

University Libraries Preservation Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to define the University at Albany Libraries' objectives and commitment to the long-term preservation of its collections. The concept and practice of preventive care is a fundamental goal of this policy.

Preservation is a library wide activity, involving all staff. Preservation activities include

- training staff and users on proper handling of materials;
- maintaining environmental controls;
- acquiring, processing, storing, and using collections via methods that promote preservation and access;
- providing security (theft prevention) for the collections;
- ensuring long-term access to electronic resources owned by the Libraries;
- repairing, reformatting, or replacing damaged items;
- preventing and managing emergencies that threaten the collection; and
- responsible exhibition practices.

Preservation priorities shall be guided by the vision, mission and goals as put forth by the University at Albany Libraries. The University at Albany Libraries fully endorses the American Library Association Preservation Policy.

The University Libraries is committed to the concept and practice of preservation in a continuing program supporting its Mission, Vision and Values. As an institution committed to building collections for the use of students, faculty, scholars, and the public long into the future, the University at Albany Libraries are obligated to ensure long-term access to those materials and their intellectual content. This is accomplished by storing materials in proper conditions, careful handling and housing, use of security systems designed to eliminate mutilation and theft, refreshment and migration of electronic files, and repair or replacement of damaged materials.

Preservation decisions are always made within the context of the University at Albany's Collection Development Policy, balancing the constraints of cost, historical, aesthetic, and/or scholarly value, and accessibility.

Objectives

Training: Provide regular instruction on the principles of preservation to library staff and patrons, and promote these principles through outreach and the regular review and revision of procedures that impact the condition or accessibility of collections.

Proper Environmental Control & Storage: Provide a stable and secure environment for the collection through proper building maintenance, and by establishing and maintaining specified levels of temperature, relative humidity, lighting, and air quality.

Acquisition, Processing, Storage & Use: Acquire, process, store and use collections using methods and materials that promote their long-term stability.

Security: Prevent theft and vandalism to the collection in public and non-public areas through appropriate physical security methods and by implementing conscientious policies and procedures.

Electronic Resources: Make decisions on retention, use and preservation of digital materials when they are acquired or created. Provide continued access to digital material, both born digital and digitized, by establishing and implementing strategies for digital preservation such as migration, emulation, or technology preservation. Ensure that preserved digital materials are authentic and secure.

Repairing, Reformatting & Replacing Damaged Items: Provide a comprehensive approach to the repair and replacement of damaged items. Treatment should be based on the physical nature of the object and the way it is used by patrons. Material in its original format will be preserved for as long as possible and access will be provided to the original or a surrogate format as appropriate. Material with intrinsic value will be preserved in original format in perpetuity.

Emergency Management: Plan for emergencies, identify risks to the collection and work to minimize their threat or impact on the collection. Maintain the *Emergency Response Plan* to ensure its usefulness. Respond to emergencies that put the library collection at risk of damage and/or loss.

Exhibition: Establish procedures for loaning and borrowing exhibit materials. Review the condition of materials prior to exhibition to determine if they may be safely displayed. Work with Special Collections and other departments to ensure the use of safe display materials, provide adequate object support, and limit exhibit duration. Maintain appropriate temperature, humidity, and light levels in display areas. Exhibit copies where possible.

Responsibilities

All University at Albany Libraries employees are responsible for ensuring that both the spirit and intent of this policy are fully implemented throughout the organization. All employees are responsible for the proper care and handling of the collections, including protecting the collections from damage and loss through patron education and outreach.

Administration: Ensure the preservation of the collection through the authorization of funding, policies and procedures that provide a framework for the continuing care of library materials.

Collection Development: Acquire new holdings in the most permanent media possible to help ensure their longevity and minimize the cost of preservation. Bibliographers review lost and

stolen titles, as well as damaged and brittle materials, and make recommendations for their replacement or withdrawal from the collection.

Preservation Department: Remain knowledgeable about preservation and conservation standards, guidelines, trends, technology, and best practices. Preservation staff shall monitor developments in preservation techniques to ensure the use of the most effective methods available and shall participate in the research, development, testing and evaluation of preservation technology.

Establish standards for temperature, relative humidity, light levels, and pollutants in the University Libraries. Monitor environmental conditions. Work with Library Administration to maintain appropriate environmental controls.

Manage the review of irreparable holdings in cooperation with Bibliographers and ensure responsible withdrawal, replacement, or reformatting. Manage the repair, conservation, rehousing and reformatting of damaged holdings.

Conduct on-going staff training in preservation.

Obtain external grant funding to support preservation operations in the University Libraries.

Coordinate preservation efforts with those of other regional, state, and national libraries.

Special Collections & Archives: Acquire, process, exhibit and store valued materials using resources and methods that promote their long-term preservation. Require readers to use surrogates where the originals are so fragile that using them will cause further damage.

Technical Services: Process holdings using materials and methods that promote long-term access to the collections. Ensure that commercial binding services meet national standards and that options are properly applied. Provide cataloging services to support the reformatting of damaged holdings.

User Services: Protect the collections from damage and loss through maintenance and implementation of security and emergency procedures, proper shelf maintenance activities, identification and routing of damaged materials for preservation action, and proper packing and shipping of library holdings. Interlibrary Loan practices will be in keeping with guidelines set forth by the American Library Association, including the *Interlibrary Loan Code for the United States*.¹

Definitions

Preservation: Preservation includes all managerial and financial considerations related to proper storage, staffing levels, policies, techniques, and methods involved in preserving library and archive materials and the information contained therein.² Preservation is the action taken to:

¹ Prepared by the Interlibrary Loan Committee, Reference and User Services Association, 1994, revised 2001. Approved by the RUSA Board of Directors January 2001.

² Based on Miriam Foot, *Building Blocks for a Preservation Policy* (London: The National Preservation Office, 2001): 1.

prevent, stop, or retard deterioration of all library materials in all media; prevent their theft or loss; where possible, improve their condition; and, as necessary and appropriate, change their format in order to preserve their intellectual content.³

Preventive Care: The mitigation of deterioration and damage to cultural property through the formulation and implementation of policies and procedures for the following: appropriate environmental conditions; handling and maintenance procedures for storage, exhibition, packing, transport, and use; integrated pest management; emergency preparedness and response, and reformatting/duplication.⁴

Last updated April 25, 2007

³From Columbia University Libraries, Collection Development, Preservation Policy, www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/services/colldev/preservation-policy.html (Accessed 7/21/2005).

⁴ AIC, Directory (Washington, D.C.: 2005): 19.