after pass to capture an image. That traditional scanning method takes time, and the higher the resolution, the longer the wait. Instant image capture takes 1/60 of a second, regardless of resolution. The Instant Image Archive Service greatly accelerates the archiving process by making it possible to capture hundreds of images in a day, with high resolution and quality. And with our On-site Image Archive Service, clients can evaluate the captures as our skilled technicians work.

DSI's Scott Nidermaier reviews image captures with Elliott Erwitt

The Advantages of Skilled Technicians and Custom Profiles

A significant obstacle in the digitization process of color materials, such as C-41 negatives, is the negative-to-positive conversion. The conversion process takes knowledge, a practiced hand, and a good arsenal of custom- built profiles. Our technicians are experts with the proprietary software used for the conversion process. Using the Cultural Heritage version of Phase One software, we can quickly convert the captured RAW files to positive, or custom-craft a conversion profile specifically for our White Glove clients. We bring knowledge and experience to creating superior digital captures of such difficult materials as Kodachrome and Polaroid Type 55 negatives, to name only a few. Our philosophy is that every client's needs are different and we craft a solution to meet those needs.

Flexible File Formats and Archive Storage Solutions

Whereas some processes, like drum scanning, deliver only a single file format, our Instant Image Archive Service can deliver multiple formats at multiple resolutions. For example, if a client requests full-size RAW files and a low-resolution JPEG of each capture, that can be easily accomplished.

Digital Silver Imaging is partnering with Drawbridge Digital to provide secure, searchable, and flexible hardware and cloud storage. Once your digital assets have been created, Drawbridge can work with you to determine your exact needs and provide a powerful and affordable storage solution.

Processing a b&w negative with Capture One software

Meeting FADGI Standards

Our method of digitization is the only method that meets the updated FADGI (Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative) guidelines for digital capture. Our Instant Image Archive Service meets the highest "four star" image designation because of resolution, color accuracy, 16 bit capture, minimal contact with original, lighting standards, and other FADGI guidelines.[2]

The Pricing Advantage

Cost is always a consideration. Our Instant Image Archive Service is the best value available. The speed, flexibility, and accuracy of our dedicated hardware and software solution make it possible to deliver the highest quality scans at a price that is far lower than the price of comparable scans from a lab offering Flextight X5 scans or drum scans.

When archiving 500+ pieces of film, we can come in lower than $20 per capture, depending on the location and specifics of the archive.[3] With our On-site Image Archive Service, we customize a solution and a price, taking into consideration workflow, labeling, and even metadata.

The table below[4] compares our service with the most popular current options for film digitization.

	Instant Image Capture™	Drum Scan	Hasselblad X5 Imacon	DSLR Film Digitization System	Epson Flatbed Scanner V850
Max File Size	150 mega pixels Converted Tiff 866 mb+	Depends on film size and res. up to 1000 mb+	RGB TIFF 4x5 Approx. 424 mb	Depends on camera used	4800 X 6400 dpi optical RGB 184 mb
Quality	Best Available (See comparison)	Excellent	Very Good	Good but depends on equipment and operator	Good but resolution is low for smaller film formats
Speed of Capture	1/60 of a second all formats and sizes	1 Hour +	35mm - 5-7 min hi res 4x5 - 8-10 min hi res	1/60 of a second up to 4x5	35mm Highest res, Epson Scan + ICE = 3:21 minutes
Negatives - Transparencies	Yes Up to 20x24	Yes Large depends on scanner	Yes Up to 4x5	Yes Up to 4x5	Yes Up to 12x18
Prints	Yes Prints up to 20x24	-	Yes Prints up to 4x5	-	Yes
Software	Proprietary / Supported	Proprietary / Supported	Legacy / Not Supported	-	Supported
Film - 4 Edge Inclusion (frame and border)	Yes - Up to 8x10 and most panoramic formats	Yes	-	Yes up to 4x5	Not with holders
Potential to Damage Asset	Very Low Touchless holders	High - Immersion in oil, wipe-down of film	Low	Low	Low
FADGI 4 Compliant	Yes	-	-	-	-
Cost per 35mm capture	Depends on quantity $15 to $50	400 - 600 mb file Range $74 -$245	Service Bureau 200+ mb Range $35 -$95	-	-
Cost per 4x5 capture	$15 to $50 Depends on quantity	700 - 800 mb file Range $99 - $470	-	-	-
Color	RAW / 16 bit	16 bit TIFF	RAW / 16 bit	RAW / 14 bit	16 / bit TIFF

