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# Curating Collective Collections-Library Logistics: Archiving and Servicing Shared Print Monographs

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# Curating Collective Collections — Library Logistics: Archiving & Servicing Shared Print Monographs

by **Rick Lugg** (Partner, Sustainable Collection Services LLC) <rick@sustainablecollections.com>



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**Michael K. Buckland**, in his 1992 manifesto on *Redesigning Library Services*,<sup>1</sup> highlights two functions of library print collections.

- **Preservation role:** Works are collected and archived to assure the completeness and security of the scholarly and cultural record. The view is toward the future and all users. "...it remains prudent to retain two or more copies designated as archival copies and carefully stored at different locations under suitable conditions."
- **Dispensing role:** "The principal reason for most investment in collection development is not preservation but the need to provide convenient access to materials that people want to see where they want to see them." The view is toward the present and local users. For print works, this means, first, a copy on hand, and a

distant second, accessibility via direct borrowing or inter-library loan.

**Buckland** goes on to note that the dispensing role accounts for "the great preponderance of libraries' operating costs and space needs" and that "local storage is no longer a necessary condition for convenient access with electronic collections."

In 1992, when the *Manifesto* was written, a well-cared-for print collection played both the preservation and dispensing roles. Selectors labored to choose books that would circulate and provide lasting value to their communities. Books were acquired both for immediate use and for the ages. Large print collections were amassed and preserved to provide both security and convenient local access (and of course to assert the status of one's library). Each library supported its own present and future user needs with the best onsite print collection it could af-

ford. Volume count was an important metric in library ranking and in accreditation. While seldom fully adequate, large-scale preservation programs were funded and implemented in many libraries.

Twenty years later, the picture has changed substantially. Preservation is becoming a network-level enterprise. It is also becoming a digital enterprise, with print in a supporting role. The HathiTrust Digital Library now contains the full text of 5.4 million books in a TRAC-certified archive.<sup>2</sup> 74% of those titles are also held in print by more than ten libraries,<sup>3</sup> many in facilities with environmental and access controls. In August 2011, the HathiTrust Constitutional Convention voted to create a distributed print archive corresponding to its digitized titles.<sup>4</sup> Regional print monograph initiatives in Maine, Florida, and Michigan have begun to focus on suitable levels of redundancy. When making deselection decisions, individual libraries routinely check the number of holdings in other libraries, at national, regional, and state levels. Last-copy discussions and agreements continue to expand. The concept of the collective collection is gaining prominence. In short, the infrastructure for regional or national preservation programs is being built — with the assumption of *shared* rather than individual responsibility.

The library's "dispensing" role has also evolved, but more toward a regional or sub-network-level enterprise. Improved discovery tools, direct borrowing programs, ILL, and courier services enable convenient and cost-effective sharing of print resources across institutions. Long-standing regional efforts such as OhioLINK, MOBIUS, Five Colleges, MeLCat, TUG, and Borrow Direct now assure 24-72 hour delivery of physical materials among partner institutions. In part, greater shared use of print collections is a response to a continuing decline in circulation (a 37% drop between 2002-2008, according to NCES figures<sup>5</sup>). Lower demand requires fewer copies. This enables reduction of "surplus" copies without affecting patron access. It also enables discovery and delivery costs to be amortized across a broader base of participants; that is, the dispensing role can be shared.

It seems likely that demand for print will continue to erode, as digital delivery of book-length content becomes more common. Already, 2.8 million full-text public domain titles in HathiTrust can be served up with a click.<sup>6</sup> Commercial eBook editions of hundreds of thousands of titles are available through a variety of business models. Shared patron-driven acquisitions experiments for eBooks are underway in many consortia. Over time, print-on-demand

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## News From the Field

✧ Those interested in shared print archiving are invited to join the ALA Print Archiving Community Forum meeting, an informal gathering at ALA Annual and Midwinter on Friday mornings from 9-noon. To keep informed about the group, one may subscribe to the PAN listserv. Please contact **Marie Waltz** at <mwaltz@crl.edu> for details.

✧ **Constance Malpas** has informed us that the final report of Print Archives Disclosure Pilot Project is now available at [https://docs.google.com/document/pub?id=1iM86\\_QRG0vBXqIRwezIA2pOANJdlqmlAnSS\\_t31WgNU](https://docs.google.com/document/pub?id=1iM86_QRG0vBXqIRwezIA2pOANJdlqmlAnSS_t31WgNU). Completed by a partnership of nine organizations, the project documents and tests a proposed method for registering print archiving commitments using existing bibliographic infrastructure. Building on prior work by OCLC Research and others, this new report describes and provides a rationale for a recommended approach to disclosing print archive collections, describes record creation and resource-sharing tests undertaken by pilot sites, and identifies critical technical, operational, and cost considerations associated with implementation of the proposed method. Appendices include detailed metadata guidelines, sample data, and an implementation checklist.

