

Plan for the Disposal of Redundant Materials

Report to the Senate Library Committee
Meeting of February 27, 2014

Prepared by Jocelyne Thompson

Introduction

The space challenges at UNB Libraries have been well-documented since the 1970s, and despite the digital revolution, the physical collections continue to grow. The Library has been making the case for the funding of a purpose-built print repository for some 20 years now. These efforts have been unsuccessful and it is time to accept that we must live within the space available to us.

At the same time, student requirements are such that more and more of our space is being converted to non-traditional uses. As learning commons, group study and seminar rooms, and social spaces have proliferated in each of the libraries on campus, it has been necessary to remove low-use materials to storage. Several storage locations now exist, all but the Provincial Archives space being rather unsatisfactory arrangements that make retrieval of materials difficult if not impossible. As these “warehouses” fill up and even more space must be found, the question arises as to the advisability of retaining print materials which are now duplicated and accessed exclusively online.

Journal Archives and Long-term Preservation: a Good News Story

In the last decade, UNB Libraries have purchased several electronic journal backfiles, including JSTOR and Periodical Archives Online (PAO). These two sources alone have provided access to well over 3,000 fulltext journals going back in most cases to volume 1, issue 1 of the included titles. These electronic surrogates have been widely adopted by both faculty and students (who download thousands of articles each year) and the use of the print journal collection has declined sharply.

Other deep journal backfiles acquired from academic publishers in recent years are listed in the table below. All of these packages have provided not only electronic archival versions of titles we held in print, but have filled in gaps in our holdings and provided access to titles to which we had never subscribed and which are now heavily used.

Archival Journal Backfiles Owned by UNB & Location of Print Volumes

Backfile	WAREHOUSE	Stacks	# of Titles
American Geophysical Union		x	20
Annual Reviews	x		18
Blackwell (now Wiley Online Library)		x	546
Cambridge (CJO)		x	176
Institute of Physics (IOP)			93
JSTOR	x	x	2,381
National Research Council (NRC)	x	x	14
Oxford University Press (OUP)		x	142
Periodical Archives Online (PAO)	x	x	957
Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)	x	x	131
Sage		x	381
Science Direct (Elsevier)	x	x	543
Springer Online Journal Archive	x	x	805

Statement of Intent

Starting this Spring, UNB Libraries plan to dispose of print journals and other materials now available digitally, in part to save further storage costs, and in part to retrieve space for other uses. This plan is consistent with the Collections Development (CD) Policy approved by Senate in November 2003: addressing library responsibility for stewardship and long-term preservation, the policy states that, "Under certain circumstances, local preservation may be limited to the intellectual content and not to the work in its original format. Specific examples would be [...] journals that are digitized and available in a stable electronic full-text version." Thousands of bound volumes of print journals currently being stored, in both closed and open stacks, fit this definition.

In addition to duplicated print journals, we are also considering the disposal of other types of print materials such as indexes and abstracts, as well as microforms, which are now available online.

While the Collections Development Policy gives the library the authority to move forward with disposal, we are also sensitive to the consternation that can arise when physical collections of library materials are discarded. Given the size and scope of this project, we wish to be transparent and clear about our intentions to avoid potential conflict.

Some kind of communication plan will be needed to alert and inform the UNB community at large as we proceed. To set the stage for a successful outcome, we are asking for support from the Senate Library Committee as we undertake this major project and welcome any advice that members may wish to provide.