



Best Practices for Retention Period

The foundation of a shared print program is the ability of member libraries to rely on each other's commitments to retain volumes for a certain number of years (i.e., until a specified date, or indefinitely). Corollary processes for [reviewing, renewing, or extending program elements](#), including retention periods; for replacing missing or damaged volumes; and for [transferring commitments](#) made by a member that can [no longer maintain them](#) are also integral components of this foundation. This best practice for retention is informed by the choices made by shared print programs about the scope of their shared collections; it recommends means for communication about local withdrawal decisions of retained copies and a dynamic and accessible dataset of retention commitments and uncommitted holdings. It also recommends retention periods, beginning at ten years (most programs have chosen to go with either 15 or 25 year retention periods).

Best Practices

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

Good

Shared print programs should

- Secure initial retention commitments for a minimum of 10 years.

- Outline retention periods in their agreements with member libraries, in an MOU or related Policy Guidelines document (See [Best Practices for MOUs](#)).

Better

Shared print programs should

- Secure initial retention commitments for a minimum of 15 years.
- Adequately prepare for expiring commitments (See [Best Practices for Expiring Commitments](#)).

Best

Shared print programs should

- Secure initial retention commitments for more than 15 years.
- For rare or at risk materials, secure indefinite retention commitments.

	Good	Better	Best
Shared print programs should secure initial retention commitments for a minimum of 10 years.	x		
Shared print programs should secure initial retention commitments for a minimum of 15 years.		x	
Shared print programs should secure initial retention commitments for more than 15 years.			x

<p>Shared print programs should outline retention periods in their agreements with member libraries, in an MOU or related Policy Guidelines document (See Best Practices for MOUs).</p>	<p>x</p>		
<p>Shared print programs should adequately prepare for expiring commitments (See Best Practices for Expiring Commitments).</p>		<p>x</p>	
<p>Shared print programs should, for rare or at risk materials, secure indefinite retention commitments.</p>			<p>x</p>

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