Opening the Pandora's Box of Digitized Collections

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The continued trend towards the digitization of print collections poses very real challenges. Although many Institutions – universities, commercial or government have been and are adopting this process as a means to overcome space and access barriers, Internet-based software and digital goods are not flawless and is vulnerable to various kinds of failures. It also poses several types of problems not only for those responsible for its development but also for those who make use of digitized collections. This paper, to be presented as a poster session, presents several difficulties that one will encounter in the process of digitizing documents and shifting from the use of traditional print materials to digitized text collections. The difficulties presented are depictions from recent papers and research commending the practice and use of digitized collections, describing its process and importance and reporting real success cases. In a sense, this paper rows against the mainstream of thought today amongst information professionals and knowledge managers. Some of the difficulties or issues presented are: capacity of the web; issues related to reliability and quality of web based information; software decay; technology challenges; intellectual property; cost/effectiveness; Interface design; availability and continued access; publishers' commitment; no faculty consensus; library's responsibilities to support long term usage; preservation and long-term access; license agreements; content differences; mutability; publishers' readiness; printing capability; authors' preferences, amongst others. As one decides to digitize its collection, it's imperative that applicability and cost/effectiveness be taken in consideration. The full potential of digital archiving can be exploited only if selective access to content is made possible. There are challenges and setbacks along the way, but the trend is clear and inexorable. At the same time, access to information is expanding rapidly. Every year, humanity produces more data, and we must decide how that data will be found, shared, remembered and interpreted. As we become better able to cope with huge quantities of information, scientific and otherwise, our appetites for organizing and mining it will increase. Do we really want to go the "digitized way"?