How reproductive is a reproduction?
Digital transmission of text-based documents

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Heritage institutions today increasingly rely on digital formats for access, use and re-use of their collections. Books and other text-based documents, previously accessed on location in libraries are now transferred into digital format and managed, distributed, and engaged as binary encoded representations.

The thesis addresses the relation between the source document and its reproduction, as conditioned by the digitisation process. This process can be described as based on two sequences of conversion; from analogue to digital format during the procedure of capture, and back to analogue as the digital resource is represented. In a study of the digitisation process it might therefore be tempting to place a focus on the technical aspects. However, the thesis demonstrates that underpinning the digitisation process we find assumptions and ideals concerning the actual defining features of documents and also of their capacity to be informative. An analysis of the digitisation process, has consequently to consider both the technical parameters in place during the conversion as well as the theoretical assumptions that have guided its design and operation.

Based on two empirical studies – an analysis of the components in the digitisation process and an interview study with researchers who rely on digital resources – this thesis seeks to outline a conceptual framework that structures the relation between the source document and its reproduction, as conditioned by the digitisation process. Boundary object theory provides a theoretical underpinning and is supported by two concepts that are developed in the critical analysis of document and information theory: modes of representation (referring to the ways in which the source document is represented as a digital resource) and informative configuration (referring to the ways in which the users engage with the digital resource, given a specific interest).

The thesis contributes to the theoretical development within the fields in Library & Information Science that are concerned with document and information theory, but also in areas such as knowledge organisation and the application of digital technology within the heritage sector at large. The thesis also indicates some of the possibilities and limitations of boundary object theory as applied to the study of documents in digitisation processes.

*Keywords:* Boundary objects; Cultural heritage; Digital humanities; Digital transmission; Digitisation; Document studies; Libraries; Materiality; Media theory