

Track B: Whither the Stacks?

[Regenstein Room 207](#)

How do we balance the need for access to print collections against the need to create other kinds of spaces in our buildings? What role does Access Services play in managing collection growth and determining what material is transferred into high-density storage? Will digitization cause us to reduce space dedicated to print collections or could it drive discovery and use of print collections?

Participants: David Bottorff (U Chicago - facilitator), David Borycz, (U Chicago), Francie Mrkich (Columbia), Romulus Stefanut (U Chicago), Elizabeth Beers (U Chicago - recorder), Bill Wood (Brown), Adam Strohm (Newbery), Danelle Sims (Rutgers), Barry Lipinski (Rutgers), Angela Knox (Princeton), Johnny Weyand (Harvard), Urszula Kerkhoven (Crerar)

Everyone has high density storage.

David Bottorff (U Chicago) – How does selection for off-site storage take place?

Bill Wood (Brown) – devised density maps – humanities & social sciences library, sciences library. Extremely overcrowded, 116%. Needed to provide a visual aid to demonstrate need and density. Developing reports based on call number range (focusing on serials currently). Moved between 15-20K call numbers out of E section already. Collection annex is around 72% full. Shrinking space, where to send materials. Focus of reports? Identifying serials that exist within range using Millennium, then matching electronic holdings to print. Serials don't circulate. Monograph reports include circulation statistics. Reports go to Collection Development.

Johnny Weyand (Harvard) – collections management (stacks, materials transfer) can provide numbers that need to go – communicate this info to Collection Development. If it hasn't circulated in 10 years, pull it. Good deal of awareness, but do occasionally need to focus on specific sections. Used to put student resources into rotations, but can't reasonably rotate same areas every two years.

Francie Mrkich (Columbia) – recent moves have been due to closing of spaces or repurposing of existing stacks space. Top floor is being evaluated, materials sent off site, to make space for rare books & manuscripts (desperately out of space). Even this space will only give RB&M 2.5 years of growth. Given that push/pull, what do we still need to have within our library?

Bill Wood (Brown) – 1 day turnaround, faculty don't like it. A lot of reluctance is due to turnaround time.

Francie Mrkich (Columbia) – 2 business days, generally next business day. Space shared with Princeton and NYPL.

Barry Lipinski (Rutgers) – Historically a lot of duplication across campus (1 of 4 main libraries, 12 total libraries on campus). Aggressive weeding project is taking place to open up more study space. Bibliographers doing system-wide checks. Pretty excited to do aggressive weeding to reduce redundancy. Collection management is part of access services.

David Bottorff (U Chicago) – Let's tie this back to digitization. Is digitization driving weeding?

Johnny Weyand (Harvard) – participating in JStor 1 project. Keeping one copy at Harvard of materials available through JStor, rest deaccessioned. Faculty could request waiver for specific works. Could show usage statistics for JStor to demonstrate that they didn't need extra copy.

Danelle Sims (Rutgers) - Biomedical library deaccessioned everything in JStor. Sent copies to other institutions who didn't have them. Got money for secure online access for a bunch of journals, deaccessioned print again. Got rid of 1.5 miles of shelves of print stuff. Not finalized, but probably taking down Dana and building a new building. Were patrons used to doing online rather than print? Yes. Looking for current, not historical. Minimal grumbling.

Johnny Weyand (Harvard) – introducing Scan and Deliver and Borrow Direct greatly lowered number of complaints. Outreach to faculty.

Bill Wood (Brown) – seems very subject driven, sciences are OK with giving up print. Humanities want physical materials, interested in whole product.

Barry Lipinski (Rutgers) – if people want print, we can still get it. There are materials specific to the humanities.

Bill Wood (Brown) – art materials need to stay in print, difficult to reproduce highest quality.

David Bottorff (U Chicago) – OCR technology not good enough to meet the needs of our East Asia collection, giving over 5th floor to their materials.

David Bottorff (U Chicago) – How do you balance the needs of those (graduate students) who need print – with the need for space (stacks, other uses)?

