

2015

# Let's Get Technical--A Technical Services Perspective on Taking on a Shared Retention Project, Part 1

Stacey Marien

*American University Library*, [smarien@american.edu](mailto:smarien@american.edu)

Alayne Mundt

*American University Library*, [mundt@american.edu](mailto:mundt@american.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Marien, Stacey and Mundt, Alayne (2015) "Let's Get Technical--A Technical Services Perspective on Taking on a Shared Retention Project, Part 1," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 27: Iss. 5, Article 42.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.7208>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.

# Let's Get Technical — A Technical Services Perspective on Taking on a Shared Retention Project, Part 1

Column Editors: **Stacey Marien** (Acquisitions Librarian, American University Library) <smarien@american.edu>

and **Alayne Mundt** (Resource Description Librarian, American University Library) <mundt@american.edu>

In 2014, **American University**, in conjunction with the other eight **WRLC (Washington Research Library Consortium)** schools, entered into a memorandum of understanding to commit to coordinating, retaining, and sharing collections, preserving rarely held items, and make better use of library resources and spaces. As part of this project **WRLC** contracted the services of Sustainable Collections Services to conduct an analysis of the nine **WRLC** libraries' shared collections. This analysis was done in order to identify rarely held materials at each of the libraries, provide insight that would allow for strategic management of the library collections, and ensure retention of materials across the consortium and across the library community. An additional goal of the project was to ensure that the **WRLC's** Shared Collections Facility (SCF) is being used appropriately as a repository of library assets while preventing unnecessary duplication within the SCF.

These types of shared retention projects are becoming increasingly common as libraries and consortia reduce their print collections in favor of increasing electronic collections and using library space for collaboration and other activities. The goals of reducing collections responsibly include aiming to retain unique and little held titles and also to prevent duplication and redundancy. These retention projects can analyze where collections are strong and are getting the most use so that library resources can be allocated where they are most needed.

With these goals in mind, **WRLC** and its member libraries entered into an agreement with **Sustainable Collections Services (SCS)** to conduct an analysis of our shared collection. Several task forces and pre-existing **WRLC** committees were involved in getting the project off the ground. These groups set up local policies, drafted the scope of the retention commitments, and addressed other goals such as reducing redundancy at our shared storage facility. Perhaps because this project was so closely related to the collections side of librarianship, technical services librarians were not involved in many of the initial policymaking and workflow discussions and decisions. We felt this was a mistake, as many errors in the implementation process could have been avoided with more input from the technical services staff.

Although our consortia is not the first to participate in one of these retention projects, the configuration of our shared catalog and our

shared offsite storage center have added some unique challenges to implementing the goals of the retention project. In order to identify the different types of markers needed for achieving the goals of the project, it was decided that using location codes in the shared catalog would be the easiest means of identifying and managing the various commitments. These location codes are:

**XXXPERM**: for items identified as being "cultural heritage" (i.e., having ten or fewer holdings within the U.S.)

**XXXRET**: for items we are committing to retain up to two copies of within the consortia

**XXXDUP**: for items identified as already having two duplicates already within the shared storage facility

**XXXDIS**: for items that have been discarded in favor of a shared retention copy for the consortia.

It was decided that location codes would be a better marker of these different commitments instead of a note in an item or holding record for several reasons. Using a location code instead of a note would ease running reports or searching for different statuses. It would make identification by circulation staff and **WRLC** processing staff much easier. Location codes would also ease performing batch processing of records, and would lower the impact on system performance by allowing batch processing using Voyager's pick-and-scan function, which is a factor when considering making significant changes to a database containing roughly

11 million records. Pick-and-scan uses barcodes and works easily with location code changes, while Voyager's Global Data Change module relies on bibliographic and holdings i.d. numbers to make changes to records and places greater stress on overall systems performance when making batch changes on a large scale. Thus, for every location code that originally existed at each **WRLC** school and the shared storage facility, four new location codes were created with the above additions, adding more than 600 new location codes into our shared catalog, and at least 33 so far for our university alone. This has had a significant impact on several local workflows and has generated a great deal of confusion and uncertainty amongst staff in Cataloging and Acquisitions as well as at all of the participating **WRLC** schools. Some issues that have arisen concern how to handle replacements when books are lost or damaged, how to correct errors, as well as how to

work with other schools and **WRLC** Central to communicate information about moving retention commitments from one school to another. There has also been confusion on where to send questions now that the task force has completed their work. **Stacey** and I plan to address these issues in more detail in future columns.

The batch location code changes were performed over the course of one or two months across the consortia's shared catalog at the end of 2014. They were based on the analysis performed by **Sustainable Collections Services** in April 2014. However, as we all know, library catalogs are living, non-static entities, and unfortunately, a good deal of information had changed in the months between the analysis and the batch location changes. This is compounded by the fact that we were still in the process of moving 100,000 items to storage, which we outlined in a previous column. Additionally, there were problems identified with the project's dataset when the location changes were made. Some of the problems that occurred were professor-owned copies of books from Reserves being accidentally included as retention copies when they shouldn't have been. We also discovered our Visual Arts Collection of nearly 30,000 titles was accidentally left out of the analysis. Any item that had gone through a location change since the initial analysis, such as items moving to the stacks from Reference, had an erroneous location code applied. Many of these errors were able to be corrected using the log files from the pick-and-scan process, and the analysis was re-run to include our Visual Arts Collection and exclude items on Reserves. There was also a rerun of the analysis and reallocation of retention commitments when one school in the consortia was unable to participate in the project. Additionally, the new location codes were not initially included in the limits in our discovery layer, Summon. Although these issues were fixed relatively easily, if technical services staff had been included in some of the initial planning, some of the issues would have not occurred in the first place, and provisions could likely have been put in place to minimize some of the errors that resulted when the location changes were made.