DSLR Film Digitization systems refers to those hardware devices that utilize a DSLR camera to digitize film. Prices determined by high and low price from 3 reputable professional labs across the country. 3/25/21
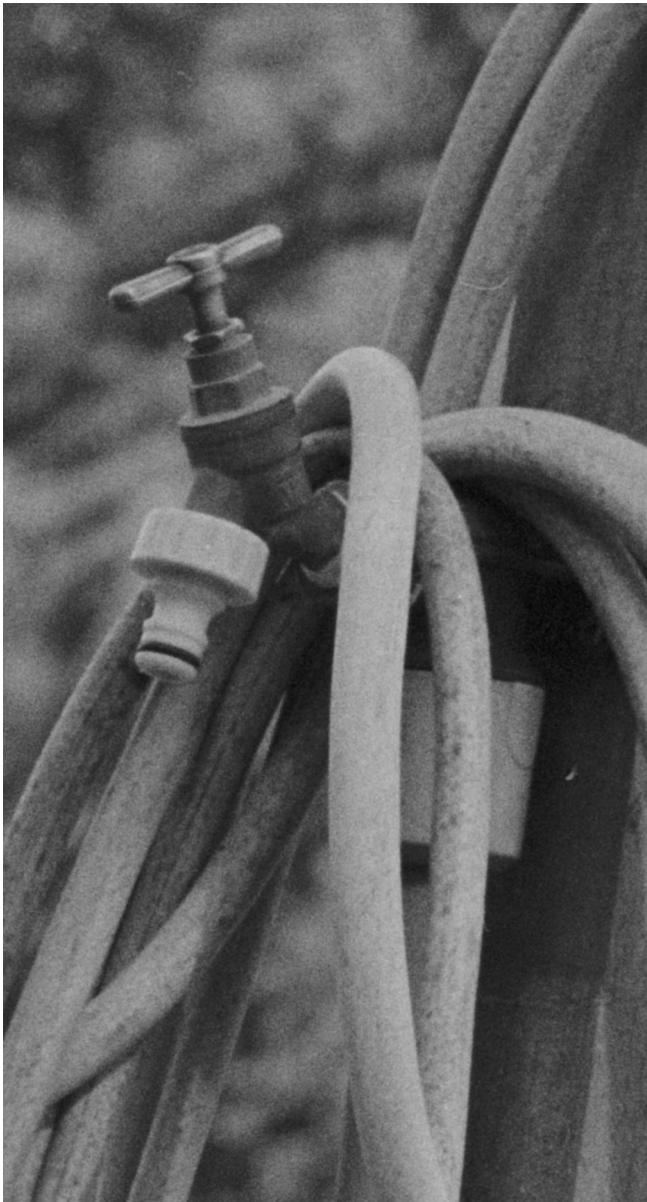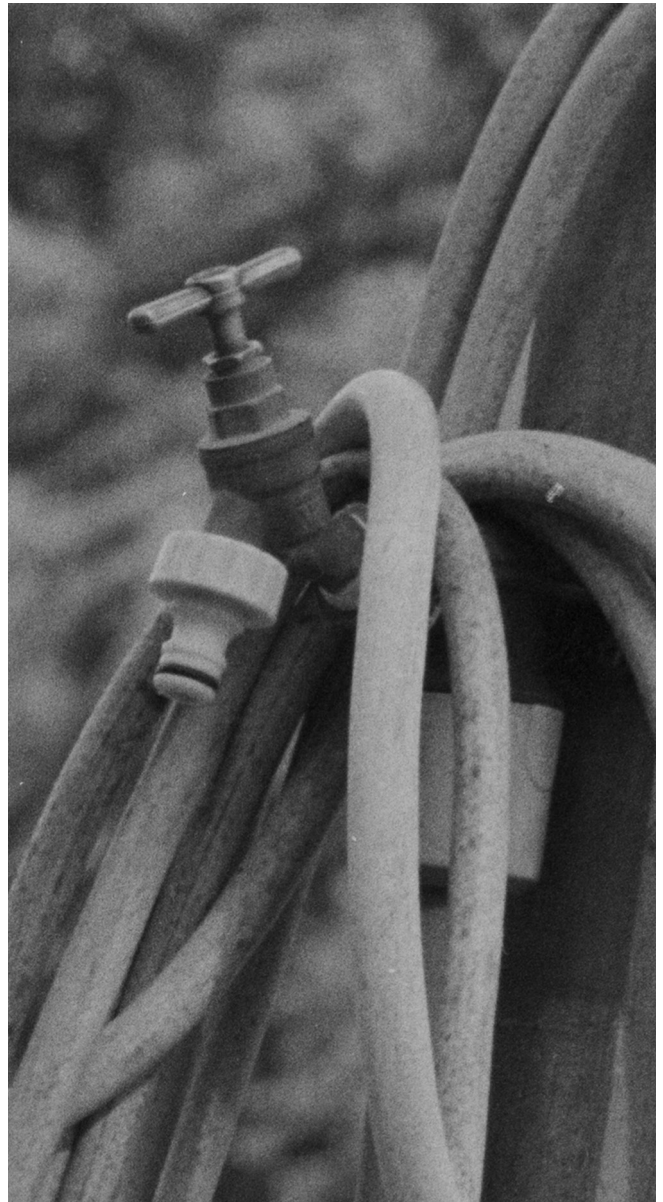
Drum Scan - Flat Scan
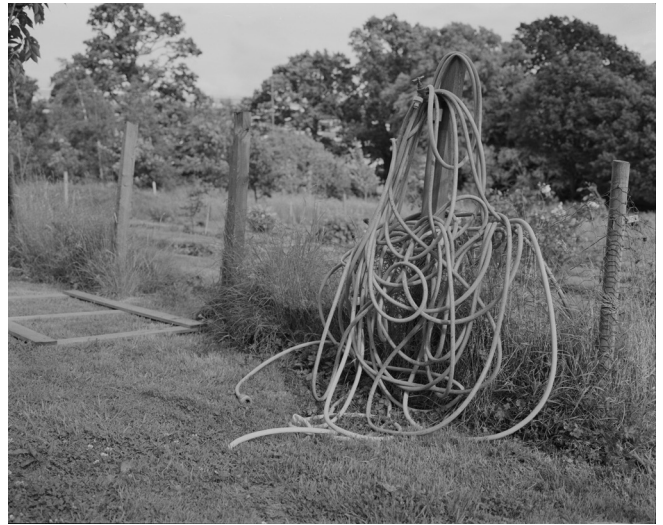
Instant Image Capture - Flat Capture