Bill Wood (Brown) – Constant tension. After years of battle, were just told that it was going to be that way. Faculty will always want to keep their stuff. Previous cancellation project was haphazard, fraught with problems. Desire for pockets of stacks space. Had to eliminate 6 ranges in the art section to make study space for art. Couldn't just get rid of stuff in that range, so had to evaluate 60 ranges and shift the collection in two directions to make the space. It's heavily used. Art selector worked with art department to make the decisions. Collection Development-

focused. Didn't have to leave growth space. Not shelving anymore – just moving somewhere.

Johnny Weyand (Harvard) – access services generates the pressure for space need, which goes to Collection Development, whose job it is to interact with faculty. Keeping access services out of the conversation since their primary concern is the space, not the collection. Access has the right to do that, Collection Development's responsibility to follow up. High level of trust between Collection Development and faculty allows Collection Development to make decisions about collections. Two classification systems – LoC and Harvard-specific. One paradigm: check every 5th book on the shelf. Don't have any option to change the space because it's permanent.

What do you do when your offsite facility is full?

Johnny Weyand (Harvard) – We can add new modules.

Bill Wood (Brown) – Brown is always pleading poverty. Facility in an industrial park. Not shared. Room to add more modules. After 10 years at 72%, maybe 5 more years of space. Decision will have to be made by the university.

So are thinning projects are mostly just sending to storage?

Bill Wood (Brown) – Brown has done some withdrawals to de-dup or at discretion of selector. Very reluctant to remove content that they don't have elsewhere.

Barry – Rutgers has one continuous serial print run, and that's it. A lot of duplication in the past. Future is ebooks, collaboration between institutions, OSS, shared environments and agreements for collections, strategic Collection Development. Getting away from pride in our collections in order to focus on access. The future is here! Last year's keynote talked about a 10 year transitional period, but we're there now.

David Bottorff (U Chicago) – Digitization drives expectation of instant access. Mansueto isn't immediate, but it is quick. Many faculty members had experienced offsite storage elsewhere and felt strongly about keeping materials onsite.

Bill Wood (Brown) – shelf browsing is argument against offsite storage.

Faculty want materials paged.

Bill Wood (Brown) – faculty want all options

Johnny Weyand (Harvard) – 'wither' the stacks. Browsing is going down. If patrons aren't coming in, it's our job to make sure the books are getting out. Document delivery.

Bill Wood (Brown) – will scan materials from the collection annex and send to you.

Johnny Weyand (Harvard) – difficult to change perceptions of what our jobs are – getting materials to the patrons rather than putting materials back on the shelf.

Bill Wood (Brown) – it's not about shelving anymore.

Johnny Weyand (Harvard) – if you're looking at shelving, you're still in the 20th century

David Bottorff (U Chicago) – Have you seen stacks staff decreased? YES.

Bill Wood (Brown) – can't justify hiring shelvees. Statistics down substantially.

Francie Mrkich (Columbia) – how can we offer a paging service if we can't hire shelvees?

Bill Wood (Brown) – shelvees are really strictly shelvees, though that's shifting a bit. Have to work within union job description.

Johnny Weyand (Harvard) – we are a shelving unit AND an unshelving unit. Part of research now. Our job is to keep the flow of books going. Any of these new services should be incorporated into shelving.

Bill Wood (Brown) – circulation staff is being used for these purposes. Shelvees continue to shelve. Very difficult to be able to hire to replace shelvees.

Johnny Weyand (Harvard) – retaining relevance is decent argument for retaining positions. Patterns of stacks use are changing, so positions and management have to respond. Anyone in a consortium already knows this. Trying to focus on the stacks itself not getting hung up on older core role.

Bill Wood (Brown) – could reflect the way organizations are broken down. University would rather not deal with shelving unit as is – use students – how would this affect shelvees? Loss by attrition.

Johnny Weyand (Harvard) – people who are experts at shelving are also experts at pulling. Faster, more accurate – experts at the stacks.

