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All together now: planning for shared print archiving at Canada's western universities

by

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Abstract

The Council of Prairie and Pacific University Libraries is a consortium of 22 university libraries in western Canada. Planning for a regional shared print archive has included the formation of several task groups, the engagement of a project consultant, and local development of a holdings registry tool. The original impetus for the project was to clear maximum shelf space at member libraries quickly. The planning challenge that has emerged is to design a project that meets this short term regional need for re-purposed space in member libraries, while building in scalability to address a broader preservation mandate, and allows linking to related initiatives in other jurisdictions.

The Council

The Council of Prairie and Pacific University Libraries (COPPUL) is a consortium of university libraries in western Canada. Founded in 1991 with 13 original members, it was incorporated as a legal non-profit society in 2000, and currently includes 22 member institutions (see www.coppul.ca). Sixteen additional affiliate members are eligible to join consortial licenses, but are not involved in governance. With very lean staffing, COPPUL frequently relies on volunteers from member libraries to carry projects forward. Its activities are similar to those of many academic library consortia: it administers an interlibrary loan network; is home to a private LOCKSS network for preservation of locally digitized resources; facilitates a network of data librarians in the region; and runs a number of other projects on behalf of member libraries. COPPUL also collaborates with cognate academic library consortia in the three other main regions of Canada—Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL), the

library arm of the Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec (CREPUQ) , and the Council of Atlantic University Libraries (CAUL) in eastern Canada.

Not surprisingly, in recent years collections activity in the consortium has focused on licensing electronic resources. COPPUL currently administers more than 160 licenses for electronic resources including e-journals, A&I databases, data sources, and some visual resources. Over the years, work has also been done on collection assessment, cooperative acquisitions, and planning toward (but not full realization of) a virtual union catalogue. As our consortium passes its 20th year in existence, we note that the dream of cooperative regional collection management on which COPPUL was originally founded, may finally become a reality through this shared print archive project. The academic publishing and library collections environments have evolved to the point where cooperation is an imperative; many important goals of member libraries can only be achieved by working at the network level.

The Consortium Collection

Planning for a shared print archive in COPPUL, or any jurisdiction, does not happen in a vacuum (Reilly 2003). COPPUL is working within a national and international framework for library collections that is being re-shaped by the widespread availability of stable electronic texts. As Malpas eloquently states in the hypothesis to her “Cloud sourcing research collections” report, “the emergence of a mass-digitized book corpus has the potential to transform the academic library enterprise, enabling an optimization of legacy print collections that will substantially increase the efficiency of library operations” (Malpas 2011, 8).

With the advent of stable electronic texts in academic libraries, prescient collection managers have known for several years that legacy print holdings would outlive their usefulness. And yet as we step across the digital divide, we are mindful of our historic obligation to preserve the scholarly record. In the print arena there has been very credible research on the need for selective print retention and the decision-making process for withdrawal from active collections (Schonfeld and Housewright 2009). COPPUL librarians were influenced by the persuasive evidence on optimal copies in this Ithaka S&R report. Courant and

Nielsen also provide detailed evidence on the economic front in their chapter “On the cost of keeping a book” in *The Idea of Order* (2010).

Librarians working in consortial environments have been reporting since at least 2005 on efforts to develop print depository systems in the presence of electronic texts (DesRosiers and Trevett 2005, Payne 2007, DiBiase and Watson 2009, Stambaugh 2010, Demas 2011, CIC Communications 2011). As many of these authors have observed, changes in collection patterns invite us to manage a thoughtful drawdown of our collective print holdings; to do so we must plan and act at the network level, while respecting the diversity of member libraries within our groups.

In 2011 librarians and university administrators were frequently urged to think of “the collective collection” (Demas and Lougee 2011), to evaluate library effectiveness based, in part, on “participation in collaborative storage and acquisition” (University Leadership Council 2011), and to work at “radical collaboration” (Neal 2011).

The space pressures at member libraries were the original impetus for COPPUL Directors to consider a project of print archiving. While these pressures have not diminished, but the more we learn about print archiving, the more it becomes an imperative to ensure the continued relevance of our group in the evolving collection management environment of university libraries. As a regional consortium, COPPUL is just the right size: large enough to have substantial collections (>19million volumes in WorldCat holdings), yet small enough to make the project nimble and manageable.

