

Handling original documents increases the likelihood of damage and rate of deterioration. Making copies of your paper documents and photographs will limit the need to handle originals. An archival copy can preserve an item that is deteriorating or fading due to the inherent nature of its materials. Copies can be easily circulated to family and friends in paper or electronic form. Store the copies and the originals separately from each other.

Modern electrostatic photocopiers (the dry, Xerox type) produce copies with a reasonable lifetime, particularly if you use archival quality paper. Digital scanning should be used where high image quality is desired or when multiple digital or hard copies are required.

## General guidelines

- Only copy once. Use the 'master copy' for multiple copying.
- Copy on a machine with a fixed glass copy plate, known as a platen.
- Ensure the copier platen is clean, and dry the platen if cleaning is required.
- Fasteners should be removed if possible before copying to avoid damage as pages are repeatedly folded back. The file should be assembled in the same order afterwards.
- Loose records should not be run through automatic feed copiers.
- If an item is brittle or torn, place it in a clear polyester sleeve before copying.
- Creases or folds may be carefully smoothed out before copying.

## Bound items

- Never force a book down on a photocopier platen. Fragile book bindings and tight spines can break if forced open; these might need to be captured by a digital camera instead.

## More information

For more information on creating copies please see the following resources:

'Just digitise it': <https://www.prov.vic.gov.au/community/managing-your-collection/just-digitise-it>  
Digital Access to Collections: <http://www.digitalcollections.org.au>

## Historic photographs

- Consider using a scanner when copying a historic photograph since it is safer. High quality scanning can produce faithful copies of historic photographs of a variety of formats, including cased photographs, glass plate negatives and slides.

## Maps and large sheet materials

- If an item is larger than the platen of a particular photocopier, it should not be copied on that machine.
- Do not fold items so they 'fit'.
- Take to plan - copying business where large custom machines can be used for a fee.
- Rolled items need to be opened carefully and left under light weight to flatten before handling and copying or scanning.