

## Breathing New Life into Static Materials

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All libraries with a history have large quantities of books/materials that are rarely used. More and more of them are starting to be stored in remote repositories and gradually going into oblivion. We call these collections “static materials” because of their extremely low usage rate. In this talk we suggest a method which, through digitization, gives them a new life. Our approach starts with identifying an objective, then systematically extracts and digitizes related objects from the static materials. The outcome could produce a collection that is surprisingly unique, significant, and useful.

We demonstrate our idea by describing a digital library of old photographs of Taiwan, extracted almost exclusively from existing pre-1945 Japanese books in the NTU Library. This collection of photos, numbered at over 40,000, covers a wide spectrum of topics, including culture, society, landscape, commerce, industry, education, and just about every walk of life of that era. It is, in fact, the most (and perhaps the only) comprehensive collection of pre-1945 photographs of Taiwan, and fills an important void in Taiwanese history.