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 have

i. 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 have

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

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

c. Best

The SPP will encourage member libraries to have

i. all of the above plus the following

ii. dedicated onsite preservation and/or conservator staff

d. Aspirational

The SPP will encourage member libraries to have

i. all of the above plus the following

ii. 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>
<tr>
<td>Onsite Preservation and/or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **Preservation Environment** (See Best Practice Tier System for Storage Environments at [https://sharedprint.org/best-practices/storage-environment/](https://sharedprint.org/best-practices/storage-environment/))

   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, 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, 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, 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, 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
iv. extensive paper damage flagged as leaf master for reformatting

b. Better
The SPP will encourage member libraries to use the following metrics:
i. all of the above plus the following
ii. text not marked (highlighting, underlining, notes)
iii. paper withstands at least one double-fold
iv. binding is intact or can be rebound at modest cost
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. all of the above plus the following
ii. few or no tears
iii. article or chapter validation

d. Aspirational
The SPP will encourage member libraries to use the following metrics:
i. all of the above plus the following
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></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>
</tr>
<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>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article/Chapter Validation</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</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>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrogate Copies Available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</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 have
  i. All of the above plus the following
  ii. shelf verification

c. Best
The SPP will encourage member libraries to have
  i. All of the above plus the following
  ii. closed stacks (staff retrieval only)

d. Aspirational
The SPP will encourage member libraries to have
  i. All of the above plus the following
  ii. Closed verified stacks
  iii. 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>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership Marking</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelf Verification</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed Stacks</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verified Stacks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDL Practiced</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. 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 have
      
      i. All of the above plus the following
      
      ii. up-to-date (within 5 years) disaster response plan
      
      iii. fire suppression
      
      iv. sited for safety (not in flood plain, high-industrial area, or next to railroad, etc.)

   c. **Best**
      
      The SPP will encourage member libraries to have
      
      i. All of the above plus the following
      
      ii. disaster response plan and permanent staff trained in disaster response/recovery
      
      iii. all the above plus utilities and 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 have
      
      i. All of the above plus the following
      
      ii. comprehensive disaster plan reviewed regularly (annually recommended) and permanent staff trained in disaster response/recovery
      
      iii. 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disaster Response Plan</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Detection</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelves Off of Floor</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Pest Management</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up-to-Date Disaster Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Suppression</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sited for Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Staff for Disaster Response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Designed to Reduce Risk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Disaster Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing Contract with Disaster Response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Shared Print Program 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