Genesis of the Project

Initial discussions about COPPUL’s approach to disposition of print collections in the presence of electronic equivalents began in September 2008 at a meeting of the directors (university librarians). The primary question was whether there was a role for COPPUL in joint efforts to establish a reliable “last copy” (as we then called it) preservation environment to assist COPPUL libraries in their de-selection decisions. At the time, many COPPUL members reported that they had already started de-selection to free library space for other student-

centered purposes. The matter was referred to the Collections Committee, and in late 2008 a task group with representatives from each of the four provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia) was formed.

Members of this first task group agreed to consult with colleagues in their respective provinces about current practices related to storage and disposal of print journal holdings with electronic equivalents, and to prepare a report and recommendations for the next COPPUL directors meeting (such meetings are held twice a year). They were to explore COPPUL's role with respect to the long-term archiving of print journals holdings, to gather consistent information about current print preservation practices in member libraries, and to gather information about any provincial print preservation initiatives.

The task group surveyed member libraries seeking answers to two questions:

- Did the membership see a role for COPPUL in coordinating preservation of last copies of “print equivalent” journals? If yes, what would be the preferred model and in what kind of framework – national or international?
- Did the membership see a role for COPPUL in coordinating efforts for preservation of electronic journals? If yes, what would be the appropriate model and approach for COPPUL?

Detailed survey results are shown in Appendix 1, and summarized below. Nineteen (19) out of 20 COPPUL member libraries responded to the survey, and the results revealed an acute space shortage at the majority of member libraries. The nature of information delivery and role of academic libraries had changed dramatically in recent years, creating a need for more public collaborative spaces to support different modalities of student learning, teaching and research. Thus, many libraries had decreased or were planning to decrease the footprint for print collections to increase the availability of spaces for integrated learning activities in their buildings. Out of 19 respondents, 7 (37%) indicated they had immediate/desperate needs, 9 (47%) had imminent/tight needs, and three (16%) had adequate space for another five years

of collection growth. Out of 19 respondents, 16 did not own and operate a storage facility at the time of the survey. Only 3 operated such facilities, and none of the institutions who owned and operated a storage facility indicated they were running these in partnership.

Out of 19 respondents, 18 (95%) saw a role for COPPUL in coordinating preservation of last copy of print equivalent journals, providing a strong endorsement to proceed. The majority also indicated they would prefer a distributed print repository network where individual COPPUL libraries would agree to retain specified holdings on behalf of the group, based on service level agreements and coordinated retention policies. A smaller number were in favor of a central repository using an existing storage facility in the region.

Out of 18 members who responded positively, 15 members (83%) indicated they saw COPPUL's role in coordinating print preservation efforts within a national framework and 3 (17%) saw COPPUL's role in an international framework. Several respondents suggested a regional framework in their comments. As planning progressed, this became an increasingly important issue. The tension between the urgent need to recover space at the libraries, and the desire to connect with print archiving efforts elsewhere created a push-pull dynamic in our planning process.

Based on the survey results and comments, the task group recommended carrying on work toward a combination approach to the permanent preservation of print collections, including elements of both a distributed print repository network and the use of existing storage facilities in the region. The survey also explored the preferred model for preservation of electronic journals, and after some further research, this issue was eventually referred to the active and successful steering committee overseeing COPPUL's Private LOCKSS Network, as they were already working on digital preservation solutions.

The task group identified the first step to "investigate, collect and synthesize information on sample models and policy documentation for shared print storage

facilities and shared collection management from different organizations so that common requirements for COPPUL libraries could be identified and established.” This initial investigation would be carried out with emphasis on identifying the model(s) for dealing with journal backfiles from non-Canadian publishers. By now, discussions of what materials were most suitable for preservation had come full circle—should they be rare and “at risk” materials, or the most widely held, low risk materials? Canadian or non-Canadian? We were recognizing that some expert guidance would help to get us back on course.

The membership of the task group was expanded to include one more library director, and an associate dean who had done significant research in the area of print preservation as part of a recent sabbatical leave, and shared his findings with the task group and COPPUL Directors. This research was instrumental in developing our understanding of best practices for print preservation as well as introducing us to similar initiatives worldwide (Ladd 2010).

As part of its investigations the task group determined that there were many similarities between COPPUL’s desired approach for print preservation, and collaborative archiving developments underway at that time among research, university and college libraries, and library consortia in the western region of the United States. The project in the Western United States was later funded by the Mellon Foundation, to plan for a shared print archiving program known as the Western Regional Storage Trust or WEST (California Digital Library 2011).

