

Preservation 101: Basic Planning for Future Access to Collections - Transcript

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Good afternoon. Welcome to the webinar. Preservation 101: Basic Planning for the future basic acid for collection. I am Kathy Carmichael. David wall will also be joining us. Before we get started let me walk you through some housekeeping reminders. If you have any questions you would like to ask the presenter or any technical questions? Use the chat box. For a people on eight desktop or laptop computers. It is on the bottom, right-hand corner of your screen. I will take care and take keep track of all of the questions. We are recording today's sessions and email a link with slides for everyone that has registered for this webinar. We will also be sending you a certificate of completion. Using the email that you used to register. If anybody needs additional certificates? Because multiple people watched this webinar with you? Email us. And include today's title with the webinar and the email addresses of people needing certificates. Laptop users could use the full screen and the bottom of your screen. To exit the full screen mode? It will expand at the top. This includes on the blue return button to get to the root default view. At the end of the session will be sharing a webinar satisfaction survey with you. We will let you know when the survey is available. The link will appear in the chat box and would appreciate your feedback with comments. And the value of the webinar. Let me hand it over to David and he will take it from here.

Thank you, Kathy. Preservation 101. Preservation 101: Basic Planning for the future to collections. It is hard to know exactly where to begin on this because there are so much to say. What I have done in this webinar with very limited time that I have is to try to get some key highlights. The essentials. If there is something that you really wanted to hear or that we have talked about? If we get to the end of the webinar and if you did not hear your topic covered and let me know in the chat. I can do a follow-up Preservation 101: Basic Planning for the future part two. I would love to address the topics of interest that you have in the future. As librarians, we acquire, manage, and maintain access to a set of information materials for our users. We are teachers, advocates, and sometimes community sermons. We have many roles. We are also information asset managers. That is the term that I started using a long time ago. I started using from the financial industry, more. Assets are things that we value. Things that we treasure, things that we plan on managing. The information that we acquire and manage for our users is really our assets. How are they managed and how we protect them, preserve them determines their future useful access. Collections are vulnerable to a whole host of things. The objects, themselves have issues. Acidic paper becomes riddle. Acetate microforms become brittle and the K eventually to a vinegar syndrome. Documents can be destroyed through natural disasters. Building mechanical systems can fail and cause floods, fires, mold outbreaks. We know that humans, themselves, ourselves do a lot of just wear and tear on a collections that we use. Inevitably, there is vandalism, theft and even arson. That takes away from users. In the case of machine -dependent material there is hardware, software, and file format obsolescence. The one that is the worst is human neglect. Deciding to do nothing. Do not plan. Do not preserve. This is part based on inertia, the fact that we are all busy. Money is tight. Increasingly it is based on a belief that is false. That collections do not matter in their physical form because everything is already online. But we of course know better that it is not. I would like to define what preservation is. Preservation is not saving everything forever. Nobody has the money for that, not even the wealthiest libraries of the world. What preservation is to develop strategic design initiatives. What you choose to do, activities and processes that you develop. That are designed to employ and provide long-term useful access to information assets for your community of users. This definition applies to most tangible and

