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A Nation-Wide Planning Framework for Large-Scale Collaboration on Legacy Print Monograph Collections

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Abstract

Libraries are working toward collaborative management and preservation of print journals, newspapers, legal materials, and government documents; they must also establish a similar concerted effort focused on print monographs. Monographs present complex challenges at a time when libraries want to ensure the preservation of the print record but have increasing incentives to divest of older, less used print materials and take advantage of the affordances of electronic text. With LYRASIS as lead organization, planning partners California Digital Library (CDL), Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), and Center for Research Libraries (CRL)were awarded a grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to conduct a workshop titled "Developing a North-American Strategy to Preserve & Manage Print Collections of Monographs." Workshop participants discussed the challenges and issues involved in collaborative monograph preservation and formulated an agenda of research and demonstration projects to test elements of a strategy.

A 2009 issue of *Collaborative Librarianship* (Volume 1, Number 3) carried a "From the Field" report by Robert H. Kieft and Bernard F. Reilly entitled "Regional and National Cooperation on Legacy Print Collections." The article described the first in a series of informal meetings among librarians and consortial executives at American Library Association (ALA) conferences. From that meeting emerged an ad hoc group of organizations interested in developing a strategy for collaborative retention of print monograph collections. As libraries are already working toward collaborative management of journals, newspapers, legal materials, and government documents, they must also develop a concerted effort focused on print monographs. Such an effort must address the complex challenges monographs present when libraries have increasing financial and facilities incentives to divest of older, less used print materials at the same time that they want to take advantage of the affordances of electronic text and ensure the preservation of the print record.

With LYRASIS as lead organization, the planning partners were awarded a grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to conduct a workshop titled "Developing a North-American Strategy to Preserve & Manage Print Collections of Monographs." LYRASIS was joined in planning and conducting the workshop by the California Digital Library (CDL), the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), and the Center for Research Libraries (CRL), with a steering committee consisting of Ivy Anderson (CDL), Kim Armstrong (CIC), Tim Cherubini (LYRASIS), Bob Kieft (Occidental College), Lizanne Payne (CRL), Mark Sandler (CIC), Karen Schmidt (Illinois Wesleyan University), and Emily Stambaugh (CDL).

The workshop was held in Chicago on October 27 and 28, 2010 and was attended by approximately 30 leaders whose work has involved collaboration on monographs. Through a combination of plenary and breakout sessions, and using a flexible agenda that alternated data gathering with sessions for summary and synthesis, participants identified themes, concerns, possible implementation scenarios, and issues that require testing or research to confirm a

framework for future action. A [background document](#) described the ideal framework for large-scale collaboration on monographs for developing a structure that accomplishes the following:

- helps libraries collectively preserve the record of scholarship published in monographs;
- creates a systematic, coordinated, sustainable, and strategic approach that replaces local, ad hoc, and independent approaches to de-accessioning or storage of monographs;
- develops a process that identifies stakeholders, analyzes opportunities and vulnerabilities, and builds on patterns of relationships, recognizing the need for libraries to repurpose space and achieve savings in housing costs by reducing unnecessary duplication while preserving an adequate number of copies;
- uses an information system that discloses retention decisions and responsibilities, facilitates large-scale holdings comparisons of print and digitized monographs, and automatically generates reports for libraries of items they should retain or may consider for removal;
- provides rapid access, when needed, to intentionally retained copies;
- supports discoverability of print copies and digital surrogates in the same discovery layer;
- provides avenues for a broad spectrum of libraries to financially support and sustain the retention commitments and access services.

With these goals in mind, participants considered four topics:[2]

- the archiving/preservation issues that are specific to monographs;
- the relationship between and issues related to digital surrogates and print archive copies;
- the requirements for a bibliographic information/disclosure system (or alternative systems) that would enable large-scale collaboration among libraries;

- the characteristics of service models and business models to sustain retention commitments and provide new modes of discovery and access to retained copies.

