Staff and User Preservation Education

An Updated Annotated Bibliography


This presentation is directed toward student library workers who handle and shelve books. Due to the limited resources and space of an academic library, particular care must be given to its materials. Good shelving habits involve not overloading carts or making them top-heavy. Unsupported and dropped books should be avoided. Staff should shelve oversized books spine down.


A popular preservation management textbook for library and information science graduate programs, this book addresses the fundamentals for running a successful preservation program in a library or archive. Chapter eight, "Collections and Stack Management" by Duane A. Watson looks at staff and user education. Watson identifies three key groups that require education and training: professional staff, stack maintenance personnel, and patrons. A good collection manager will have a thorough understanding of preservation issues and know how to balance them with access concerns. He or she must be able to work with all personnel involved with the collections and the building.


Under "Information Resources," the California Preservation Program offers a variety of resources for training collection staff and users. "Preservation Education for Staff & Users" addresses the ongoing need for commitment from managers to raise preservation awareness and to set the example to library personnel on ideal collection care behavior. This in turn will encourage staff to demonstrate and explain to patrons how and why materials should be properly used. It is up to library workers to make clear from a preservation point of view to users why certain practices and policies (e.g., cooler temperatures, no food and drink) are in place.

The Preservation Department at Northwestern developed this online tutorial for patrons to better understand the consequences of library material abuse. Pictures of tattered, dog-eared, and waterlogged are effectively used to demonstrate what not to do to books. Lost and damaged materials means that the library’s funds must go toward replacing those items, and ultimately leads to less new acquisitions. Library books are a shared resource and need to be cared for by all patrons in order to ensure future use. A pictorial quiz follows the tutorial.


This library tutorial was created in an effort to address the need for preservation program development in Southeast Asia. The content, however, is relevant to any library or archives program wanting to begin a sustainable preservation effort at their institution. The tutorial is divided into four sections: management and planning, preservation, building capacity, and supporting the effort. The first section addresses basic environmental and material care. The section on preservation looks at the nature of materials typically found in libraries and archives. It also talks about making conservation decisions and reformatting options. Part three on building capacity discusses teaching staff and users, with a particular focus on international collaborations for preservation training. The last section covers needs assessments, funding, and public relations.


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Dr. Cal Lee from the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill lectures on digital preservation, using the efforts and standards in paper-based preservation as a basis for comparison. Appropriate for library professionals and graduate students, this talk discusses preservation techniques for maintaining the integrity of electronic objects through proper physical handling, environmental control, and recognition of the important properties of digital objects. Information specialists must be aware of the multiple
"layers" that compose a digital object. Dr. Lee discusses strategies to avoid object obsolescence such as digital archaeology, migration and emulation, and raising awareness among users to consider the importance of the long-term preservation of their work when choosing formats and systems. Approximately 45 minutes.


An updated version. Chapter five, "Operations," includes a short but insightful section on preservation. This edition focuses on disasters, with an emphasis on crisis prevention and response. One article looks at how to manage water-damaged materials through various techniques such as freeze-stabilization, air-drying, and vacuum thermal-drying. The pros and cons of each method are discussed. Chapter four, "Materials," briefly addresses the proper storage conditions for archival records.


This textbook integrates appropriate preservation information into each chapter, demonstrating how preservation should be integrated into each library function. Chapters on circulation, reference services, and library instruction address patron education directly. The book, which addresses all types of libraries, is appropriate for use in graduate and library/media technical assistant programs. Libraries often use this book for staff training for various public services.


While directed toward the care of personal collections, this article provides useful definitions of conservation, preservation, and restoration. General preservation tips are given on how to maintain collections at home: avoid fluctuations in temperature and humidity, keep objects out of direct sunlight, and regularly dust objects to avoid corrosion and insect damage. Advice is also provided on how to find a reputable conservator and the costs to expect.


In a podcast from the George Eastman House/International Center of Photography and Film, Grant Romer talks about the importance of protecting our photographic heritage. He discusses the meaning of "conservation" today in archival environments and notes that it is no longer restoration so much as maintaining the current condition of an object. Iconic images shown in the video include those of Billy the Kid and George Custer. Romer explains why photography is "the heartbreaking trick" and alludes to the need for continual cultural preservation of this medium.

Geared toward library patrons, this webpage from Smith College offers some basic care and handling tips. The accompanying photos of damaged books graphically warn patrons of what could happen if materials are not used with respect. Correct book removal and bookmarking are discussed. Library users are discouraged from repairing books themselves.


This comprehensive collection of preservation leaflets by the NEDCC covers everything from "what is preservation planning" to conservation procedures used to stabilize books. Ideal for library administrators, staff, and volunteers, these resources provide readers with a better understanding of how to monitor and protect library collections. Both preventative and response measures are given for dealing with pests, floods, fires, and climate control. Further readings are available at the end of each leaflet as well as at http://www.nedcc.org/resources/web.php.


Chapter eight of this book on how to create and sustain online digital archives focuses on the latter activity. "Maintaining and Preserving Digital Archives" looks at the internal administration necessary to upkeep digital materials for access and preservation purposes: accurate and thorough metadata, sufficient backups, and format/media migration. At the end of the chapter, Stielow outlines current models and frameworks that have been developed to ensure robust digital archives.


Swartzburg's second chapter, "The Preservation Survey: Tool for Collection Management," views preventative preservation as the most important aspect of a preservation librarian's job. The key to proper collection care is a staff training program in which all staff members are taught to respect the materials in their care and to be aware of practices that could be harmful to the collections. Staff may need to be trained in the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain materials on a daily basis.