Best Practices for Preservation in Shared Print Programs

Future access to the materials of shared print collections depends on their preservation over time. Successful preservation of printed books comes from active management at the time of selection, during the entire course of storage and use, and when a book’s physical usefulness approaches its end.

Each book selected into a shared print collection has its own materiality and history. Best practice involves significant investment as early as possible in selecting sound copies and in creating a program and a physical environment that minimize deterioration and risks. Early investment reduces later costs and losses; however, it is neither practical nor possible to start a shared print program with only perfect copies.

Even the best storage environments and materials in them can deteriorate over time. Therefore ongoing management directed by dedicated, trained preservation professionals is one of the most important requirements to remediate damage in order to meet the needs of users and to mitigate new risks to the collection as they emerge. Material objects decay, even under ideal conditions. Best practice acknowledges this potential for loss and incorporates mechanisms to transfer text to new formats while maintaining some copies of the old format as long as possible to validate the new.

The following outline articulates the process of print preservation into the areas of staff, environment, condition, security, and risk mitigation. For all their vulnerabilities, printed books are persistent objects, especially in numbers distributed over different locations. Any of the activities described here will increase their chances of survival.

Each level presumes all checks of any/all preceding levels.

1. **Staff**
   
   a. **Good**
The SPP will encourage member libraries to

i. have readily available staff trained in preservation or if that is not possible, identify a member library with preservation staff to assist all program members

ii. an informal digitization process (i.e. identify where the print item has an equivalent digital version and/or to digitize local materials)

b. Better

The SPP will encourage member libraries to

i. have readily available staff trained in preservation or if that is not possible, identify a member library with preservation staff to assist all program members

ii. engage in a formal digitization program that identifies when the print item has an equivalent digital version and/or digitize local materials

c. Best

The SPP will encourage member libraries to

i. meet all criteria listed under Better

ii. have dedicated onsite preservation and/or conservator staff

d. Aspirational

The SPP will encourage member libraries to

i. meet all criteria listed under Best

ii. have an onsite conservator and dedicated lab

Table 1: Better, Best, and Aspirational Practices for Staffing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Better</th>
<th>Best</th>
<th>Aspirational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trained Staff in Preservation</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Digitization Process</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Digitization Program</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   a. **Good**
   
   The SPP will encourage member libraries to take actions that correspond with tier 1 of the [Best Practice Tier System for Storage Environments](https://sharedprint.org/best-practices/storage-environment/), and member libraries will prioritize retained items for preservation.

   b. **Better**
   
   The SPP will encourage member libraries to take actions that correspond with tier 2 of the [Best Practice Tier System for Storage Environments](https://sharedprint.org/best-practices/storage-environment/), and member libraries will prioritize retained items for preservation.

   c. **Best**
   
   The SPP will encourage member libraries to take actions that correspond with tier 3 of the [Best Practice Tier System for Storage Environments](https://sharedprint.org/best-practices/storage-environment/), and member libraries will prioritize retained items for preservation.

   d. **Aspirational**
   
   The SPP will encourage member libraries to take actions that correspond with tier 4 of the [Best Practice Tier System for Storage Environments](https://sharedprint.org/best-practices/storage-environment/), and member libraries will prioritize retained items for preservation. In addition, member libraries can strive for the following:
   
   i. TWPI 200 or better, 30-40% humidity, temperature 50°F or less
ii. no windows  
iii. no UV  
iv. lights on only in local area at use (timed or motion-sensing)  
v. comprehensive boxing/lids on trays

3. Condition

a. Good (Acceptable)  
The SPP will encourage member libraries to use the following metrics:  
i. some damage acceptable  
ii. no active pests or mold  
iii. no significant loss of text  
v. extensive paper damage flagged as the paper original retained primarily for production of copies

b. Better  
The SPP will encourage member libraries to use the following metrics:  
i. meet all criteria listed under Good  
ii. text not marked (highlighting, underlining, notes)  
iii. paper withstands at least one double-fold  
v. books not intact (if only option available) are in enclosures or tied  
vi. shelf validation (physical volume present)

c. Best  
The SPP will encourage member libraries to use the following metrics:  
i. meet all criteria listed under Better  
ii. few or no tears  
iii. article or chapter validation

d. Aspirational  
The SPP will encourage member libraries to use the following metrics:  
i. meet all criteria listed under Best

ii. as printed condition (original binding)
iii. page validation
iv. value added: effective enclosures, deacidification
v. brittle: have verified additional copies or digital surrogate