digital but I am focusing on this webinar on tangible materials. So long-term useful access requires developing an organizational culture of one that continually plans for and monitors risks. To content and develops the initiatives to mitigate those risks for your using community. So developing this mindset is just as much about organizational cultural change as it is developing processes and strategic work procedures. So you have already have a mission on a values statement of the mission statement. If you have already defined we are user community is ? That is great. The preservation policy and plans are directed to meeting those people's information's needs. If you do not want to do this for the entire library you can also do this for a segment of the collection that is a special collection. Or a specific user based on where your library is, geographically. But defining your user community is the focus of what you do your work for preservation. The definition should be the foundation for developing your policies and plans for preservation. Just to keep in mind of what we are talking about with information assets. It is all the things that we have. Books, journals, maps, and very special collections. License content books, web disseminated information, digitally formatted publications, and even archival records. All of these have to have their risks assessed. The primary issue with collections is documenting what we even have to begin with. If you lost it how would you even prove that you owned it? And how would you add to get back if it was gone? It is good to know the age of the material predominately in your collection. Do you have a lot of 19th century or early 20th century material? Or is your collection more modern. Having been collected primarily in the 1960s to the present. Do you have special collections or large artifactual value? Do you know where the older collections of materials are in your stack? Along with special collections? Frequently you have no choice on where these collections end up. But being aware of where they are located can associate with the building environment and the surrounding in terms of potential risks from failure of mechanical systems. You cannot talk about preservation without talking about little paper. It was the predominant worry of scholars in the 80s that they would simply have a blank memory in the content because of brittle paper. One of the contents of making paper to the masses was that to make it more cheaply. You had to create processes that allowed paper to be machine made. And in the figuring of how to break down trees into cellulose. The process left acids in the paper. That cause the paper to become brittle. The acidic paper area is primarily 1850s, machine made paper was developed before that. However by 1850 it was predominantly in use. It pretty much last all throughout the 20th century and even in to the 90s. The federal government, another major publisher began to create alkaline paper. Heat, and humidity speeds up the acidic reaction. Once it reaches the state that you can see in the photo there is nothing you can do to replace it or reverse it. This condition can only be replaced or simply reformatted to preserve the information. Because of the acidic reaction is increased by temperature and humidity. These same publications might not be in the same conditions depending on the environment that they have lived in. There might even be collections that have been pliable and even better conditions, elsewhere. You can look for libraries that start publications on the FDL exchange. You can see if it is possible to get a copy. GPO is potentially re-forgetting government publications all the time because an ongoing basis. We work with libraries that are doing digital conversion on their own. We ask them to share the government publications and also being a contributing partner. Ask them to share the information with us for the addition of our digital repository. To save space, a lot of us have many, many microforms. Most of these microforms in the libraries seem to be microfiche or certain films and various models as well. The issue with microforms as they are vulnerable to water and humidity. The decay of the substrate plastic that we will talk about in one moment, microforms. Because the cabinets are heavy they are usually in the basement and that is usually a high humidity area. To preserve microforms and to keep them away from the water and humidity. They should never be at 55%. It can cause the emotions to become sticky. There is nothing worse than a black microform. The plastic and the older versions that were use in microfiche. It is acetate plastic. When it decays it releases acidic acid. And it smells like cider vinegar. If you smell vinegar when you open your aggravation drawers or microfilm drawers? It is going to begin to decay and it will

eventually destroy. For most content distributed by the federal government it seems that Niekro fiche is beginning to have this symptom. If you have this issue? Tell me what issues and conditions are impacted. We are trying to get a handle on what particular title and what agencies have distributed a lot of these microfiche that is developing vinegar syndrome. Simple things like even materials and shells can have a great impact on their useful access. If you notice these books on the left are leaning they do not have a book hand to hold them up. You would not think that he would have much impact without a book and put the book on the picture on the right is permanently warped in that condition. It will not go back. It sat that way for so long that it became twisted and out of shape. The problem with that is that if you open it and try to press it flat. If perhaps if you want to make a photocopy? Or even to just try to read it. It will put such a stress on the binding that it will twist. And it is actually breaking the binding. That would not have occurred if it was supported on a shelf with a book end. If you had a lot of 19th century books with tight back findings or books that especially are large? That, short books? Frequently they need extra support to be used safely. You have to use these materials in a special collections area. It is good to have the materials available to the readers that I have shown on the right. These are a series of wedges that allow the books to be opened in a more relaxed and angular degree. The white strings are actually weighted cords. That the users can delay safely across and help keep the pages open. The courts in the book wedges are more of a special collection situation. The book might have to be paged for the reader. And the staff personnel will bring out the book as well as the wedges and the explanation of how they are to be used. These are all available at different library supply areas. And really not that expensive. It saves the wear and tear on the book on the binding as well as keeps the pages from popping out the bonding. There is also a lot of unbound pamphlets in library collections. They are frequently housed in the soft envelopes that do not offer much protection at all. These small items can be jammed in with other books and damaged by book ends if they encounter those hard, metal surfaces. You can also see the envelope that this was stored in is acidic. It left an impression on the item, itself. The picture on the right shows the forefront and the closure with another book type binding attached to it. This gives a lot of protection for pamphlets of this type. You can also put individual folders in a top lid box. That is another option for pamphlets like this if you have a group of these on the same topical area. But they need for protection than just being shelved, as they are. There are entire courses and workshops that you can take on basic preventative book repair. You are not storing the items, you are not trying to be a conservator with a lot of info pension and repair. The primary, number one repair is shown in the picture. This becomes stretched and lose so the binding is pulling a way from the case. The repair for this is pretty simple. And it saves from the book having to be rebound. Binding budgets have been cut and these repairs will go a long way so they are collections state in their originally bindings for years to come. There are a lot of online materials to learn and with YouTube videos and tutorials on how to do this. The materials themselves are not that expensive. This will go a long way to saving the binding of books. Whatever is used, the materials should be appropriate. Tape is for packages, never used tape on books. I was talking about disasters briefly, earlier. One of the things to be aware of is where your library is in the country. Are you in a floodplain mark are you in a tornado alley? What types of natural disasters are prevalent in your area? What type of building you have? When was it built? Does it have a peek roof? These are all things that you need to be aware of. And you are also probably aware of different risks imposed by mechanical systems. The link that I have on the slide is actually a U.S. government site. You can go and see if your library is in a floodplain or not. The primary disaster and the library from a failed mechanical system involves water. Libraries are commercial buildings. They have a lot of pipes with water coming in and going out. All of these can leak and create a disaster. This is just a listing of some of the different types of water flowing in and out of the building. This is just an atypical commercial building like a library. The pipe that I have on the photo is that we work in a building that we walk around in all the time. We are not really aware of these things. It is just kind of like the wall, itself. But if you have something exposed like this? Keep an eye on it. And

