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# Let's Get Technical: Working Together to Move Titles to Off-Site Storage

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# Let's Get Technical — Working Together to Move Titles to Off-Site Storage

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In our previous *ATG* article, “Workflow Collaboration at the American University Library” (v.26#6, Dec. 2014-Jan. 2015), **Alayne** and I detailed the first time the Acquisitions and Cataloging units at **American University Library** collaborated on a project. In this article, we describe how we came together to work on moving over 100,000 volumes to our off-site storage facility.

## The Situation

Over the course of the past two years and up to the present, the Technical Services unit has moved over 100,000 volumes from our stacks to our consortium’s (WRLC) off-site storage unit, located about an hour away from the **American University** campus, in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. The moving of all these volumes was done in order to create more study space for students in the library. Before the massive relocation occurred, there had been a small-scale weeding project involving the science librarian and the librarian responsible for collecting in philosophy and religion. This small weeding project took place a couple of years before the big push to move low-use books offsite. Both those librarians identified titles to be moved and asked their respective faculty to review the titles. Cataloging handled all of the technical aspects of that project.

There are three ways that the bulk of the titles are being identified and diverted to cataloging in order to be moved off-site. Since the timeframe was tight and we had no formal weeding policy, a quick and dirty criterion is being used to pull the volumes. If the publication date was 1980 or earlier and had no circulation statistics since 1998 (when our library implemented the Voyager system), the title is pulled. The head of Circulation runs the title lists for the student workers to locate the books. He excludes any titles that are charged to administrative accounts, such as processing and repair. The student workers take the titles off the shelves and put them in an area in Technical Services for the Cataloging and Acquisitions staff to review. The process of identifying the titles is more complicated than just running a report as we are dealing with many multi-volume sets. Certain criteria are set up in evaluating the multi-volume sets, and it is complicated enough to warrant a separate article.

The second way the titles are identified for weeding is to evaluate the books that are damaged and routed to Acquisitions from the

Circulation Department. The Circulation staff has loose criteria to identify damaged books. If a book is checked out with damage, a note is made in the circulation record so that when it is returned, the book is placed on a cart for the processing unit. When the books are returned, they are also examined for obvious damage. The books can also be identified when the student workers are in the stacks doing tasks such as shifting or shelving. The number of damaged books spike at the end of the semester. The cart of damaged books is then given to Processing, and a form is filled out for the Collection Managers to review. A decision can be made for the book to be replaced and moved to off-site storage or to just be sent without being replaced.

The third and final way titles are identified to be moved is from a one-time dismantling of our reference collection. Decisions are made by the Collection Managers about retaining reference titles that would then be moved to the stacks or would be moved to off-site storage.

## The Logistics

Once the books slated to be sent to off-site storage are staged for cataloging work to be done, they are placed on shelving in Technical Services. Cataloging student workers have been trained by Circulation staff to pull books, so they are able to work on all aspects of the move to storage workflow: pulling, staging, database work, and boxing. This has

ensured that there is always work for students to do and there is no downtime due to delays in pulling from Circulation. Cataloging staff, student workers, and Acquisitions staff involved in

the move-to-storage project, pull books to be worked on from the staging shelves. There is no proscribed order for working on books, so titles can be pulled at random. Cataloging has developed two sets of procedures for books being moved to storage. One procedure is for single-volume books, which is primarily used by student workers, and the other procedure is for more complex problem resolution and multivolume sets. This is because the location change procedures for the two categories of materials are treated differently in the catalog.

Instructions for working on books being sent to storage include:

- Looking the books up by call number to ensure that the book in hand matches the corresponding bibliographic record.

- Checking that multiple date elements in the record match each other and the book in hand.
- The ISBN.
- Pagination.
- Title statement matches the book in hand.
- Publishing statement matches the book in hand.
- Location code.
- Barcode matches the book in hand.

If any of these elements do not match or are incorrect and they are being worked on by students, the books are set aside for full-time staff to correct.

Students have been trained to scan the barcode and create an item record for monographs that did not have them, and to change the location code to identify them as a book that will be stored in the off-site storage facility. They place any books that have incorrect elements or other problems in a special shelving unit for full-time staff to correct.

Because multivolume sets are more complicated and need to be treated differently in the catalog because of display issues, work on them is reserved for full-time staff. The same bibliographic elements are checked as for single volumes, in addition to:

- Certain fixed field elements.
- Holdings statement in the holdings record matches what we actually have.
- Individual volume information in the item record is correct.
- Additionally, we add a note into the holdings record that displays in the catalog to indicate that the books are held at storage and can be requested through our consortium loan service.

The Acquisitions unit has been able to contribute significantly to this project over time. All Acquisitions staff members have been trained on the move to storage workflow. One Acquisitions Specialist has been trained on more complex elements of the project, and has taken on some problem resolution as well as oversight of Acquisitions student workers contributing to the project.

Additionally, our Processing Department, which is located within the Acquisitions Unit, has played a large role in this ongoing project by being able to evaluate books slated to be moved to off-site storage for damage or mold, and replacing or repairing books as necessary. The Processing and Serials Specialist has trained Cataloging Staff and student workers to evaluate books and route them to her for

*continued on page 77*



## Pelikan's Antidisambiguation from page 75

the unknown person or persons who made it possible for me to enjoy the work, I'm confronted with obvious, characteristic OCR errors in a recent eBook edition. Grumble.

But this shouldn't be the end of the story! Have you noticed that **Kovid Goyal's Calibre** (<http://caliber-ebook.com>) permits the editing of an eBook file? Regular readers of "**Anti-disambiguation**" (at least, those who would admit to it) will recognize my shout-out to this extraordinary open source software package. If you use an eBook reader, I mean, at all, you owe it to yourself to have a copy of **Calibre** installed somewhere.