Several themes and concerns emerged over the course of the two-day meeting. Major discussion threads included the following:

- the incentives for, or likelihood of, libraries of various sizes, with different traditions and missions and in various kinds of partnerships reducing their print footprint and relying on a relatively small number of (stored) print copies;
- who among users would object to the loss of on-site print and under what circumstances might they not;
- copyright restrictions and the accessibility of digitized text;
- user behaviors with print and electronic texts and the preference professed by many for shelf-browsing; their behaviors with respect to things they buy rather than borrow from the library;
- the costs of de-duplicating monographs in on-campus and in high-density storage facilities, the item level information needed about titles, the reliability and easy comparability of both title- and copy-level information in WorldCat;
- the components of a "what to withdraw" decision framework for monographs;
- whether to concentrate print preservation and digitization efforts on scarcely or widely held titles and the tension between preserving the print record and collaboration on access to print copies;
- which printed works require preservation in physical form, how many copies are enough, what is the acceptable loss rate, and how to break down the class "monographs" into groups in order to work on them;
- working with scholars or taking various approaches to monographic digitization that would select titles to digitize;
- the relationship of work on legacy collections to current acquisition practices;

- leadership and organizational auspices for a nation-wide cooperative.

On the second day, the group considered six scenarios for grappling with the many-headed beast of monographic publications and for helping to define a post-workshop agenda. Each of the six scenarios focused on collaborative preservation of monographs selected or identified in a different way, and all shared the same assumptions: 1) archiving would be based on a distributed model; 2) some kind of retention and access agreements would be developed and implemented; 3) a system infrastructure for disclosure and resource sharing would be defined. A collaborative approach, therefore, could start with monographs that are:

1. *Already in storage.* Under this scenario, libraries would identify and disclose low-use monographs already housed in storage facilities. These materials are already shelved in a protected environment and they may be costly to de-accession, and thus are likely to be retained.

2. *In Hathi Trust and in the public domain.* This scenario would use the approximately one million public domain titles currently in the Hathi Trust as the basis for identifying corresponding print holdings for de-accessioning and archiving.

3. *Selected by class range, subject, or discipline.* Under this scenario, participants would identify collectively a set of domains or class ranges as a proactive way to focus print archiving efforts.

4. *Volunteered by a library.* Under this scenario, participating libraries would volunteer commitments to certain titles or subject areas as opposed to having a community defined direction. The goal is to create the lowest barrier to entry for participation, but it may result in the most complex or diffuse organizational model and the archived contents may be difficult to explain.

5. *Designated from branch library closings.* This scenario drives archiving and de-

selection decisions based on the fact that institutions are closing branches and need to decide what to do with the collections. The advantage of this approach is that those collections need to be processed anyway. However, most branch closings involve science libraries, which include fewer monographs.

6. *In Hathi Trust and published through 1963 or 1976.* This scenario is similar to Scenario 2, but covers all titles published through 1963 (which would include those that required explicit copyright renewal) or 1976 (those published before copyright term was changed to author's life plus 50 years). This approach would significantly increase the pool of materials available to be archived.

After discussion of the components and merits of the six scenarios, participants identified the three most promising:

1. already in storage;
2. in Hathi Trust, both in the public domain and published up to 1976 (i.e. a combination of scenarios 2 and 6);
3. selected by class range, subject, or domain.

Scenario 1: Already in storage

- Advantages:
  - volumes are already in a protected environment, in facilities that provide some degree of access/delivery;
  - it would be relatively quick to initiate this approach after identifying these items and would afford the opportunity to experiment with delivery models;
  - understanding the capacity and contents of these storage facilities, and extending their utility, would carry weight with university administrations;
  - we have relatively high confidence that these copies actually exist because each volume has been ingested individually into storage, then maintained in access-controlled facilities.

- Disadvantages:
  - facilities house a relatively random selection of materials, so it is difficult to predict which items will be covered by a plan;
  - titles in storage may not have digital equivalent in Hathi or other archives of digitized texts. Instead of random selection, we might consider identifying the subset of stored materials that have a broad overlap with partner collections to create a more focused value proposition.

Scenario 2+6: In Hathi Trust and also in public domain or published through 1963 or 1976

- Advantages:
  - clear link between digital availability and print preservation;
  - advances the transition to digital delivery;
  - supports testing use of digital copies;
  - organizational structure already in place to lead the development (Hathi).

