



Best Practices for Geographic Distribution Recommendations for Shared Print Programs

Introduction

Future access to shared print collections depends on the successful preservation of printed materials. This entails active management of storage of carefully selected sound copies, as well as minimization of both deterioration and risk. To minimize the risk of losing a copy of a print resource, copies should be kept in numbers (i.e., multiple sound copies), as determined by each shared print program, and they should be distributed over different locations. This will increase their chances of survival over time. When considering copy distribution, shared print programs should prioritize variance in geographic location in order to mitigate the chance of loss or damage. In a world where weather has been negatively affected by climate change, a single natural disaster such as flood, fire, hurricanes, tornadoes, and the like, have the potential to completely wipe out multiple copies of a print title that are stored in locations that are too close geographically, or that are prone to the same type of natural disaster. This best practice therefore recommends that programs take into serious account geographic climate concerns when determining distribution of copies, that they prioritize diversity of geographic areas, based on the types of and history of potential natural disasters, especially if these disasters are likely to affect a large area. Part of this geographic distribution consideration will of course be distance between locations, as mileage will reduce the likelihood of a common disaster wiping out too many copies.

NOTE: Throughout this document, the term storage facility is used broadly to mean any building where books are stored and does not necessarily mean a purpose-designed, preservation quality book repository. Even books in open stacks can serve as storage facilities that contribute to geographic distribution. Storage facility managers can refer to library directors as well as people who manage a preservation facility.

1. Location and Condition of Storage Facilities

Individual storage facilities (defined in this document as any building where collections are housed) are the building blocks for managing geographic distribution of the shared collection. Unfortunately, there is no simple, universal formula for geographic distribution. Copies of the same title in two facilities ten miles apart may be “distributed” if one is close to a floodplain but the other is not. Two facilities located 50 or 100 miles apart may not be enough if both are on

the same earthquake fault line or typically lie in the path of the same hurricanes. A purpose-built facility located closer to a floodplain may be less risky than an older building further away, if the siting and structure of the purpose-built building is designed to manage water efficiently. The foundation of risk mitigation described below comprises awareness, preventive action, and coordination.

NOTE: Each level presumes meeting any/all preceding levels.

Good: The shared print program encourages managers at each participating storage facility to

- review their own institutional knowledge, the standards for siting and construction of storage facilities, and the [FEMA National Risk Index for Natural Hazards](#) in order to gather a list of both lower and higher risk features of each site, building, and areas within buildings.
- consider the recommendations in the standards when planning for construction of new or remodeled storage facilities,
- have an up-to-date disaster plan.

Better: The shared print program encourages managers at each storage facility to

- build on their awareness and take action when possible to seek alternative strategies to reduce risk (e.g., proactive maintenance, water management planning, relocation of certain collections to specific parts of the building, or relocating certain collections to other facilities).
- implement as many of the recommendations in the standards as possible when planning for construction of new or remodeled storage facilities.

Best: The shared print program secures its retentions in different storage facilities in different geographic areas. In addition, it encourages managers at storage facilities to

- document the strengths and weaknesses of their storage locations and share that documentation with the shared print program (e.g., on a shared checklist), so that the shared print program can use that documentation for planning and policy.

2. Policies and Practices Concerned with Location and Storage Condition of Commitments

As each member institution collects and shares information about local risks, the shared print program has opportunities to incorporate that information into their policies and practices. Policies for best practice for [Discovery and Disclosure of Items in Local Systems](#) may be developed to facilitate incorporating considerations of location of copy commitments into withdrawal decisions. Considerations of geographical distribution are incorporated into collection analyses. For example, the shared print program may recommend against withdrawals if all remaining copies fall in locations with high risk of loss from the same hurricane or if all

remaining copies are in higher risk buildings. Or the SPP may recommend increasing the total number of copies retained if multiple copies are known to be stored in a high risk location.

Good: The shared print program encourages each participating storage facility to

- create and share descriptions of strengths and weaknesses of the spaces where their committed books are stored.
- be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the major storage facilities used to store collections committed for retention to the consortium.
- to house committed items in a preservation storage facility.

Better: The shared print program

- shares descriptions of all storage facilities to all members of the consortium. Managers informally use this information to inform consortial decisions about locating larger collections or numbers of copies retained.

Best: The shared print program

- makes shared risk inventories of all storage facilities available to all members of the consortium. Managers formally document and share policies and procedures for locating collections or numbers of copies retained.
- encourages managers to work together nationally to create policies and tools for not withdrawing copies nationally or internationally below a target minimum. These policies include recommendations for when target minimums may be adjusted, specifically accounting for the risk index of geographic locations.

Resources

This Resources section references standards for the siting and construction of buildings in which collections are stored and used, including those for shared print programs. They describe considerations for building location, construction materials, and protections against water, pests, fire, and other threats to book collections. See also the Partnership for Shared Book Collections Best Practices for [Shared Print Storage Environments](#).

This section also references the [FEMA National Risk Index for Natural Hazards](#), which evaluates risk by county and by hazard. (Click through to the map, select a county, and click on "create report" to get a report that details the risk level for a slate of different natural disasters, including a chart that gives annualized frequency data (likely number of events/year, by disaster type) for that county.) Data on risks for flooding are located at a separate site, FEMA [National Flood Hazard Layer](#).

Published Resources

Bogus, Ian, Candace Arai Yano, Shannon Zachary, Jacob Nadal, Mary Miller, Helen N. Levenson, Fern Brody, and Sara Amato. "A Model to Determine Optimal Numbers of Monograph Copies for Preservation in Shared Print Collections." *C&RL* [forthcoming September 2023].

Conservation of Cultural Heritage - Specifications for Location, Construction and Modification of Buildings or Rooms Intended for the Storage or Use of Heritage Collections. European Standard CSN EN 16893-2018.

EM-DAT International Disaster Database <https://www.emdat.be/>

FEMA National Risk Index for Natural Hazards

<https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps/products-tools/national-risk-index>

FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer

<https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps/national-flood-hazard-layer>

Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAIC). [Held in Trust](#). [received National Endowment for the Humanities funding in 2022 to construct an interactive climate risk map for cultural institutions].

Pacifico, Michele F., and Thomas P. Wilsted. *Archival and Special Collections Facilities: Guidelines*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2009.

Relevant Best Practices

- [Scarce Copies](#)
- [Shared Print Storage Environments](#)
- [Discovery and Disclosure of Items in Local Systems](#)
- [Best Practices for Digital Surrogates](#)
- Best Practices for Number of Copies (in development for 2023)
- [Best Practices for Print to Digital Validation](#)

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