To further guide the development of our model for print preservation, COPPUL organized a workshop in Calgary in March 2010 with two leading professionals in the field, Constance Malpas, Program Officer at OCLC, and Emily Stambaugh, Manager of Shared Print for California Digital Library. The workshop for COPPUL library directors and collections managers created a rich environment for networking. Participants learned from the experiences of colleagues in other organizations that had developed successful policies and processes for collaborative print preservation and implemented

effective preservation practices. The first part of the program featured presentations by the invited guests and the second part was an interactive session that engaged group members in discussion about best practices and possible models for COPPUL. The results of the workshop were subsequently reported to the Directors, and recommended that COPPUL take the following steps:

- approve a COPPUL-wide print preservation utilizing a phased-in approach
- focus on retrospective print journals for phase one of the project
- adopt a hybrid model of print preservation combining a centralized and a distributed model
- develop a written agreement to guide the initiative and outline responsibilities of participating libraries
- begin work to develop a holdings registry.

In the summer of 2010, technical services librarians from the University of Alberta and the University of British Columbia developed a pilot project on validation and ingestion costs on behalf of the consortium. The pilot project was designed to gain an understanding of cost implications and other issues associated with preservation of “last copy print” journals where electronic equivalents exist. The project report and associated documents are available at www.library.ubc.ca/doug/COPPUL/. The pilot project focused on the journal holdings validation and was based on the methodology developed by the Western Regional Trust (WEST) using their definition of Archive Types. It revealed a number of issues for consideration, including the following:

1. Holdings validation and collection analysis are costly and time-consuming processes, which require development of very efficient workflows and financial commitment. A high level of validation at the volume, issue, and page level might not be necessary for print journal titles with reliable electronic equivalents; however, it might be required

in situations where a reliable electronic archive does not exist. Parameters for making that assessment should be developed before initiating holdings validation work.

2. Accurate holdings information will be essential to the success of a print preservation initiative and there is a need for standardization in recording holdings information in library catalogues. This will be critical for accurate representation of holdings information in COPPUL's holdings registry.

The task group then evolved into a steering committee, with a refreshed membership now including library directors in addition to frontline librarians with related expertise. The steering committee was also awarded a budget of up to \$50,000 from the consortium's general funds to move the project ahead. Subcommittees were struck to work on business models, technical services, and collections priorities, all of which settled into concentrated work, sensing that we finally had a workable structure with the right people involved to make real progress.

The technical services subcommittee worked actively on the development of a prototype for a COPPUL holdings registry. Programmers at one of the member libraries worked under the guidance of the subcommittee to create a prototype based on defined specifications. The goal was to develop a discovery layer that would harvest holdings information from existing library catalogues to avoid establishing another database that member libraries would have to update. Z39.50 searching is used to expose standardized retention statements in set fields. We are working to coordinate this effort with emerging industry standards for vocabulary and MARC fields, through the coordination efforts of the Center for Research Libraries (CRL). Refinement of this registry tool continues, perhaps most importantly as an immediately useful tool in the absence of Local Holdings Records in all member libraries serial records in WorldCat. If the consortium hopes to eventually use CRL's Print Archives and Preservation Registry (PAPR) tool for collection analysis, and to expose our consortial print archives through WorldCat, member libraries' serial records in WorldCat will ultimately need to be upgraded. But the cost to our members (in terms of labor) is not insignificant. Our local registry allows us to proceed while we work toward these improved records.

Consultation Report 2011 and Next Steps

In Spring 2011, the steering committee organized a consultation process and engaged Emily Stambaugh, Shared Print Manager at the California Digital Library and Assistant Project Manager at Western Regional Storage Trust (WEST). Stambaugh was to suggest suitable models for governance, financing and cost sharing for COPPUL, and to familiarize us with best practices in collaborative print archiving.

Members of the steering committee and subcommittees met with Stambaugh in Vancouver for consulting and a consensus building session. Stambaugh subsequently conducted a second survey of the COPPUL membership to identify print archiving preferences of member libraries based on risk models for print preservation. The report prepared by Stambaugh as part of the consultation process outlined the specifics of different models for print preservation and archiving. It recommended a business model for COPPUL's collaborative archiving initiative, governance structure, financial, staffing and operating guidelines and a model inter-institutional agreement.