Table 3: Good, Better, Best, and Aspirational Practices for Condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Good (Acceptable)</th>
<th>Better</th>
<th>Best</th>
<th>Aspirational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Major Damage</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Active Pests or Mold</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Significant Loss of Text</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Paper Damage Flagged for Reformatting</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Markings</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Withstands Double Folds</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binding Intact</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Enclosed (if Necessary)</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shelf Validation</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few or No Tears</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article/Chapter Validation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As Printed Condition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deacidification</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrogate Copies Available</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4. **Security/Circulation** See also Best Practices for Inventory at [https://sharedprint.org/best-practices/inventory-for-shared-print-programs/](https://sharedprint.org/best-practices/inventory-for-shared-print-programs/)

   a. **Good**
      The SPP will encourage member libraries to have
      i. some sort of security tracking (RFID/3M etc)
      ii. ownership marking/labelling

   b. **Better**
      The SPP will encourage member libraries to
      i. meet all criteria listed under Good
      ii. engage in shelf verification

   c. **Best**
      The SPP will encourage member libraries to
      i. meet all criteria listed under Better
      ii. have closed stacks (staff retrieval only)

   d. **Aspirational**
      The SPP will encourage member libraries to
      i. meet all criteria listed under Best
      ii. have closed verified stacks
      iii. engage in controlled digital lending

Table 4: Good, Better, Best, and Aspirational Practices for Security/Circulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Better</th>
<th>Best</th>
<th>Aspirational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security Tracking System</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ownership Marking</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shelf Verification</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed Stacks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verified Stacks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Risk Mitigation

a. Good
   The SPP will encourage member libraries to have
   i. a disaster response plan  
   ii. fire detection 
   iii. shelves 1 or more inches off floor 
   iv. integrated pest management program

b. Better
   The SPP will encourage member libraries to
   i. meet all criteria listed under Good
   ii. have an up-to-date (within 5 years) disaster response plan
   iii. have fire suppression
   iv. be sited for safety (not in flood plain, high-industrial area, or next to railroad, etc.)

c. Best
   The SPP will encourage member libraries to
   i. meet all criteria listed under Better
   ii. have a disaster response plan and permanent staff trained in disaster response/recovery
   iii. have a building shell designed to reduce risks (no water lines over stacks, roof design appropriate to climate; insect and small animal barriers)

d. Aspirational
   The SPP will encourage member libraries to
   i. meet all criteria listed under Best
   ii. have a comprehensive disaster plan that is reviewed regularly (annually recommended) and permanent staff trained in disaster response/recovery
iii. have a standing contract with disaster response firm

Table 5: Good, Better, Best, and Aspirational Practices for Risk Mitigation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Better</th>
<th>Best</th>
<th>Aspirational</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disaster Response Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire Detection</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shelves Off of Floor</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrated Pest Management</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Up-to-Date Disaster Plan</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire Suppression</td>
<td></td>
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<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sited for Safety</td>
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<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Staff for Disaster Response</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Designed to Reduce Risk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Disaster Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standing Contract with Disaster Response Firm</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

6. Shared Print Program MOUs *(See also *Best Practices for MOUs*)

   a. Good
      i. MOUs include preservation considerations and recommendations for member libraries

   b. Better
      i. MOUs include preservation requirements for member libraries
      ii. The SPP provides access to preservationists for questions and issues that may arise within member libraries
c. Best
   i. MOUs include preservation requirements for member libraries
   ii. The SPP provides a designated preservation expert for member libraries

Resources

Library of Congress:
   ● Preservation Guidelines for Digitizing Library Materials
   ● Risk Management
   ● Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiatives

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