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Digitization strategies in Switzerland : new partnerships for the Swiss National Library

In common with many other national libraries, the Swiss National Library has initiated a number of digitization projects. Its strategy is to digitize primarily for access rather than for preservation; therefore it has carried out a wide-spread user consultation to determine areas of most interest to its users. Unsurprisingly, access to newspapers online was considered the prime area of interest. Newspaper digitization requires significant financial resources (often several hundred thousand pages are concerned, incurring costs at digitization and subsequently for data storage) and poses significant rights management questions for material after 1923. In order to meet these twin challenges of financing and access rights, the Library has sought to create new partnerships in both the public and private sector. The first of these, which will be briefly described, has resulted in free online access to 172 years of the Journal de Genève (1826-1998), and a recommendation by Presse Suisse that any future projects in the French-speaking part of Switzerland follow this model of cost-free access. The presentation will outline the digitization strategy, the evolution of the public-private partnership, including its advantages and potential difficulties, the funding model, and its significance as a model for future cooperation to enhance access to the National Library's collections not just for users in Switzerland but also across the world.