notice if something is going on like rust developing on the outside of it. It is good to know your physical plan to be able to check in with your people. Just see how these things are monitored. This is a telltale warning sign. This is over a collection area. If this is on the floor, directly or below? This is certainly something that you would want to be aware of and pay attention to. It takes a long time for physical plant people to respond to this, typically. It is good to report them as soon as they appear. And know whether it was a result from a storm that could've been one, two days earlier? Or white might be the potential cause. But this is certainly an impending risk. This could certainly cause a mold bloom. If humidity is excessive and the environment? It would frequently cause a mold bloom like this. This is caused by consistently higher humidity than 55% relative humidity. Mold is in the air around us all the time. It is what keeps allergies at times. And it is living and floating in the air. Mold spores are looking for the ideal environment. To be able to start growing, they need a certain amount of the right temperature come in the right validity to do that. They also need an organic substance to be able to start growing on. Paper and books are an ideal substance for them to do that. Sometimes renovations change the airflow as fresh airflow is something that mold does not like. Sometimes it was designed if you are trying to save a few dollars on even the temperature control. This is frequently the worst thing to do. Mold blooms are extraordinarily expensive to clean up. Their potential liability issues beyond the damage of the collection in terms of their effect on the people living in the building. Be aware of any signs of water or things seem humid. You can try to monitor that and try to prevent mold from blooming. Fires are extraordinarily destructive. No need to say that. A number of fires in libraries is usually caused by overuse of electric heaters, space heating. And the use of extension cords is where people need to use electricity for computers and break room refrigerators, things like that. Those are frequently not there when the power and building was built. If you find that you have a lot of long extension cords that are strewn about? You need to start planning for your physical plant people to be able to bring the electricity to where it is needed. Of course, fewer and fewer people smoke cigarettes. But it is always good to that policy is enforced. Unfortunately, arson is a frequent cause of library fires. The number of arson fires to whatever reason people decide to burn down a library? This has been consistently high over the past one decade or so. This is just an awareness of the environment that people have come and go. The fire detection and suppression systems are always monitored and should be monitored by physical plant people. But it is good to check in and be aware and that they are inspected. But just being aware of people and their suspicious behavior. It might be a bit odd. It is good to improve sightlines to public areas so people cannot hide in the corner and create mischief. In terms of disaster supply I am frequently asked what should we buy in case we want to be ready. Really, the advice that I have is plastic sheeting. You can buy plastic drop cloths for painting at Home Depot, and Lowe's, very cheaply. It is good to have a supply on hand especially if you see ceiling tiles that are over collection areas and discolored. The response time for dealing for that in terms of could be weeks or months and you want to be ready in case that is leaking and breaks into a full shower. You can keep these things on hand and even trade these over the collections. When the building is closed at night? In case a disaster happens and if you're not there? This is a really simple and cost-effective way of preventing a major disaster to precious collections. If you are concerned of the public could react if you have something draped or permanently like this photograph in the middle? It is just to engage the public and put up a sign. What is going on and why. Books are great and this is protection. Every library that I ever worked and had collections that were stored in a storage area. A basement or something in boxes. This is simply a preventative matter that you should never sort directly things on the floor. The slightest bit of water that hits the floor from the boxes on the left is going to be a disaster for the content inside of them. Cardboard is absorbent just as much as a paper towel. The books on the right are protected on the pallet and have about four, five inches of room for water to come in and flooded the and those boxes will still remain dry. There is an extra bit of protection because they took a Plaxo plastic drop cloth at the top. That would prevent any water from the ceiling and impacting those as well. In terms of

