Prioritizing Treatments in Collections Conservation Using Shared Resources Jennifer Hain Teper University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

The Problem

For decades, library preservation and conservation programs have identified materials requiring treatment through use, but considering each library's priorities for preservation and conservation independently. The gradual acceptance of digitization as a preservation methodology has changed our conservation programs in many ways. Our field finds itself at a threshold – overwhelming consensus seeks to focus our staff towards the support of special and lesser-held materials, while shifting away from those widely held. Can and should digital surrogates aid us in identifying materials that should *not* be preserved as physical objects? Should digital surrogacy and or the scarcity of an item on a national scale dictate our conservation priorities and depth of



A Survey — How Are Shared Resources Being Used?

The author sought to ascertain how current preservation programs in US research libraries integrated the availability of content outside of their own physical holdings to help inform their preservation and conservation workflows. This information was collected via an electronic survey. The survey was distributed through various professional listservs and open from October 24th to November 14th, 2012 and collected 49 responses. Overall, there were 30 questions grouped into seven general categories: 1) general information; 2) current preservation practices; 3) selection for preservation; 4) print replacement; 5) holdings; 6) digital surro-





The University of Illinois Preservation and Conservation Program has sought to evaluate potential elements affecting current decision making in light of widely available digital surrogacy, shared holdings, and participation in shared **print repositories.** This study began with a survey of peer institutions (at right) to ascertain to what degree other North American research libraries were utilizing similar metrics and for what types of treatments. After survey data was collected, a pilot prioritization project was implemented to examine how evaluating available metrics would change preservation and conservation treatment decisions for the Library's general collections materials.

gates; and 7) use. The charts display a brief summary of the most relevant findings which influenced the University of Illinois' approaches towards integrating wider holdings and digital availability into prioritization and treatment decisions.



A Pilot Resulting in New Prioritization for General Collections Preservation & Conservation

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A pilot for utilizing metrics to assign collection significance scores was be-

gun in the general stacks of the University of Illinois in the summer of 2013 and ran for one year, assessing 1,000 volumes identified through use for preservation or conservation treatment. Utilizing a locally produced search aggregator called "easy search" and available APIs (application programming interfaces) for WorldCat, the HathiTrust, the Internet Archive, and CRL's Print Archives Preservation Registry, as well as local and state holdings available through the integrated library system (ILS), scores were derived for each item reviewed with were used to guide treatment decisions. **Scoring Basis** Circulation: $\mathbf{3} = 5$ or over; $\mathbf{2} = 1-4$; $\mathbf{1} = 0$ (none recorded in 10 years) Available digitized content: $\mathbf{3} = 0$ (none available); $\mathbf{1} = 1$ or more Worldcat Owners: $\mathbf{3} = 12$ or fewer; $\mathbf{2} = 13-26$; $\mathbf{1} = 27$ or greater Illinois Consortial Copies: $\mathbf{3} = 1$ only; $\mathbf{2} = 2-5$; $\mathbf{1} = 6$ or greater Local Copies: **3** = 1 only; **2** = 2; **1** = 3 or greater

Effects of Analysis on Final Treatment Decisions





Armed with statistical data, the author found that our standard triage decisions were altered approximately 215 times (21%). Changes (seen above in *Effects of Analysis on* Final Treatment Decisions) resulting in less items being recommending to brittle books reformatting (where searching in this area was already part of standard workflows due to the high cost of preservation reformatting), more items being routed to low-cost treatments such as enclosures and commercial binding, a small number being recommended for replacement or withdraw (1.1% and 0.2% respectively), and a more strategically selected materials were being sent for conservation repair (items with scarce holdings, in particular). **Next Steps.** A new SQL database is being programmed to allow a seamless check in and tracking of all