✧ The Maine Shared Collections Strategy has developed a useful Website <http://mainefonet.net/mscs/> to share information about this statewide project in which nine partners are collaborating to broaden library collection access across the state of Maine. **Valerie Glenn**, Program Manager, has announced that searchable Meeting Summaries of the various committees are now available. These provide a rewarding glimpse into issues they are wrestling with as they fashion a multi-type, state-wide shared print archive.

✧ Seven Michigan academic library members of the Midwest Collaborative Library Services are collaborating with Sustainable Collections Services (SCS) on a Shared Print Initiative pilot project to develop a shared print archive. For more information contact **Doug Way**, Head of Collections at Grand Valley State University or **Rick Lugg**, SCS.

✧ From Golden State, **Bob Kieft** reports that California academic and public library members of Link+ (<http://csul.iii.com/screens/members.html>) are in the early stages of thinking about a collection analysis project that may pave the way for collective attention to older print materials among their 33,000,000 vols. Similarly, Statewide California Electronic Library Consortium (SCELC, <http://scelc.org/>) is beginning to discuss approaches to shared print for its members' 23,000,000 vols. The California State University System (<http://www.calstate.edu/>), some of whose campuses are members of Link+ or SCELC, are also beginning a process for getting advice on planning for collaborative archiving of print collections. 🐼

will play a greater part in dispensing books (or parts of books); shared infrastructure can make this cost-effective. Further optimization of the “dispensing” function will require fewer copies of each titles, but it will also require the development of better discovery and logistics capabilities, as noted in *Cloud-sourcing Research Collections*: “The absence of a robust discovery and delivery service based on collective print storage holdings is an impediment to changed print management strategies, especially for digitized titles in copyright.”

No matter how much each role evolves, however, preservation and use will never be entirely compatible. They never have been. In an all-print world, a delicate balance was struck, and a certain amount of risk tolerated. Any book loaned might be damaged or lost; any book too well-protected might never be used. To date, we have relied tacitly on a **LOCKSS**-style (lots of copies keeps stuff safe) approach; it is safe to lend because there are many other copies in the collective collection.

But most libraries are now rethinking their investments in local print collections, and surplus copies of low-use titles are beginning to disappear from shelves. This is a healthy development, but it needs to be deliberately managed. The competing objectives of preserving and dispensing content need close attention as we begin to draw down print collections. As a community we need to coordinate these growing deselection efforts and to take a more specialized approach to each function.

This distinction is underdeveloped in discussions of shared print management. I suspect this is largely because those efforts are at present focused on journals. With journals, a single copy can often support both archiving and distribution, because article scanning and document delivery are well-developed systems, and because articles are shorter than books. This allows a print journal volume to be protected, but also for its contents to be disseminated. Monographs will require a different model, at least for the foreseeable future. It will most often involve the delivery of a copy to a user. This puts that copy at risk, highlighting the need to assure preservation via other copies.

Here’s my suggestion: Separate the archiving and dispensing functions entirely. Dedicate different copies from the collective collection to serve each function. Build specialized operations for archiving and servicing, each optimized for its own purpose, rather than blended operations trying to serve both. Establish *regional archiving centers* to hold and curate “archive copies.” Establish *regional service centers* to innovate and optimize discovery and delivery of “service copies.” By treating the archiving and dispensing functions discretely, fewer copies will be needed overall. Once collection integrity has been assured by “archive cop-

ies,” then “service copies” can be deployed more creatively and aggressively.

### Archive Copies

Archiving is the first priority. Archive copies should be defined to include both digital and print components. To be considered fully secure, a monograph would reside in a trusted digital archive such as **HathiTrust**, with that digital version supplemented by multiple print copies, held in either a dark or dim archive. In a dark archive, books reside in a climate-controlled and access-controlled environment; copies would be used only for re-digitization. In a dim archive, climate and access controls remain in place, but copies could be consulted onsite or used for non-destructive scanning and re-digitization.

In its “*What to Withdraw*” study,<sup>8</sup> which focused on **JSTOR** journals, **Ithaka Strategy + Research** determined that two page-verified, dark-archived print copies of each digitized journal were needed to provide adequate back-up to **JSTOR** and **Portico**. It is unclear whether the same threshold would apply to books. Even if it does, a different approach may be necessary. Page verification is enormously labor-intensive (not to mention boring!), especially if designated archive copies are distributed across multiple locations. Absent page verification, it will be necessary to retain more than two “archive copies.” Further research will be needed to determine how many, and that number may depend on whether the archive is dim or dark.

The academic community will need to agree on these parameters for risk management, which will take time. But ultimately, responsibility for archive copies could be distributed across a group of regional storage facilities. This might be coordinated through **HathiTrust** (already embarking on a distributed print archive for monographs), or might rely on voluntary commitments. Copies in regional archiving centers (or distributed archive copies) would not leave their climate/access-controlled environment, except for additional preservation work or re-digitization. A successful program would require explicit preservation commitments, disclosed through the MARC 583 field, similar to the process now being developed for journals.