- Disadvantages:
  - Hathi monographs are generally held by fewer libraries and disproportionately held by research libraries (perhaps less value in this approach for other libraries);
  - may be relatively fragile and somewhat rare (may limit access to copies);
  - requires willingness to provide digital copies where copyright status is unknown (perhaps with take-down policy if protested).

Scenario 3: By class range, subject, and discipline

- Advantages:
  - engages scholars to address resource questions;
  - elevates conversation from inventory management to scholarly communications;
  - aligns libraries to scholarly enterprise;
  - feeds digitization programs;

- allows libraries to reclaim space efficiently by deselecting in a defined shelving area; institutional preservation of a certain domain; some disciplines, e. g., Z's, have high duplication but a smaller constituency.

- Disadvantages:
  - may exacerbate concerns of humanities scholars that their materials will be removed.

The meeting discussions particularly on the second day resulted in identifying the following research and demonstration topics as likely projects for future action.

1. Optimal copies research**.** How many copies are needed to support collaborative print monograph preservation? What does "optimal" mean for monographs?
2. Library plans, goals, and constraints. Survey broad set of libraries (including small and mid-size) about plans to divest monographs and whether/what kind of collaboration they might support.
3. Overlap of materials in print collections and Hathi Trust that are in the public domain and already-identified storage facilities.
4. Circulation patterns. Study interlibrary lending/borrowing for monographs and local circulation if possible.
5. User behavior. How much are they spending outside libraries to get content?
6. Demand for print. How much demand for print in light of digital availability? Does presence of digital version increase or decrease use of print? Can libraries increase the use of print if positioned differently in Google and the catalog?
7. Cataloged holdings vs. actual inventory. Sample-based study of holdings in catalogs compared to items in library.
8. Costs to de-duplicate storage facilities (e.g. OhioLink) and library collections.
9. Leadership and ongoing coordination. What entity(ies) are in a position to lead

and support long-term coordination on this issue?

Attendees also identified the following potential demonstration projects.

1. Planning grant for a subject-oriented project including discussion with society executives, develop a plan to engage professional associations.
2. Project to test actual and proclaimed user behavior, including browsing behavior and dependence on a shared collection (in storage, possibly in libraries, print only and print-and-electronic).
3. Project to expose Hathi orphan works digital copies for use.

Outcomes and Follow-up

Throughout the workshop, two ideas garnered particular attention. The first is the notion that identifiable bodies of material exist through the intersection of monographs that are:

a) already in storage facilities, and/or;
b) in the Hathi Trust, and/or;
c) in a particular domain or domains.

These bodies of material could serve as the test bed for further development of the issues and concepts discussed, and a near-term project idea emerged. This project would focus on particular domain(s), particularly those well-represented in Hathi and, if identifiable, already in storage facilities, and would include planning and engagement with professional associations.

A second idea to be pursued in the near-term is gathering data from a broad set of libraries about plans to divest monographs and attitudes toward collaboration. There is consensus that ARL libraries will be moving forward in any case with actions both to retain and divest of monographs. The likelihood of success in collaborative efforts may increase through involvement of small and mid-size academic libraries. As an initial step to understand attitudes toward collaboration, questions related to this workshop's

topics have been added to the 2010 Ithaka S+R Library Survey on collection management strategies (currently underway).

For a more complete account of the workshop, see the meeting notes compiled by the steering committee. The final report of the workshop and its recommendations will be prepared by the end of January 2011.

Endnotes

[1] With thanks to Karen Schmidt and the members of the steering committee.
[2] The workshop was informed by research or demonstration projects conducted by the organizing partners; such organizations as the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR), Hathi, Ithaka, and RLG Programs/OCLC Research; and monograph archiving projects on the regional level by the Consortium of Academic Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI), the Minnesota Library Access Center (MLAC), the Research Collections Access and Preservation (ReCAP) facility, among others, as well as experience gained on collaborative approaches to journal archiving by CRL, Western Regional Storage Trust, Five Colleges, and many other consortia. Participants in the workshop learned shortly before the event that a consortium of public and academic libraries in Maine had received a National Leadership Grant from IMLS to develop a "Maine Shared Collections Strategy" (http://umaine.edu/news/blog/2010/10/1 8/umaine-awarded-prestigious-grant-from-institute-of-museum-and-library-services/).