



Best Practices for Scarce Copies

To ensure the depth and longevity of collective scholarly print resources, a shared print program needs an understanding of the intricacies of collective collection management. Identifying and communicating scarce print resources within shared print archiving networks and within state or regional collecting programs is key to managing print collections at scale. For this reason, we are recommending the following for scarce copy practices to guide libraries and programs when they encounter last or scarce copies in collective collections.

With the growth and success of shared print programs, libraries tend to withdraw titles in coordination with these programs and in accordance with their local collection development policies and practices. The best practices stated here emphasize the importance of a program's evaluation of the number of retention member libraries holding a title prior to withdrawal of the title.

NOTE: Case studies on collaborative collection management may help programs develop scarce copy policies (see OCLC, 2021). An appendix of established last copy policies from various programs appears at the end of this document.

Best Practice

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

Good

Shared print programs should

- define scarce copies for the program. For example, one copy held within a shared print program, or two copies held within the state, or three holdings shown in WorldCat.
NOTE: There is no ideal or universally agreed upon number of copies. Scarcity should be determined within each program, because scarcity varies depending on the format, type of work, and relative value of the item to researchers within the realm of scholarship in a particular discipline, and the size of the SPP.

- add a local retention note to bibliographic records so that a scarce copy may be recorded within a shared print program and is not withdrawn, following the [OCLC Detailed Metadata Guidelines](#), which outline the MARC tags that should be used for shared print disclosures (see [Best Practices for Discovery and Disclosure of Shared Print Items](#)).

Better

Shared print programs should

- Include the definition of scarce copies within their MOU or related policy document.
- address material type/format.
- prioritize access—every reasonable effort should be made to provide access to a copy of a requested title.
- when dealing with scarce copies, examine the circumstances under which transfer to a special collection is desirable (see ACRL, 2016). Policy applications should be made in dialogue with special collections staff at member libraries.
- verify existing digital surrogates at least at the title level.

Best

Shared print programs should

- address editions and manifestations of works in scarce copy definitions.
- indicate in their MOUs whether digital surrogates will be created for scarce or last copies if they are not already available through a trusted digital repository such as HathiTrust. In general, libraries should strive to ensure digital surrogates exist for scarce copies.
- carefully consider identifiers and match points to avoid over-estimating the total number of libraries holding a title.
- provide access to scarcely held copies in a way that carefully balances the following factors: number of copies available in the shared print community (local, regional, partnership), condition of the scarce copies, availability of an electronic copy, and need of the requestor to use a physical copy when an electronic copy is also available. Consideration of in-house use restrictions should also be included.
- record digital surrogates in accordance with the [Partnership's Digital Surrogates How To guide](#).
- verify existing digital surrogates at least at the edition level.

Aspirational

Shared print programs should

- share bibliographic records more broadly so that they may inform other shared print programs.
- Shared print programs should consider the status of a scarcely held title in the context of the Partnership at large¹.
- Shared print programs should, when multiple copies are known to be held across North America, consider geographical distribution with regard to potential use as follows: distribution of copies such that physical proximity to the widest number of Partnership members.
- authorize members to cease retention of print materials for reasons that preclude lending, such as physical condition, if validated digital surrogates are available.
- When multiple copies are known to be held across North America, consider geographical distribution with regard to potential use as follows: consideration of stability (in terms of weather, natural disasters) of location sites and facilities (see France & Bogus, n.d.; [Best Practices for Preservation](#); [Best Practices for Storage Environment Best Practices](#); [Best Practices for Geographic Distribution](#)).
- create digital surrogates when one is not available.
- verify existing digital surrogates at least at the page level.

	Good	Better	Best	Aspirational
Policy Elements: Definitions and Range (e.g., across state/program/alliance)				
Define scarce copies for the program. For example, one copy held within a shared print program, or two copies held within the state, or three holdings shown in WorldCat.	X			
Shared print programs should carefully consider identifiers and match points to avoid over-estimating the total number of libraries holding a title.			X	
Policy Element: Scope				

¹ Note that Partnership-wide analysis regarding total holdings of any one title is an aspirational goal at the time of the first drafting of these practices.