actually mitigating risk one of the things that a few of just general preservation concerns about your collection. And if you want to start engaging and looking at some of these things about the building environment and how things are shelved. And stacked and how things are organized. You probably need to form a task force group or an interested group that can lead and talk about these developing things that you want to do. In terms of strategic initiatives. One of the best strategic initiatives is to cite who is going to be responsible for these things. It can be as simple as people that agree, depending on their task and where they work in the building. To simply walk through regularly and notice the physical environment. Look at the ceiling. Look at the pipes. Look at how collections are used. When books are not returned at the circulation desk. If they are collected from a study table, or copiers. Somebody needs to notice what condition they are in. Do they look like they would benefit from some extra repair? Are there people that would be interested in learning how to do some basic book repair and take that on? As you develop your strategic plans and your policies, it becomes a process. A stack of volunteers and groups that are responsible and want to be responsible. Very few libraries have the luxury of being able to just hire a preservationist. If you do, that new person's responsibility is to develop all of those. But your group can sit down. And in our information assets in our library. Why do we need to preserve these things? Who is our user community? Who are our assets? What do we actually need to preserve? Come down to some very simple processes on how these things will be preserved. Part of this is simply a risk checklist. You can go through and notice the stacks conditions. Is everything supported well on the shelf? Are shelves organized in a way with that there is plenty of space? So users are not able to pry the books off the shelf. Are known buildings subject to any high humidity, flooding or are those being dealt with? Are you aware of them? If you have collections stored remotely or in the basement. Do they ever get monitored or is it completely out of sight, out of mind? Is there anything in the mind for or if you have a building that was built like the one I worked in in Texas. With very, very large windows and lots of sunlight. They simply realize that the books were getting hardly faded. They took the books off and turn the stacks of that collection by the library. So the books would not be directly flooded with sunlight. Collection items need to be inventoried. Do you have enough of an inventory to know what you have? In terms of I.T. systems backup, and historical in the case of a disaster this is not really a digital aspect. These are your working, functioning systems for your Wi-Fi in your building. Your catalog, your systems that you use daily in your job. They need to be backed up and historical. And of course, the overall building in the collection need to be monitored. So preservation is really asset management. And successful risk mitigation. It comes down to strategic practices to learn and they turn into actions. This is by a group that carries out and develops processes for long-term access to materials and resources. One of the best ways to develop support for this is to manage and define your user community. When you start building an effort for preservation. Engage in the user community and be very transparent about what you are trying to do. These things that you are trying to do for them to make their collections that they rely on more accessible into the future. This type of community engagement and the more transparent you are it really kind of builds confidence with the work that the library is doing. In the end, you can have confidence that your information assets can be used long-term and into the future by following some of these very basic practices. There are some preservation network and training opportunities that are available. In addition to what I mentioned about looking at book repair videos and different online sites. The Northeast documentation preservation center offers preservation courses that you can take. There are usually preservation topics in the regular programming of the American Association of library conferences. The ALA, the American Library Association and the Society of American conferences. On the digital side there is the deal of, the potential library of Federation the imaging science and technology has a conference once per year of a digital asset management. Archiving and of course the international press covers tangible and digital topics as well. These are some conference opportunities and network opportunities that you can look into to learn more. We have

plenty of time for questions. This is my contact information after we have talked day if you have anything that you would like to ask? Reach me by my regular email. Preserve set info at gpo.gov

David, let me see. We have a question from Chad. You mentioned basic training for minor repairs where we are not trying to be conservative. Do you have a specific one in mind that you would recommend?