Building such a system or network for archive copies would clearly be a major undertaking. But it only has to be done once, and parts of it are already in place. According to *Cloud-sourcing Research Collections*, “most **Hathi** content is also held in trusted print repositories with preservation and access services. “In addition, there are many benefits to specialization. First, there is clarity of purpose. Archive copies secure the cultural and scholarly record, with a certified digital copy and multiple dark archive copies of every book. This provides the foundation for the integrity of the collective collection. Second, regional archiving centers can be optimized for content protection. Digitization can be prioritized for titles not yet contributed to **Hathi**. Preservation efforts can be stepped up for copies designated for archiving. And of equal importance, *we can release all other*

copies of these books for very different treatment. They become “service copies.”

### Service Copies

Once all book content has been secured, we can think differently about how best to serve users with the remaining copies — or viable substitutes for them. Instead of a semi-protected collection, we can work with an active, well-managed inventory of “service

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copies.” We don’t need to worry about loss or damage in quite the same way. We can reduce the number of copies to match anticipated demand (which will be low, since this work will initially involve the least-used titles). We can focus on distribution, speed of delivery, and convenience.

Regional service centers might look radically different than existing storage facilities. Whereas regional *archive* facilities would be optimized for long-term curation, regional *service* centers would be optimized for long-tail inventory management and rapid delivery directly to homes, offices, and desktops. Because we know that no content is at risk, we can experiment with different techniques.

In some respects, a regional service center might resemble a library crossed with a vendor. Servicing of shared print collections could benefit from the expertise of large-scale book distributors like **Ingram, Follett, or Baker & Taylor**, to automate, improve “turns,” and reduce transaction costs. The library world in general could learn from logistics experts at **UPS or Amazon**, and locate service centers near airport hubs and highways. Service from regional library centers should be built to include 24-hour delivery direct-to-user, email order confirmation and tracking capability, real-time display of availability, and perhaps even the option to purchase via partner relationships. It might be worthwhile to consider outsourcing these long-tail inventory management functions to vendors, enabling libraries to specialize in archiving, selection, and discovery.

Within the regional service centers, use can be monitored, and inventory adjusted. For titles with no use, service copy levels could be drawn down to one or even zero, in the knowledge that archive copies exist, or that other avenues are available for re-acquisition if necessary. A title may be available as a commercial eBook, either to rent or to buy. Inexpensive copies may be available on the used book market. Print-on-demand may be available. Scanning and electronic delivery of chapters might be supported. These all become viable options for service copies, because the content is otherwise secured. In many cases, re-purchase of a service copy when needed may be more cost-effective than storing low-use titles over time. In short, service copies can be managed based on demand, using techniques drawn from other industries.

Admittedly, this level of specialization is quite different than the profession’s current approach. Not everyone will agree with this, and it will be costly to set up initially. Other avenues are certainly possible. A widely-distributed light archive, which is essentially our current approach, shares risk and inventory reasonably well. But light archives require broader and deeper retention of low-use materials, and involve their own significant cost. The conflation of archiving and service functions (especially at larger scale) does confuse the issue, as these are very different functions. Trying to serve two masters can lead to sub-optimized service and at-risk content. Wherever we may end up, it’s worth thinking through the advantages of specialization.<sup>9</sup> 🐾

## against the grain people profile

### Sheri E. Dean

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**BORN AND LIVED:** I was born in Philadelphia, raised in North Carolina. Lived in various cities for work and college including Washington, DC, Houston, TX, and San Francisco, CA.

**PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES:** I’ve been in publishing for nearly 20 years. Began my career as an unpaid intern and worked my way up from there. Incredibly lucky to have been with some of the best publishers, including **Morgan Kaufmann, Elsevier, Business Expert Press, and Momentum Press.**

**FAMILY:** My family are three amazing dogs — Daisy, Happy, and Mojo!

**IN MY SPARE TIME:** In my spare time, I’m hiking, camping, and drinking wine. I often visit my parents, now in their mid-eighties, married 62 years. I have a very close family of sisters, brother, and dozens of nephews, nieces, and now great nephews and nieces. I’m a vegetarian and am always trying new recipes!

**FAVORITE BOOKS:** A few of my favorite books include **Ken Follett’s Pillars of the Earth** and **World Without End**, as well as **Atlas Shrugged** and **Cold Mountain.**

**PET PEEVES:** Animal abusers, litterbugs, and dumb politicians.

**PHILOSOPHY:** My philosophy is — When life sucks, sit on a screen porch with some dogs and great wine while it’s raining — that fixes everything.

**MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT:** Going from an unpaid internship at Barrett-Koehler to Director of Sales & Marketing now — I just knew publishing was for me.

**GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW:** Five years from now I hope to be able to say — I was in on the ground floor of two unique and hardworking publishers, **Momentum Press and Business Expert Press**, and I was a part of their success today.

**HOW/WHERE I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS:** Five years from now, I’d like to see third world countries have more access to free textbooks, online resources, and better discoverability. Shutting out any audience that wants to learn is unforgivable. 🐾



#### Endnotes

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