Include the definition of scarce copies within their MOU or related policy document.		X		
Shared print programs should address editions and manifestations of works.			X	
Shared print programs should address material type/format.		X		
Policy Element: Metadata				
Shared print programs should add a local retention note to bibliographic records so that a scarce copy may be recorded within a shared print program and is not withdrawn.	X			
Shared print programs should follow the OCLC Detailed Metadata Guidelines , which outline the MARC tags that should be used for shared print disclosures (see Best Practices for Discovery and Disclosure of Shared Print Items).	X			
Shared print programs should share bibliographic records more broadly so that they may inform other shared print programs.				X
Policy Element: Access Considerations				
Shared print programs should prioritize access—every reasonable effort should be made to provide access to a copy of a requested title.		X		
Shared print programs should provide access to scarcely held copies in a way that carefully balances the following factors: number of copies available in the shared print community (local, regional, partnership), condition of the scarce copies, availability of an electronic copy, and need of the requestor to use a physical copy when an electronic copy is also available. Consideration of in-house use restrictions should also be included.			X	
Policy Element: Digital Surrogates				

Shared print programs should indicate in their MOUs whether digital surrogates will be created for scarce or last copies if they are not already available through a trusted digital repository such as HathiTrust. In general, libraries should strive to ensure digital surrogates exist for scarce copies.			X	
Shared print programs should create digital surrogates when one is not available.				X
Shared print programs should verify existing digital surrogates at least at the title level.		X		
Shared print programs should verify existing digital surrogates at least at the edition level.			X	
Shared print programs should verify existing digital surrogates at least at the page level.				X
Shared print programs should record digital surrogates in accordance with the Partnership's Digital Surrogates Best Practices .			X	
Shared print programs should authorize members to cease retention of print materials for reasons that preclude lending, such as physical condition, if validated digital surrogates are available.				X
Policy Element: Withdrawal/Retention				
Shared print programs should consider the status of a scarcely held title in the context of the Partnership at large ¹ .				X
Shared print programs should, when multiple copies are known to be held across North America, consider geographical distribution with regard to potential use as follows: distribution of copies such that physical proximity to the widest number of Partnership members.				X
Shared print programs should, when multiple copies are known to be held across North America, consider geographical distribution with				X

regard to potential use as follows: consideration of stability (in terms of weather, natural disasters) of location sites and facilities (see France & Bogus, n.d.; Best Practices for Preservation ; Best Practices for Storage Environment Best Practices ; Best Practices for Geographic Distribution).				
Shared print programs should, when dealing with scarce copies, examine the circumstances under which transfer to a special collection is desirable (see ACRL, 2016). Policy applications should be made in dialogue with special collections staff at member libraries.		X		

I. References/Further Reading

ACRL. (2016). *Guidelines on the selection and transfer of materials from general collections to special collections. Guidelines, Standards, and Frameworks*. Association of College & Research Libraries. <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/selctransfer>

France, F. and Bogus, I. (n.d.). *Assessing the physical condition of the national book collection*. <https://nationalbookcollection.org/overview>

OCLC. (2021). *Weeding and deselection bibliography*. SCS and GreenGlass. https://help.oclc.org/Library_Management/SCS_and_GreenGlass/Weeding_and_deselection_bibliography?sl=en#CollaborativeCollectionManagement

II. Appendix: Last Copy Policies

A. [Rosemont last copy agreement](#)

B. [Rosemont last copy donations and transfer guidelines](#)

C. CARLI Last Copy Program:

<https://www.carli.illinois.edu/products-services/collections-management/last-copy-project>

D. ALI Last Copy Policy:

<https://academiclibrariesofindiana.org/shared-collections/reports>

E. Keep@Downsview Memo of Agreement :

<https://content.library.utoronto.ca/common/pdf/201801081636.pdf>

F. Appendix A of COPPUL/SPAN Monographs Project:

<https://coppul.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/SPAN%20Monographs%20Project%20%231%20MOU.pdf>