On basic repair or types of repairs?

Basic repair training.

Yes. There are a number of different things out there I did not zero on one, specifically. There are a lot of them that are good. If you just want to learn how to do hinge tightening? You could even look up hinge tightening in mind a lot of descriptives. And even YouTube videos on how to do that. Basic repair, or hinge tightening, and your repairing pages. Spine repair. If the spine to the book on the outside caves or becomes detached? How you can reattach that. These are things that can be done without a lot of specialized training if you're fairly handy and crafty.

Evelyn asks anything on recommendations for xeroxing old, heavy books.

You can do a facsimile, or for books that are brittle and things like that. Special collection materials. If you're going to subject the book to that I would seriously think about putting in a special collection environment and making a surrogate copy available of the content. These days, frequently photocopies are all working just as well as the digital scanner. You might just as easily make a digital copy of it or something. Or a digital copy that would be available at the place of check out.

Okay. Carolyn asks is there a class that or a piece of material that she could use to cover permanently cover a collection?

Shelving?

Carolyn, can you clarify?

While we are waiting on that, one other question about handling very brittle maps. Should they be reimaged? And how should we handle those? The problem is that originally they were designed to be folded up. Unfortunately, that is not how they are going to survive. Being unfolded and folded back up. Personally I find it difficult to fold it right back up that it was originally folded. If this is something that really need access to and it has been folded up? You can carefully unfolded it as much as possible. And even wrap it around a tube of cardboard. And unroll it like that. It is very difficult . that is something that I wish we could do into more of is map imaging. Because it is certainly needed. That would be a good topic for webinar isn't dealing with maps.

Carolyn said yes she was asking about shelving. And in case of a leak that happens when they are out.

Yes. I would not necessarily cover the shelving all the time. That is a just in case, if there is no evidence. But you could be even blocking airflow. You could even trap humidity under the plastic sheeting. But if you have a situation where you are concerned that there could be potential indications of pipes that travel above special collection areas? You can have that plastic sheeting ready to go. It is usually polyethylene sheeting that is what most drop cloths are made of and that is fine. That would be fine for

books and other materials. What you do not want is polyvinyl chloride, or PVC plastic. That will even mask chemicals that are not good for books.

Are there any resources to learn more about digitization of magnetic tape, or A/V materials?

That are but there could be a topic on a future webinar. If you have a lot of magnetic media and things like that that you are concerned about. With formatting. It is very expensive to do it your self if you have a lot of these that you need to do. It is a fairly steep advantage or in the materials. There are commercial firms that will take to set, or even audio or different format. Things from the past from cassettes as well as video and convert them to digital files for you. And you can just manage those digital assets but that is certainly something that you can do. If that would be interest of a future webinar? You can let me know.

Susan shared a link for a YouTube video. And they agree that an additional webinar on large maps would be helpful. We have large, scalable maps and blueprints in our library.

Yes.

With another map preservation issue and another one. And Julie says that in addition to plastic, what else would be recommended in that situation? She also shares a link in the chat.

Plastic tieback would also work as a covering material to protect from water. It is usually opaque see cannot see what is going on underneath of it. It is also usually more expensive than ordinary poly sheeting.

Trina is asking that if you could repeat what the sheeting is made of. Is saying that you should not use PVC.

Correct. It is usually polyethylene or sometimes PET that is the good stuff. Polyvinyl chloride, PVC is the bad stuff. Just think of it in those, simple terms.

My library is in the Caribbean. it has a lot of audiobooks and VHS. It would be nice that we could convert to a digital format. A webinar would be nice to cover that.

Okay. That sounds like with digital conversion of magnetic media as a future topic.

