



# Historical images: Measures

Since 2010, swisstopo has been preserving the unique photographic heritage within its own collection, known as the image collection, on the basis of the Federal Act on Geoinformation and in accordance with the principle of the "long-term availability of geodata".

The care of the collection includes cataloguing and indexing the photographs and photographic media, conservation measures for their long-term preservation and providing the acquired information for the full publication and communication of the collection.

## Cataloguing and digitisation

An image without the associated meta-information is of limited value in terms of use. Together with digitisation, the cataloguing and indexing of the collection ensure its availability and usability.

Cataloguing includes the collection of metadata and its management. Cataloguing work includes the completion of the collection, the organisation and indexing of the collection items and their contextualisation, the recording of relevant metadata in digital containers as well as the maintenance of the data over time.

The digitisation work on the photographic objects is being carried out in-house: indexed, cleaned and repackaged objects are being sent for digitisation. The digital long-term archiving of the image data is ensured by the IT department of the Office together with the Federal Office of Information Technology, Systems and Telecommunication.

## Preservation

The collection is to be preserved in its originality in the long term to allow future generations to access the original information and its potential, new interpretation.

However, all analogue photographs are subject to a continuous process of decay from the moment they are made. The nature and rate of the age-related processes of alteration are determined by the composition of the photographic materials, their processing and the conditions under which they are stored.

In addition to object care, i.e. "active" conservation, which includes the cleaning and transfer of all photographic elements into appropriate storage material, measures are taken in the field of "preventive" conservation. In preventive conservation, damage factors are to be minimised and the deterioration of the objects avoided as far as possible through a controlled environment.

The focus is on the long-term preservation of the analogue media collection in its entirety. Preservation measures aimed at stabilising the condition of the entire collection are prioritised over the restoration of individual objects.

## Availability

The digitised images and resulting products are accessible online. As an important part of the landscape memory, the image collection can be consulted by the public at any time.

The digitally available contents of the image collection are currently made available via three internet portals: the [federal geodata viewer](#), the [national research portal of Memoriav](#), the centre of competence for the Swiss audio-visual heritage and a [crowdsourcing platform of HEIG-VD](#) to visualise and locate historical images in a virtual globe in 3D. In the future, all image data will not only be displayed easily and free of charge, but can also be downloaded by users.