

Best Practices for Geographic Distribution Recommendations for Shared Print Programs

Introduction

Future access to shared print collections depends on the successful preservation of print materials. This entails active management of storage of carefully selected intact copies, as well as minimization of both deterioration and risk. To minimize the risk of losing a copy of a print resource, multiple intact copies should be kept in sufficient numbers (see C&RL's [A Model to Determine Optimal Numbers of Monograph Copies for Preservation in Shared Print Collections](#)), as determined by each program, and distributed across 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 a single natural disaster such as a flood, fire, hurricane, tornado, and the like, which 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.

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. The phrase storage facility

managers can refer to library directors as well as people who manage a preservation facility.

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

Good: The shared print program

- strongly encourages facility managers 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.
- strongly encourages facility managers to consider the recommendations in the standards when planning for construction of new or remodeled storage facilities.
- strongly encourages facility managers to have an up-to-date disaster plan.
- strongly encourages facility managers to create and share with the program descriptions of strengths and weaknesses of the spaces where their committed books are stored.
- strongly encourages facility managers to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the major storage facilities used to store collections committed for retention to the program.
- strongly encourages facility managers to house committed items in a preservation storage facility, if possible.

Better: The shared print program

- shares descriptions of all storage facilities to all members and uses this information to inform decisions about locating larger collections or numbers of copies retained.
- strongly encourages facility managers 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 relocation of certain collections to other facilities).
- strongly encourages facility managers to 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 retention commitments in different storage facilities in different geographic areas.
- works with other programs to create policies and tools for not withdrawing copies nationally or internationally below a target minimum.
- follows recommendations for when target commitment minimums may be adjusted, specifically accounting for the risk index of geographic locations.
- strongly encourages facility managers to formally document and share policies and procedures for locating collections or numbers of copies retained.
- strongly encourages facility managers to document the strengths and weaknesses of their storage locations and share that documentation with it (e.g., on a shared checklist), so that the program can use that documentation for planning and policy.

- develops policies for best practice for [Discovery and Disclosure of Items in Local Systems](#) to facilitate incorporating considerations of location of copy commitments into withdrawal decisions.
- Considers geographical distribution as part of collection analyses (e.g., the program may recommend against withdrawals if all remaining copies fall in locations with high risk of loss from the same natural disaster or if all remaining copies are in higher risk buildings or may recommend increasing the total number of copies retained if multiple copies are known to be stored in a high risk locations).

Table: Good, Better, Best Practices

Practice	Good	Better	Best
The shared print program strongly encourages facility managers 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.	x		
The shared print program strongly encourages facility managers to consider the recommendations in the standards when planning for construction of new or remodeled storage facilities.	x		
The shared print program strongly encourages facility managers to have an	x		

up-to-date disaster plan.			
The shared print program strongly encourages facility managers to create and share with the program descriptions of strengths and weaknesses of the spaces where their committed books are stored.	x		
The shared print program strongly encourages facility managers to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the major storage facilities used to store collections committed for retention to the program.	x		
The shared print program strongly encourages facility managers to house committed items in a preservation storage facility, if possible.	x		
The shared print program shares descriptions of all storage facilities to all members and uses this information to inform decisions about locating larger collections or numbers of copies retained.		x	
The shared print program strongly encourages facility managers 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 relocation of certain collections to other facilities).		x	
The shared print program strongly encourages facility managers to implement as many of the recommendations in the standards as possible when planning for construction of new or remodeled storage facilities.		x	

The shared print program secures its retention commitments in different storage facilities in different geographic areas.			X
The shared print program works with other programs to create policies and tools for not withdrawing copies nationally or internationally below a target minimum.			X
The shared print program follows recommendations for when target commitment minimums may be adjusted, specifically accounting for the risk index of geographic locations.			X
The shared print program strongly encourages facility managers to formally document and share policies and procedures for locating collections or numbers of copies retained.			X
The shared print program strongly encourages facility managers to document the strengths and weaknesses of their storage locations and share that documentation with it (e.g., on a shared checklist), so that the program can use that documentation for planning and policy.			X
The shared print program develops policies for best practice for Discovery and Disclosure of Items in Local Systems to facilitate incorporating considerations of location of copy commitments into withdrawal decisions.			X
The shared print program Considers geographical distribution as part of collection analyses (e.g., the program may recommend against withdrawals if all remaining copies fall in locations with high risk of loss from the			X

same natural disaster or if all remaining copies are in higher risk buildings or may recommend increasing the total number of copies retained if multiple copies are known to be stored in a high risk 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 Shared Print Partnerships 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, & Sara Amato. "A Model to

Determine Optimal Numbers of Monograph Copies for Preservation in Shared Print Collections." *College & Research Libraries* [Online], 84.5 (2023): 767. Web. 30 Apr. 2025.

<https://crl.acrl.org/index.php/crl/article/view/26029/33943>

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 Print to Digital Validation](#)

Relevant Toolkit Items

- [How to Identify Digital Surrogates](#)

Last Updated July 2025