Although the projects and associated processes with it have been confusing for staff and have complicated certain workflows to the point of bringing work to a standstill while we resolve questions, there have been some ancillary benefits on the technical services side. As a part of the analysis done by **Sustainable Collections Services**, we were

*continued on page 85*



**Let's Get Technical**  
from page 84

provided with several remediation lists that have enabled us to do systematic database cleanup in certain areas. We have been able to do a clean-up of records for which the title and author in records in our local database did not match the corresponding record in OCLC, records that did not have holdings set in OCLC, and records lacking an OCLC number.

Projects such as these are not necessarily meant to be perfect in their execution. When performing any process with nine million records, there are bound to be errors and inconsistencies. For example, the task force that outlined the scope of the project, retention commitments and criteria, acknowledged in their final report that there are bound to be errors with the data set, and they did not recommend an inventory of titles identified for retention as a good use of resources. However, it is the technical services staff that often carries out and maintains the day-to-day and title-by-title issues as they come up, and it is imperative that they should be included in the decision-making process with projects such as these from the beginning. Doing so will reduce potential errors and will improve the overall outcome of the project. 🌿

**Rumors**  
from page 71

Many of you have searched the online *ATG* archive at **Purdue University Press**. It's a fabulous place to start looking for library issues and history. I had forgotten that **Lucretia** guest edited the 2000 **Millennium issue** of *ATG*, for example! Check it out! <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/>

Speaking of library issues and history — It was great to run into **Leigh Watson-Healey** at the **Outsell Signature Event**. **Leigh** is the lead analyst for **Outsell** and speaks and writes frequently about key trends and issues in the information industry. Me, I remember when **Leigh** worked for **Faxon, Dick Rowe, and Becky Lenzini!**

And talking about old friends, I was excited to see names of two old *ATG* friends in the issue — **Tom Izbicki** (**Collecting to the Core – The Renaissance**, this issue, p.56 and **Xan Arch** (**Reflections on the 2011 PDA issue**, this issue, p.26.) I remember that **Thomas** used to be at **Johns Hopkins** and **Xan** used to be at **Stanford**. We will see **Xan** at the **Charleston Conference** this year.

<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3827&context=atg>  
<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2589&context=atg>

Another old friend, **Bob Holley** tells us in this issue (p.70) that there is a new **ALA Retired Members Roundtable (RMRT)** which will keep up with professional activities by members since retirement. Hmmm, there are plenty of active retirees. Look at our mentors at the **Charleston Conference**. And — **Derek Law**, now retired, is enjoying his grandfatherly duties BUT he will also give the **Charleston Conference** closing session!

**OH! This is very relevant to this guest edited issue on STLs and Emerging eBook Business Models!** Did y'all see that the incredible **Chuck Hamaker** of UNC-Charlotte has put together the **Charlotte Initiative: Permanent Acquisitions of eBooks for Academic libraries**. This spring, the **Atkins Library** at UNC-C received a grant of \$271,000 from the **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** for a two-year research and planning grant to produce recommendations for the licensing and

*continued on page 89*



# Evolutionary Ecology Research

MICHAEL L. ROSENZWEIG — EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

---

*"The report of my death...is greatly exaggerated."* — Mark Twain

- **Pioneer open-access-green-road journal**  
[www.Evolutionary-Ecology.com](http://www.Evolutionary-Ecology.com)
- **Your gadfly to the publishing world**
- **Cooperating with librarians since 1999**
- **Illustrious, international board of editors**
- **Start a subscription or renew now:**  
Contact [scarab@u.arizona.edu](mailto:scarab@u.arizona.edu) or your journal service.



**turpin**  
distribution

A 360° SERVICE DELIVERING GLOBAL FULFILMENT SOLUTIONS

---

### BOOK FULFILMENT

At Turpin we understand the importance of providing a timely and efficient fulfilment service for your book customers. We support many thousands of customers throughout the global arena on a daily basis – to include key trade accounts, internet e-tailers, academic institutions and individuals. Core services include:

- Full EDI integration for key trade accounts
- Amazon Advantage programme compliant
- Bespoke P&A data feeds for improved product discoverability
- Comprehensive consolidation service for reduced shipping costs
- Dedicated key trade customer advisors
- Electronic delivery of all invoice and shipping documentation
- State-of-the-art warehouse management system providing real time access to stock levels

---

### SUBSCRIPTION MANAGEMENT

We can handle every aspect of the subscription fulfilment process for you, from order processing to claims handling, payment collection, renewal campaigns and label production and mailing.

We can support all types of subscription products and business models using multiple currency pricing and payment options. With over 40 years experience in the business we have developed extensive partnerships with subscription agents and online hosts to ensure there is a seamless transition from order to activation.

---

For more information about our services please contact Neil Castle or Bob Rooney and we will be delighted to discuss how Turpin can assist you with your print and digital distribution.

Neil Castle - Commercial Director - UK  
E: [Neil.Castle@turpin-distribution.com](mailto:Neil.Castle@turpin-distribution.com)  
T: +44 (0)1767 604868

Bob Rooney VP Publisher Relations - US  
E: [Robert.Rooney@turpin-distribution.com](mailto:Robert.Rooney@turpin-distribution.com)  
T: 001 860 318 5330