• Fair use claims will be further enhanced when libraries provide copyright owners a simple tool for registering objections to use of digital surrogates, such as an e-mail address associated with a full-time employee.

FOUR: CREATING DIGITAL COLLECTIONS OF ARCHIVAL AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS MATERIALS

DESCRIPTION:
Many libraries hold special collections and archives of rare or unusual text and nontext materials (published and unpublished) that do not circulate on the same terms as the general collection. The copyright status of materials in these collections is often unclear. Despite the investments that have been made in acquiring and preserving such collections, they frequently are of limited general utility because they typically can be consulted only on-site, and in some cases using only limited analog research aids. The research value of these collections typically resides not only in the individual items they contain (although such items are often unique in themselves), but also in the unique assemblage or aggregation they represent. Special collections can have a shared provenance or be organized around a key topic, era, or theme. Libraries and their patrons would benefit significantly from digitization and off-site availability of these valuable collections. While institutions must abide by any donor restrictions applicable to their donated collections, and they will inevitably consider practical and political concerns such as maintaining good relations with donor communities, librarians will benefit significantly from knowing their rights under fair use.

Presenting these unique collections as a digital aggregate, especially with commentary, criticism, and other curation, can be highly transformative. Works held in these collections and archives will serve a host of transformative scholarly and educational purposes relative to their typically narrower original purposes. Materials in special collections typically include significant amounts of primary sources and artifacts (correspondence, institutional records, annotated volumes, ephemeral popular entertainment) whose value as historical objects for scholarly research is significantly different from their original purpose. The new value created by aggregating related documents in a single, well-curated collection is also significant. In addition to access for scholarly purposes, digitization facilitates novel
transformational uses of the collection as a whole—see principle seven below regarding
digitization for search and other nonconsumptive uses.

**PRINCIPLE:**
It is fair use to create digital versions of a library’s special collections and archives and
to make these versions electronically accessible in appropriate contexts.

**LIMITATIONS:**
- Providing access to published works that are available in unused copies on the
  commercial market at reasonable prices should be undertaken only with careful
  consideration, if at all. To the extent that the copy of such a work in a particular
  collection is unique (e.g., contains marginalia or other unique markings or
  characteristics), access to unique aspects of the copy will be supportable under
  fair use. The presence of non-unique copies in a special collection can be
  indicated by descriptive entries without implicating copyright.
- Where digitized special collections are posted online, reasonable steps should be
  taken to limit access to material likely to contain damaging or sensitive private
  information.
- Full attribution, in a form satisfactory to scholars in the field, should be
  provided for all special collection items made available online, to the extent it is
  reasonably possible to do so.

**ENHANCEMENTS:**
- The fair use case will be even stronger where items to be digitized consist largely
  of works, such as personal photographs, correspondence, or ephemera, whose
  owners are not exploiting the material commercially and likely could not be
  located to seek permission for new uses.
- Libraries should consider taking technological steps, reasonable in light of
  both the nature of the material and of institutional capabilities, to prevent
  downloading of digital files by users, or else to limit the quality of files to what is
  appropriate to the use.
- Libraries should also provide copyright owners with a simple tool for registering
  objections to online use, and respond to such objections promptly.