



FIZnews

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Legal Helpdesk of NFDI4Culture publishes guide on legally compliant digitization of historical sources

How can historical accession books and inventories be digitized and made available online in a legally secure manner? This question is increasingly occupying museums, libraries and researchers in provenance research - especially when acquisition data, ownership details or sensitive historical contexts collide with data protection, personal rights or copyright. As part of the NFDI4Culture consortium, the Legal Helpdesk and Heidelberg University Library are contributing their expertise to this complex legal area in a targeted manner.

A pioneering component of this is the new practice-oriented guide on the risk assessment of entries in access books and inventories, developed by Oliver Vettermann and Grischka Petri. Together they cover the entire spectrum of legal challenges in data protection and privacy law (Oliver Vettermann) and copyright law (Grischka Petri). The publication is intended to provide cultural heritage institutions with the necessary tools to deal confidently with legal pitfalls in the digitization of provenance sources. Important here are not only GDPR compliance, but also copyright protection periods, personal rights and specific challenges when dealing with historically compromised materials from the Nazi era.

The guide is based on the practical experience of the cooperation partners of the Heidelberg Accession Index (HAI) - a digital portal with historical acquisition books that is already successfully provided by the Heidelberg University Library. This practical approach makes the publication particularly valuable.

Particularly well thought-out: the publication comes in a double pack. A clear decision tree enables a quick initial legal assessment and risk evaluation. The detailed legal report, on the other hand, systematically examines all major legal issues from data protection for acquisition data to copyright protection periods.

With this guide, NFDI4Culture is sending out an important signal: Digital cultural transfer not only needs technical solutions, but also legal security. Provenance research thus receives a practical tool for performing digital work responsibly.

Information on and link to the publications:

Entscheidungsbaum

Oliver Vettermann / Grischka Petri: Handreichung zur Risikobewertung bei der Open-Access-Veröffentlichung digitalisierter Zugangsbücher und Bestandsverzeichnisse (Entscheidungsbaum), Heidelberg: arthistoricum.net, 2025
DOI: [10.11588/artdok.00009725](https://doi.org/10.11588/artdok.00009725)

Gutachten

Oliver Vettermann / Grischka Petri: Handreichung zur Risikobewertung bei der Open-Access-Veröffentlichung digitalisierter Zugangsbücher und Bestandsverzeichnisse (Gutachten), Heidelberg: arthistoricum.net, 2025
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