All right, but say I use **Calibre** to fix an obvious OCR botch in an out-of-copyright work like **Grant's** — what then? Well, I'd have to sync the repaired file to the several eBook readers I maintain, as well as the file servers I keep at home for purposes of redundant backup. Ever looked into NAS RAID devices? These are a faintly miraculous technology, once accessible only among the corporate or the hopelessly geeky — now available to all! I presently employ three of these boxes on my home network, each containing two hard disk drives configured to mirror each other. Whilst they quiet the mind, they also exact a bit of overhead in terms of file management — but good file management will always entail a blend of good decisions and good practices.

The idea of applying corrective measures to an eBook differs only in degree from things we already do. Those controls on your audio devices labeled Bass and Treble? Those have been collectively referred to in the past not merely as Tone controls, but Equalization controls. The concept behind audio equalization is corrective. Recognizing that different listening environments have differing acoustic characteristics, as do the many and various transducers in use, thoughtful manufacturers of audio gear provided audio controls permitting one to tailor the frequency response of one's

audio gear to compensate. If your rugs and curtains absorb high frequencies resulting in, say, a six dB roll-off at 10 kilohertz, you can boost the response of your system at 10 kilohertz by six dB to "equalize" it.

Of course, many folks don't use these controls to equalize anything but, in fact, to de-equalize, indeed, to change the frequency response of their audio systems simply to suit their preferences. Those worthies cruising slowly down the street in the low car with dark windows and after-market muffler, whose audio system's subwoofer can be heard two blocks away, sending ripples through puddles like **Crichton's** T-Rex, melting their tympanic membranes — they're merely applying user preferences.

This appetite to configure, to tweak, to personalize, must cause despair, or at least shrugs, among the engineers and producers who struggle to achieve a particular sound in a produced recording. The thoughtless destruction of producer's and artist's wishes has been going on for a long time. Ever been in a discount store and heard one channel of a stereo recording in housewares and the other in lawn and garden? I recall a story my brother told of the fourth and last time he went to **Stanley Kubrick's** "*2001, A Space Odyssey*" — it was in 1969 at a drive-in theater in Indiana. It was raining heavily. You could just make out the screen through the fogged windows. The little metal speaker box hanging in one side window was struggling to handle "Also Sprach Zarathustra" with little success. Poor little thing...

I've long wished for there to be released the audio version of critical editions of recorded classics. As a darn-near-life-long multitrack audio production guy, there's nothing I'd like more than to get my hands on a multitrack version of particular classic recordings. As soon as the **Beatles** got past "Beatles '65" they were increasingly taking advantage of technical possibilities afforded them by their studio,

and opened by the skills of **George Martin**. **Hendrix's** early recordings were very simple. In the space of a few hundred days these artists were taking their music places few had gone before, and they were layering sound upon sound to do so. It was the audio equivalent of photo or motion picture compositing, placing elements of differing origin into seamless proximity with each other.

With a multitrack edition of these recordings, one could separate the original signals, listen to each individually, and gain a better understanding and appreciation for how the producer and the artist achieved such phenomenal results. Of course, it would require that a multi-channel mixer be part of the signal chain — but who wouldn't want that? And if a particular sound always seemed buried to you, you could bring it out in the mix! Conductors do this when they interpret a score in front of them, shaping the statement and balance of each of the parts of the score through guidance provided to the orchestra. Really, a musical score is a multitrack representation. So its counterpart in recorded music — that's all I'm asking for...

Blu-Ray and DVD editions of motion pictures often offer options in playback to include or exclude deleted scenes, to change language settings, etc. I've seen the occasional book, usually a children's book, that feature branching in the storyline, permitting exploration of alternate plotlines based upon decisions as you go.

I know it will probably not happen in my life time. Works of interpretation are works themselves — that's probably part of the reason why such a great idea won't easily come about. Royalties and Intellectual Property issues involving derivative works get complicated. But I'd be happy to sign a license attesting that I would not release a remix of Sergeant Pepper or Electric Ladyland — I would only take bits of them apart to see how they work. This isn't too different from standing in front of an artist's masterpiece in a museum with a sketchpad, working with charcoal and paper to understand what's going on in the painting or sculpture.

There are some promising prospects enabled by digital audio analysis. Some of the same algorithms that achieve noise removal through example (sample the offending waveform, then look for it in compound waveforms and separate it out, leaving a clean signal) can be used to "de-mix" a mixdown. It might be feasible before long to divide a favorite recording back into separate tracks.

If you're interested, there's an intriguing PhD dissertation at **Stanford's** Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics entitled "Interactive Sound Source Separation" by **Nicholas J. Bryan**. The dissertation is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 United States License. Google that title to find the pdf. Outstanding work. 🌸



## Let's Get Technical from page 76

triage, as well as to isolate any books that have mold.

After performing the check of bibliographic elements and changing the location code, books are reshelfed in the staging area on their spine. This signals to student workers that these books are ready for boxing to be sent to the off-site storage facility. Students track the number of books boxed on a spreadsheet so that we can report to our administrative office the number of volumes being sent, since we are charged by our consortia's main office for relocating them to the off-site storage facility. Our consortia office sends a truck to pick up the boxed books once a month.

## The Results

Since the move to storage project began in June 2012, we have relocated approximately 102,000 volumes to off-site storage, freeing up student study space within the library. The secondary benefit to the project has been cleanup of records and ensuring that books match the record they are attached to before sending them to off-site storage. This is in addition to evaluating the books conditions and having the opportunity to repair or replace damaged or moldy materials. 🌸