Lori Wilson was asked to asking about sheeting. Also asking about sheeting. And also more comments about maps, a maps webinar. And she did. We still have time if there are any more questions?

In terms of the maps issue. To be quickly frequently come in and ask to use the maps? I heard Sandborn maps, are there are also other geological maps, things like that? I know that there are a lot of that from the 19th century publications. Sometimes maps were housed in these large booklets but they were folded up, in any case. It is a case where people are coming in to ask them to use them. And they did not feel happily confident bring these out and fold them and unfold them. Is that the issue?

Lori wants to know that what is the deterioration and where do we dispose of it? Can we just put it into the trash and any recommendations on microfiche disposal? And Barbara wants to know how dangerous is this to humans? The vinegar syndrome.

Let me do the last question, first. It is not dangerous there have been people that have had a mild allergy if they handle the microfiche. It is an acid that comes out of it but it is not strong enough to burn you . but it can be an irritant. It can also irritate people's noses around it if they are around it a lot. But this is very evident if this is a case where it is very evident. If you can see the impact on the microfiche and it is starting to change when you open the door and the drawer. If it smells like apple cider vinegar? Unfortunately there is nothing that can be done for this. But happily, for the most part once the reaction is starting. It is only going to accelerate there is nothing to stop it. I should say that unhappily, that the way that microfiche was designed there is nothing that you can copy. It was all, essentially published and produced at people and multiple copies of it. There is a group that recently got a grant to do research on this. We are trying to see what the federal government distributed in terms of fiche and films. And if that is available in other formats. Or if the agency that originally produced it have any type of Masters that it would be produced or reproduced or to take the same contact contact and digitally reproduce it. That would be the ideal way to go.

Is the U.S. be a good choice for digital documents?

A USB thumb drive?

And I am guessing. And she also asks that I have flat and folded maps, international and geographical maps. We do not get very many users for paper these days.

Yes. USB drive is a great way to backup systems and things like that. But they're really not designed for long term storage. I am curious to know what you have in terms of data like that. If you are backing up data from your systems? That could be ideal for doing that. But for a really long term storage it really needs to be another solution especially if you are talking but digitally imaged content. Or digitally reformatted a publication. If you digitally reformatted a U.S. government publication, let me know what you did. You can possibly work out a digital content contributor agreement. And see if it is capable of passing our quality assessment standards. It could be eventually added and you could be contributing to that national collection of content.

How do you prevent silverfish, though small insects that are found in books? She is not sure that if they are called that?

I think they are called that. Silverfish they do eat paper. They also like to nibble on the cellulose and the bindings. They are there because the environment is humid. Insects, pests are usually there because the environment is favorable for them. Silverfish are not there because humans leave things around in the break room that is good to eat. Because silverfish are a threat to the books. They are there because the environment is more humid than it should be or is there a source of water, somewhere for them. If you can get the humidity lowered? And do some cleaning around the area where they seem to be thriving. And also put out some sticky traps to reduce their numbers. You could probably get a handle on them and decrease their number. Almost all insect posts. People are more concerned today because we are more aware of pesticides and things like that and the impact on people. But almost any type of pesticide just kills the creatures that are there. It does not change the environment. The reason why they came there in the first place. Changing the environment and making it inhospitable for them is really the way to go.

We have a couple of other comments. I have a lot of my items of interest in my personal library at home. Thank you for the information. While we are waiting, Ashley, can you send out the link to the survey? And yes. Just remember that if you have a particular topic that you would like to have covered? Put that information into the survey. We will look at that and take that information. Okay. Last call for questions.

I have a question that people might respond to in terms of thinking about preservation. Are you thinking that you have a collection. We talked of some formats that are of concern are you thinking about collections? Or are you thinking of an overall preservation perspective? If you go the route of collections and monitoring the environment and things like that that I talked about. Do you feel that there are folks that you can count on to help you do this. You could have a group of people work with you to help monitor somebody's risks. Learn some basic book repair and do some of these types of things.

It looks like there are no more questions. If that is the case, I wanted to thank everybody for attending today's webinar. In a very special thanks to David for sharing his expertise. Everybody have a great day. Thank you.