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Remote Storage and Pritzker Legal Research Center -- Figuring Out How to Do More with Less

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Remote Storage and Pritzker Legal Research Center — Figuring Out How to Do More with Less

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Getting Ready and Beginning Work

Pritzker Legal Research Center is the library for **Northwestern University School of Law** (“Northwestern Law”). As with many long-established libraries, we hold many older print materials, a significant portion of which are now reliably available electronically. The library expects to renovate its physical space, though that will likely entail a smaller footprint and less stack capacity.

In late 2010, the then-Associate Dean for Information Services asked our librarians to develop a plan detailing which materials would move off-site were the library to reduce its shelving capacity by up to 55%. In late spring, 2011, the librarians completed the plan, which consists of a series of rules for what to keep on-site and what to move to remote storage. The rules vary a bit from collection to collection within the library, but by and large they say to send off-site:

1. those print materials which do not require extensive browsing, and for which there is reliable electronic access; and
2. many older materials (regardless of electronic access) which have seen little use in the past 20 years.

While **Pritzker** planned, the University was building the first module of its **Oak Grove Library Center**, which opened in late fall, 2011. During the facility’s first two years of operation, the University Library and the **Galter Health Sciences Library** sent materials there. (A similar deselection project at the **Galter Health Sciences Library** is also detailed in this issue.)

As a construction project at **Northwestern Law** was about to break ground in spring, 2014, **Pritzker** became aware that about 5,000 vol-

umes stored in our basement would need to be moved to allow construction crews access to a particular area. In our 2011 plan, we had identified these volumes to send off-site. These were sent during a three-week period in February and March, 2014. Later that spring, the **Galter Health Sciences Library** completed sending its weekly loads to **Oak Grove**, freeing up system capacity for **Pritzker** to begin sending materials. Following our 2011 plan, we have been sending weekly loads of materials since June, 2014, with occasional breaks.

Specifics on Doing the Work

Because we need to prepare weekly shipments with a lean staff, we have found a few ways to achieve maximum efficiencies.

First, our University Library colleague **Gary Strawn** helped us by modifying the

Oak Grove Assistant program he developed for **Northwestern’s** internal use with Voyager. The modifications allow us to change item records in bulk by having Oak Grove Assistant process .txt files of scanned barcodes rather than scanning barcodes one-by-one into the program. Second, we decided to minimize the handling of materials. With the software modifications discussed above, we could pack the materials into totes in the stacks, instead of moving all volumes on trucks to a workstation for scanning and packing. The filled totes are moved from

the stacks to our loading dock each week by facilities staff, which also drops off empty totes in the stacks.

In some cases, the staff use a laptop and portable barcode scanner to create the files of scanned barcodes that are emailed to be processed. In others, staff members pack the entire run without scanning, and the necessary database work is done with a related piece of software making batch changes to Voyager. The first approach works best when picking non-sequential volumes from an area (such as a portion of the monographs). The second approach works better when an entire run of a serial is being sent off-site.

There is typically a bit of cleanup work to do after the data are processed. However, this takes relatively little time compared to moving volumes and processing them one-

by-one at a workstation, and has allowed **Pritzker** to continue work on an important project through a period of lean staffing and staff turnover.

We estimate our **Oak Grove** project will take about three years total to complete. At the end of that time, we expect to have on site a more compact

and fresher-appearing collection that will be of greater use to our patrons, while allowing for changes to library space that accommodate contemporary usage patterns. 🌱



The Joe and Rika Mansueto ... from page 22

A number of selection options were considered: selecting clusters of subject-related materials in areas of low research/teaching interest, selecting duplicates and closely related editions, selecting materials by format or type which do not have close subject classification (e.g., dissertations, microforms, etc.), transferring materials that were already shelved in non-browsable locations, and transferring bound serial volumes from library stacks. After much discussion and consultation with faculty advisors, the Library chose to focus on the transfer

of bound serials volumes, with highest priority being those available as online full-text equivalents or well indexed in online databases. In addition, extremely large oversized volumes (aka “elephant folios”) and archival materials, which also are of limited value for browsing, are located on special racks in the facility. As of June 30, 2014 the **Mansueto Library** contained nearly 1.2 million items.

In addition to providing greatly expanded shelving capacity, the construction of the **Mansueto Library** provided space for library services and for scholars and students. A state of the art conservation laboratory and space for the Library’s digital preservation program staff and equipment were included

in **Mansueto**, and, while not directly related to its function as a storage library, a grand reading room “under the dome” provides a unique environment for consulting materials from the collection or for other scholarly work or study and has become a popular destination for students on campus. 🌱

Endnotes

1. <http://mansueto.lib.uchicago.edu/>
2. The Joe and Rika Mansueto Library: Director’s Message <http://mansueto.lib.uchicago.edu/director.html> (accessed Feb. 19, 2015).