Indiana Historical Society:  
[link](http://www.indianahistory.org/our-collections#.VifrHtKrRQI)  
partnered with Newspaper Archive  
also provides free on-site access to AncestryLibrary, Heritage Quest Online, American Civil War Database, and others.

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**Administrative Aspects**

The purpose of the digital library is to provide online access in conjunction with the physical collection for the Indiana Historical Society. The ‘Reference’ page of the website indicates that many of the images have not been digitized yet, the online catalog offers the opportunity for users to look through historical images, documents, artifacts, etc. without access to the physical collection/library. While the mission of the digital library is not explicitly stated they do have a ‘Statement of Purpose’ in their collection policy.

They state that the Indiana Historical Society is an educational institution that researches and preserves collection. The collections are held for the interest of the public. The ‘Statement of Purpose’ does cover the audience of the library a bit, and that is the public. Specifically the information, resources, and collections available through the digital library would be appealing to the local community looking for ancestry information, local historical trends, and those that are interested in quality historical documents as a hobby. The Indiana Historical Society’s digital library is owned by the Indiana Historical Society, which describes them as a ‘private, nonprofit organization’. The IHS partners with museums around the Indianapolis area along with other
historical groups and educational organizations. The IHS is partnered with Newspaper Archive for digitization of historical Indiana newspapers. The World Newspaper Archive is a large collaborative effort to preserve and digitize historical newspapers (Simon 2009). The project does not have details of the funding, but the Indiana Historical Society as previously mentioned is a private non-profit organization and has been around since 1830. The Indiana Historical Society is a well established organization in Indianapolis with name recognition and an intriguing building that houses their on-site library in central downtown Indianapolis.

Collection Content

A formal collection development policy is posted on the website. The collection development policy states that there is an emphasis on collecting material on ante-bellum Indiana but they also collect items from a list of subject areas. These subject areas are Agriculture, Architecture, Business, The American Civil War, Communities, Education, Ethnically and Racially Identified Groups, Families, Government, Journalism, Medicine, Military Affairs, Notable Hoosiers, Old Northwest Territory, Organized Labor, Politics, The Professions, Religion, Social Services, Transportation, and Women. This collection of subjects does not appear to be completely apart of LC Subject headings and falls under a fairly standard local and self-created cataloging subjects (El-Sherbin 2011). The collection allows printed or published material such as newspapers and pamphlets. They also allow Manuscripts and archival material, artifacts, visual material, and some digitally born material. They also have a list of formats and subject matter that they normally would not collect but would take in certain special cases.

The digital collections do not contain any link to subscription services. The digital collections
have been curated and collected from the Indiana Historical Society. There are subscription services available at the on-site library such as AncestryLibrary. The Indiana Historical Society’s collections are supplemented by the Midwest Railroad Research Center whose collection policy and specification of the agreements is laid out in the collection policy.

**Information Organization**

The Indiana Historical Society website offers access to the online digital collections as well as an online search of their on-site collection through the worldcat.

The digital image collections are categorized into collections and can be viewed through the collection or individual items can be searched through via the search bar and advanced search options. A ‘browse’ option allows users to scroll through pages of all of the items from all of the digital image collections in the digital library. The digital image collections are explained on the website as being created during the 1990s and are often incomplete records. The description appears to be informal and as mentioned, incomplete.
The digital library is sorted by collections and by subject. A specific metadata standard does not appear to be in place, though many of the metadata elements on each item is similar or the same as some standardizations. Standard metadata elements that are used are title, subject, type, and copyright information. Metadata used that is not associated with a metadata standard is ‘use statement’, ‘owning institution’, and ‘format of original. There does seem to be controlled vocabulary used for the ‘subject’ metadata and all metadata entries are fairly uniform in their
Collection Storage and Preservation

The collection mainly contains digitized objects, but per the collection development policy some digitally born objects are eligible to be part of the collection. The collection policy does not discuss preservation details for digitally born objects. For digitized objects the Indiana Historical Society has a webpage discussing the importance of conserving the condition of the artifacts and does this through their conservation department.
Metadata for each item does give the format of the original and the format of the item in the digital library. Current formats of digital items include JPEG and JP2000. Newspapers are currently being digitized from microfilm from a partnership with Newspaper Archive. These are available for viewing online at the on-site library or by visiting newspaperarchive.com.
Collection Access

Contentdm houses the digital image collections for the Indiana Historical Society. The entire library catalog can be searched through the worldcat. Features in the digital image collection for searching includes the ability to search by collection or search bar, a pop-up preview of the metadata for each item, along with many filter options. A study on Contentdm shows results indicating that Contentdm, while it was adequate in providing all information and housing a collection, is ‘confusing’ for end users, even those with technology experience (Dickson 2008). I felt the same way when looking through the digital collection. While everything was accessible, I felt like I was missing part of the collection, and the aesthetics are dated. Items are presented in a thumbnail view along with a title. Advanced search with Boolean operators are available for user use. Records are displayed in a very standard format with the title of the item at the top of the page with the image below and metadata listed at the bottom. Each item allows for zooming into sections of the item and have high resolution images. The metadata offers different terms that are clickable to open a new search through the collection using that term. Below the metadata user submitted metadata tags are listed and then comments. Copyright information is listed on each item in the metadata section. While there are user-participation tools such as a rating system, metadata tags, and a comments section they do not appear to be widely used. This addition of web 2.0 interactive metadata is progressive and nice to see but the lack of linking the metadata to external sites might contribute to the lack of use (Alamu, Stevens, et al 2014) . There is no statement regarding access for those with special needs.

Technical and Service Aspects

The digital collections are open access and open to the public. Some options are only available, online through the on-site location. The digital collection does appear to work properly. There is great assistance for users. The reference desk can be reached during business hours via phone, fax, email, or written letter. A research question can also be submitted via a form from the Indiana Historical Society’s website. There is a list of resources and contact information of users dependant on their needs. Despite the services provided there does not appear to widely used based on the lack of metadata tags, user ratings, and other lack of user submitted aspects of services. This is a common problem as is discussed in a study monitoring graduate students
usage of digital library services (Bagudu, Sadiq 2013).

There are consultations available for those considering donating to the library. They also offer local history services to users to help organize their historical collection. On the website author guides and a book and publication list are available with a description of what each list can offer. The digital collection offers saving options to save the record for the user or print and download options. These options are all above the image on the page and are easy to see and use. The copyright notice is located at the bottom of the metadata elements of each item.
References