Directors agreed with many of the thorough recommendations provided by Stambaugh, and her report moved the project forward very substantially. COPPUL became aware of and connected to the larger community of the Print Archive Network coordinated by CRL, we ceased discussion of "last print copy" and realized we were embarking on a partnership in an optimal copy network, and we had much of our planning work of the previous two and a half years endorsed. This was heartening for those individuals who had been working on the project since its inception, some of whom were growing frustrated at the pace of planning while the pressing space needs at their campuses only became more urgent. On reflection, this frustration revealed some crucial lessons about effective decision-making within our group.

To move ahead in 2012, COPPUL is currently working with OCLC on a custom consortium-level collection analysis—a first for the group to date. This analysis will provide each member library with a list of uniquely held titles in the region and in WorldCat, provide a high-level view of the degree of duplication and uniqueness in our collective collection, and will provide information on print serials holdings that will form the basis for further analysis. With these reports in hand for both the library- and consortium-level, a summer student will be hired

in 2012 to undertake detailed serials holdings work. If available, we plan to use PAPP; if not it will be back to our complex serials holdings spreadsheets.

In any case, after several years of planning and many lessons learned, the Council should have its first volumes registered and/or deposited in a Shared Print Archive Network by the end of 2012. For many who have been working on this project, it has reconfirmed the adage, “if you want to go quickly, go alone...if you want to go far, go together.” By its very nature, shared print archiving is not a task any library can “go alone.” Libraries engaged in similar planning can learn from COPPUL’s experiences.

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Appendix 1: SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

Number of respondents

Library Size	University Enrolment in Full Time Equivalents	Number of Responding libraries
SMALL Libraries	< 10,000 FTE	11
MEDIUM Libraries	10,000 – 20,000 FTE	4
LARGE Libraries	20,001 – 30,000 FTE	2
VERY LARGE Libraries	30,001 – and more	2
TOTAL (n=20)		19 (95%)

The survey was completed by:

Position	Number
University Librarian/Library Director	4
Associate University Librarian (in some way responsible for collections)	7
Collections Coordinator or similar title	6
Other	
Librarian	1
Library technician	1
TOTAL	19

Q. Does your institution experience space shortage and what is the current collection space need of your institution?

Library Size	Immediate/ Desperate Need	Imminent/Tight (2-3y collection growth @ current rate)	OK for 5 Years	OK for 7-10 Years	NO SPACE PROBLEM
Small	4	4	3	0	0
Medium	1	3	0	0	0
Large	2	0	0	0	0

Very Large	0	2	0	0	0
TOTAL (n=19)	7 (37%)	9 (47%)	3 (16%)	0	0

Q. Does your library own and operate a storage facility? (Yes/No)

Library Size	Operate Storage Facility	Do Not Operate Storage Facility
Small	0	11
Medium	0	4
Large	1	1
Very Large	2	0
TOTAL (n=19)	3 (16%)	16 (84%)

Q. Do you see a role for COPPUL in coordinating Preservation of Last Copy of Print Equivalent Journals efforts? (Yes/No).

If your answer is YES to this question, what would be the appropriate model for COPPUL?

A. **Central** - Single storage facility building or buildings to which COPPUL institutions would submit their low use print materials.

a. New building. The construction of a new central facility will require infrastructure investment and annual maintenance cost contributions. The management of central facility will require availability of staff for day-to-day operations. COPPUL Libraries are geographically dispersed.

b. Using an existing storage facility owned by a COPPUL institution. The management of central facility will require availability of staff for day-to-day operations and annual maintenance cost contributions.

A. **Distributed** - Distributed print repository network where individual COPPUL libraries agree to retain specified titles/volumes for the rest of COPPUL libraries based on service level agreements and coordinated retention policies.

B. Other

If your answer is YES to this question, should COPPUL’s role in preserving last copy of print equivalent journals be within a national or international framework?

- A. National Framework
- B. International Framework
- C. None of the above

Library Size	Responded YES	Responded NO
Small	11	
Medium	4	
Large	2	
Very Large	1	1
TOTAL (n=19)	18 (95%)	1 (5%)

Library Size (Positive respondents)	Preferred Model – Central a.	Preferred Model – Central b.	Preferred Model – Distributed	Preferred Model – Other
Small	0	2	7	2
Medium	0	0	3	1
Large	0	1	1	0
Library Size	Framework -	Framework -		
Very Large	National	International	1	0
TOTAL (n=18)	0	3 (17%)	12 (66%)	3 (17%)
Small				
Medium	2	2		
Large	2			
Very Large	1			
TOTAL (n=18)	15 (83%)	3 (17%)		