Library Preservation Today!
Introduction to Library Preservation

A VIRTUAL PRECONFERENCE PRESENTED BY

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Poll Question #1

- Briefly characterize your current preservation program? Select only one reply.
  - Zilch!
  - A few activities but nothing that’s really organized
  - Staff have preservation responsibilities and many are involved
  - Our program is well-established but needs an update
  - Our program runs well meeting organizational needs
The value of preservation

- *Preservation* is an essential and integrated part of library operations
- Maintaining a collection is elemental to the mission
- Collections and society’s collective memory
- Recorded history is fragile!
- Protection and prevention can and should save institutional resources
What is “preservation”? 

- American Institute for Conservation – “...protection of cultural property through activities that minimize chemical and physical deterioration and damage and that prevent loss of informational content.”
- Policies, principles and practices such as stabilization, reformatting, emergency management, controlling the environment, proper storage and handling, training, etc.
- Maintain collections as a whole by minimizing and preventing damage
What is “digital preservation”?

- A subset of preservation including all the financial and managerial considerations in maintaining access to analog collections
- In 2007 ALCTS generated Definitions of Digital Preservation (short, medium and long) consistent with core concepts in library preservation
- “Digital preservation combines policies, strategies and actions that ensure access to digital content over time.”
  - [http://www.ala.org/alcts/resources/preserv/defdigpres0408](http://www.ala.org/alcts/resources/preserv/defdigpres0408)
Other terms

- **Conservation** is treatment or repair of individual items
  - **Restoration** is to try and return an object to a known or assumed state
- In a museum environment the original appearance is often pivotal to value or understanding
- Reversibility, non-damaging, identifiable repairs – special and historical collections
- Preservation and Conservation are not mutually exclusive

Libraries: protect against loss of information and collections as a whole
Preservation past in U.S. Libraries

- 1905 ALA creates Bookbinding Committee
- 1930s First minimum standards developed by ALA and library binding industry
- 1933 William J. Barrow and brittle paper
- 1956 Council on Library Resources (CLR), now CLIR
- 1980s Cooperative microfilming
- 1990s Mass deacidification
- 2000s Digitization, digital preservation
Poll Question #2

- What are your greatest preservation challenges today? Select all that apply.
  - Competition for resources
  - Lack of awareness/need for training
  - Inadequate building/space for collections protection
  - No plan or unsure how or where to get started
  - Digital assets that you aren’t sure how to protect
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- Hybrid libraries – physical collections will continue to be with us for a long time to come
- Emphasis continues to be on prevention
- Archival and special collections more the focus
- Traditional methods of stabilization and housing options still effective
  - “Hidden collections” – preparing materials for digitization
- Justifying the cost of implementing preservation programs with budgets and staff resources stretched thin
• Shift away from building and maintaining physical collections – emphasis on access to digital collections
• Space for more seating and service areas – collections move offsite
  ○ So does Preservation, Technical Services
• Collaborative protection of last-copies of monographic holdings
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- Traditional “preservation” focuses on physical collections
- Digital preservation and the new preservation specialist – Peter Verheyen, “Preserving Digital Collections: An Overview”
  - Differences in skills – hand skills; knowledge of information systems and programming
  - General approach vs. specialization
- Preservation is MANAGEMENT.
Who has responsibility for collections care?

- Programs vary – consider size, collections and mission
- Centralized versus decentralized programs
- Have a high level manager with responsibility for managing your efforts
- Integrate preservation into every job function
- Work across departments and divisions and collaborate according to your strengths and abilities
Getting started: What is your service vision?

- How will preservation fit into your institutional mission?
- What staff, finances, past practices, policies and procedures are already in place?
- Is the built environment protecting your collection?
- What about emergency planning, including security?
- How well do remedial activities such as repair, conservation treatment or reformatting fit into your program (or idea of one)?
- What are you doing to protect your digital assets?
- Should you conduct a separate study of your digital preservation readiness???
- Where do you want to be in a year? 2 years? 5?
Getting started

• A large research library may hire a preservation specialist to establish a new program
• Otherwise an in-house professional can conduct a self-survey of preservation needs
• Hire an outside expert to conduct a review
  ○ Start with an overall assessment then drill down as needed
• The report/s form the basis of a preservation plan
  ○ Impact/feasibility of each recommendation
  ○ Priority actions/activities
  ○ Required resources in the short/medium/long term
Preservation planning

**NEDCC:**

- Preservation planning is a process by which the general and specific needs for the care of collections are determined, priorities are established, and resources for implementation are identified.
- Its main purpose is to define a course of action that will allow an institution to set its present and future preservation agendas.
- In addition, it identifies the actions an institution will take and those it probably will never take so that resources can be allocated appropriately.
The key items are the list of high priority actions that are achievable and a timetable for implementing them.

Your primary goal should be to produce this timetable.
Insider tips

- If staff and administration don’t know what you do, or why it’s important, they won’t get on board
- Use every opportunity to train staff and remind them of the importance of preservation
- Make friends everywhere, because someday you will need them
- Keep good statistics and track all your expenses – prove your effectiveness!
- Remember that any type of preservation program is a service to the library, but never forget the patrons

PRESERVATION AND ACCESS
Questions?
Thank you!

- Questions?

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Selected resources

- ALCTS Fundamentals of Preservation – 4 week online program, [http://www.ala.org/alcts/confevents/upcoming/web course/fpres/ol_templ](http://www.ala.org/alcts/confevents/upcoming/web course/fpres/ol_templ)

- Preservation 101: Preservation Basics for Analog and Digital Collections – free, online
  - Next live offering Winter 2015

A few good articles
