ITU Library & Archives Mission

To acquire, preserve and provide access to accurate, trusted, and essential information and research materials on
(i) telecommunications and related topics
(ii) the history of ITU from 1865 to the present day
in all formats and media
Key roles

• Knowledge provider - The Library & Archives provide a solid foundation for in-depth and comprehensive research in all areas of the ITU’s work through its rich and up-to-date collections, archival fonds, and training programme

• Memory keeper - The Library & Archives ensure that the institutional memory of the organization remains accessible to future generations
Functions

• Library (paper and digital): providing documentation and information to ITU staff, delegates and researchers on ICTs

• Archives & Records management: giving access to ITU’s record of work; safe-keeping of institutional history

• History & Digitization: promoting ITU’s history by digitizing key documents and creating a web portal
User Communities

• ITU staff
• ITU members
• General public
• Responds to world-wide information requests via e-mail, the Internet as well as telephone, fax, and walk-in users
Library & Archives staff

- Library
  - 1 professional
  - 1 assistant

- Archives
  - 1 professional
  - 1 assistant

- Digitization
  - 1 professional
  - 2 assistants
  - 1 contract staff (database, web, SharePoint developer)
Archives collections

1865-present

- Conference and meeting documents
- Administrative documents
- Historic correspondence (1869-1947) and other operational and administrative records (1950-present)
- ITU publications
- Photographs
- Maps
  world and regional maps of telecommunication networks, ca. 1875-1930
Library collections

PAPER COLLECTIONS
• ITU publications and documents
• Non-ITU books, journals, standards (commercial publishers)
• Library Catalogue: https://itu.tind.io/

DIGITAL RESOURCES
• Electronic journals, books, conference proceedings, standards
• Library guides to help users
  http://libraryguides.itu.int/library
HISTORICAL DIGITIZATION PROGRAMME
The purpose of our digitization programme is to organize, catalogue, digitize, and provide online access to a selection of key ITU publications and documents in order to make unique ITU records widely available to ITU staff and all kinds of researchers.
Objectives

• Improve access to ITU information while ensuring the long-term preservation of the historic documents

• Make this information freely available for consultation on the web by researchers and ITU staff
150 years of ITU history buried inside ITU’s documents
Programme output

• Catalogue records for all materials processed as part of the digitization programme
• Digitized versions (PDF + OCR) of key ITU publications and documents
• All electronic files and appropriate metadata stored
• Background information for each collection
• Fully functional website available internally and externally
Step 1 : Collect & Select

- Collect materials from the Library and Archives holdings
- Compare different editions and language versions
- Appraise, select, and prepare the documents that will be digitized
Step 2: Study & Research

• Study the context of the materials
• Look for supplementary information in the ITU Journal and other sources
• Write information pieces that will provide context for the collection
Step 3 : Digitize

• Scan the materials:
  – Book scanner (bound volumes, special formats)
  – ADF scanner (cut volumes)
  – Negative scanner (film negatives and slides)

• Quality Control
  – Completeness
  – Image clean-up

• OCR
Step 4: Store and Describe

- Store digitized items
  - Local server: master + consultation
  - DMS: consultation
- Catalogue all materials (Library catalogue)
- Assign metadata (SQL database)
- Register Handle ID
Step 5: Provide Access

- Access is provided through our web site, the History of ITU Portal
- PDF versions are freely available for download
- Plus, background information on the different types of collections
August 2016: 820,000 pages scanned

DIGITIZED COLLECTIONS

- Radio Conferences
- Plenipotentiary + Administrative Conferences
- Development Conferences
- On demand scanning
- Other digitization projects

66%
22%
5%
4%
3%
Current digitization projects

  - Scanning and OCR done by an external vendor for the first time
  - Acquiring a presentation platform specifically for this collection
- Plenary Assemblies (1924-present)
- Migration of all digital collections to SharePoint and implementation of search facilities
Welcome to the History of ITU Portal

http://www.itu.int/history

Your gateway to a wealth of information about ITU’s history: facts, figures, lists, dates, and a growing selection of digitized documents.
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Explore the Digital Collections

There are currently nine digital collections accessible through the History of ITU Portal.

All of the items in each collection are freely accessible to read online or download.
ITU Conferences collection

• 76 key ITU conferences
  – 19 Plenipotentiary Conferences
  – 36 World Radiocommunication Conferences
  – 13 Telegraph and Telephone Conferences
  – 7 Telecommunication Development Conferences
  – 1 World Conference on International Telecommunications

• Two access points
  – List
  – Map
We create a web page for each conference

Typically, a conference page includes:

- Digitized versions of the outcome publications, the conference documents, and the list of participants
- Background information
- Further reading
- Image

International Telecommunications Conference (Atlantic City, 1947)

1 July - 2 October 1947 - Atlantic City, United States

On September 16, 1946 the United States government requested that the Bureau of the International Telecommunication Union invite members of the Union to a Plenipotentiary Conference in Atlantic City. The International Telecommunication Conferences took place in Atlantic City, beginning with the International Radio Conference, which convened on 15 May 1947, and the International Telecommunication Conference, which was held simultaneously beginning on July 1, 1947. One of the first actions of the International Telecommunication Conference was to approve the Rules of Procedure as well as assess the participation of a number of invited countries. In particular, Spain was not admitted to any of the Atlantic City conferences while under the rule of Franco.

One of the most significant outcomes of the Atlantic City conference was the decision for ITU to enter into a relationship with the United Nations Organization. This relationship was formalized one year later in 1949.

The Atlantic City conferences were the first ITU conferences held following the end of World War II. The conferences sought to establish the aims and purposes of the Union and the means of achieving them in order to emphasize the role of the ITU as the center of international cooperation in matters concerning telecommunications.

The roles of future ITU conferences were defined. The Plenipotentiary Conference would remain the main governing body of the ITU. The time and date of the conference would be set at the preceding conference, but could be changed if a new location was proposed by at least twenty members of the ITU. For the time being, Administrative Conferences would meet at the same time and place as the Plenipotentiary Conference. These conferences would be responsible for revisions to the Regulations. Furthermore, an Administrative Council was created to continue the work of the Union between conferences. The Administrative Council would comprise eighteen members elected by the Plenipotentiary Conference every five years. The selection procedure for Council members would follow the same guidelines as electing members to the International Frequency Regulation Board.

In order to become independent of the Swiss government, the Union felt it was necessary to establish an autonomous and centralized office led by a single director. Therefore, the Plenipotentiary Conference determined that a Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General and staff would need to be appointed to administer the General Secretariat of the ITU. The General Secretariat would be required to operate independently from the authority of an external government influence. Recruitment for the positions would take place on a large geographical scope and employees would be given international status. By a unanimous vote, Geneva was chosen as the permanent seat of the ITU.

The issue of languages was discussed and French, English, Spanish, Russian and Chinese were adopted as the official languages of the ITU. In addition to determining the official languages of the Union, the working languages were revised to include French, English and Spanish; however, the authentic language of the Union would remain French.

The History of ITU Portal is now using Persistent Identifiers for its digitized documents. To view the Persistent Identifier for a specific document, hover the cursor over the document link and then right-click to copy it.
Welcome to the History of ITU Portal

Your gateway to a wealth of information about ITU’s history: facts, figures, lists, dates, and a growing selection of digitized documents.
Discover ITU’s History brings together a variety of information about the Union’s history including:

- Articles
- Lists
- Films
- Timeline
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