Drum Scan - Detail 100%, 300 DPI

Instant Image Capture - Detail 100%, 300 DPI

Film files in Erwitt's studio

Customer Profile: Elliott Erwitt

Elliott Erwitt's many photographs have become part of the world's visual vernacular. His images for Look, Life, and Magnum capture a world of humor, beauty, and irony. His prolific output has filled over 20 published books, with a new book just released in 2021. Erwitt's prints can be found in virtually every major museum collection in the US and abroad.

On a chilly Sunday afternoon, Digital Silver Imaging's Scott Nidermaier and Eric Luden got to work digitizing the Erwitt archive. Over the course of the next several days, the pair set up in Erwitt's studio and rapidly captured some 3,400 negatives and transparencies. Such an undertaking could have taken months or even years using the traditional approach, but the On-site Image Archive Service made it possible to complete the job in under three weeks. Unlike drum scanning, this process minimizes contact between film and machine, dramatically reducing the risk of scratching or damage. This factor was very attractive to Erwitt, since much of his film is older and delicate.

Much of the credit for the efficient digitization goes to Erwitt's studio manager, Mio Nakamura, who organized the film by box, contact sheet, and negative—with a corresponding spreadsheet—so there was no confusion about which images to capture. With the digitization of Elliott's prized images now completed, his entire film archive will be housed at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin. It's a comfort to know that Elliott's film will be preserved in perpetuity.

Looking back on Elliott's project, Nidermaier reflected, "It was fascinating to see a sheet of great negatives and wonder why Elliott picked one negative over another. Elliot Erwitt lived with a camera in his hand, and many of the images we digitized were family photos that obviously had personal significance. Sure, the Marilyn Monroe and celebrity images are amazing, but there are so many great images that have never been seen before. It makes you realize that archiving is not just about a financial legacy; it's a personal legacy. It tells you so much about the life of the artist."

The Digital Silver Imaging team will shortly be returning to Elliot Erwitt's studio. Pleased with the success of the initial service, Erwitt has decided to digitally capture many of his darkroom prints. Digital Silver Imaging is grateful to have been a part of the preservation of this important archive.

Summary

Although some photographers are still using film, digital is today's preferred medium for archiving images. Your film and prints represent a legacy that can have monetary, historical, and personal value. Preserving that legacy becomes more urgent with the passage of time. Inaction only increases the chance that the archive will be lost. DSI's mission is to provide an archiving service that can preserve the valuable imagery captured on decades of film and prints. We believe that our Instant Image Archive Service and On-Site Image Archive Service will give image makers and institutions an affordable and high-quality means of capturing that legacy.

Contact

For more information, a price quote, or to start your Instant image archive service please contact us.

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Footnotes

1. Color accuracy from manufacturer of light source, Cultural Heritage Systems.
2. For FADGI guidelines, see http://www.digitizationguidelines.gov/guidelines/digitize-technical.html System claims of compliance made by Cultural Heritage Systems.
3. Pricing as of 4/10/2021. Prices are subject to change and depend on the specifics of the service needed. Pricing can be found on Digital Silver Imaging's website, digitalsilverimaging.com.
4. Data in table was compiled from 3/28/21-3/30/21 and drawn from manufacturers websites, online reviews, and sources deemed credible by Digital Silver Imaging. Pricing information was sampled from reputable labs known by Digital Silver Imaging, in Boston, New York, Los Angeles, and Denver.

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