Barry Lipinski (Rutgers) – transitional phase, should offer staff development, demonstrate expertise. Multi-campus environment, scanning – training shelvees for years with a lot of follow up for quality control. Different organizational structures, but really need to be responsive to changes in browsing trends. Dartmouth stacks have light sensors, completely dark. Undergraduates don't care about browsing as a result of changing attitudes towards the book.

David Bottorff (U Chicago) – if people aren't coming into the stacks, are there things that we can/should be doing to encourage browsing? Paging services are getting the books out – but how can we get the people in? Repurposing stack space to tie in study areas.

Bill Wood (Brown) – as many people in the library. We've just repurposed the space – lots of different kinds of study space. It's not that the library's irrelevant – it's just that the use has changed.

Francie Mrkich (Columbia) – more, entry data goes up every year.

Barry Lipinski (Rutgers) – offering study space is what patrons want.

David Bottorff (U Chicago) – ACRL report about libraries as sacred spaces. Students responded most positively to those with traditional architecture and BOOKS. No response to study center with no books.

Francie Mrkich (Columbia) – science library opened with no books on 1st floor. All study space and digital science center. Space is very heavily used by undergraduates – light, open, works for the way they prefer to study.

Angela Knox (Princeton) – Princeton's Lewis library is the same way.

Bill Wood (Brown) – space that was reference now open space with comfortable furniture. Totally packed during reading/exam periods.

Danelle Sims (Rutgers) – med students are at the library all day. Will browse from their laptops then retrieve in person. Physical browsing is only part of the collection. Need to orient users to online and in person browsing. Patrons will bring call numbers on phone or laptop.

Angela Knox (Princeton) – advertising campaigns for the stacks?

Francie Mrkich (Columbia) – stacks space underutilized. Not a welcome place, not all the floors have wireless. As they need to replace furniture, will take chairs from the stacks.

Barry Lipinski (Rutgers) – can't help but notice that there are laptops in every carrel.

Danelle Sims (Rutgers) – New carrels have Ethernet cables.

Bill Wood (Brown) - New medical facility is book-less.

Danelle Sims (Rutgers) – use of collections is different in medical. Like what Jeremy said – the value is in the ability to answer collections – might be different in

humanities, but in biomed, users want to answer a question, not put their feet up and read.

Bill Wood (Brown) – so many more options – used to be that you had to go to the index. Google doesn't have every answer, so you do sometimes need to consult the print, but online supports more flexible and dynamic use.

David Bottorff (U Chicago) – for humanities, answering a question IS reading books.

Bill Wood (Brown) – need to be prepared to help all patrons

David Bottorff (U Chicago) – request for popular reading, more classroom space. All of our course reserves are consolidated – would it be worth our investment to create a teaching collection for specific quarters that is then located in a specific classroom. Faculty using the rooms want to use the collections in their teaching. The point of our job is making the collections accessible.

Johnny Weyand (Harvard) – “our job is getting the books on AND off the shelf – getting our books used”. If we're not all participating, we're doing the users a disservice. Our resources need to be circulating.

Adam Strohm (Newbery) – Newbery is special case. Digitization is encouraging use of physical materials. Here's our cool stuff that you can access online, but you will probably also want to come in and touch and use it. Difficult to justify digitizing – more pushback – so emphasizing that digital isn't a replacement for print, but can be an outreach tool. Very proactive.

David Bottorff (U Chicago) – Similar to what Special Collections has been trying – provides as much access as possible, but ultimately serious scholars will want to interact with the actual objects.

Bill Wood (Brown) – selector does a weekly blog on collections – highlights specific items and locations.

David Bottorff (U Chicago) – digitization is driving print use – serendipitous discovery is a naïve understanding of cataloging/organization. Searching a massive online corpus like Hathi but still wanting to use print collections – difficult. Really need to consult multiple sources simultaneously. Maybe we don't have to make collections available in the same ways – instead focus on the step from discovery to retrieval.

Adam Strohm (Newbery) – changing expectation on what you can find online. A lot of streaming AV at Northwestern – students so accustomed to getting things online, even if they have to look for it. But other users still using catalog.

Consensus that no one uses the print catalog.

David Bottorff (U Chicago) – Traditional catalog is what we hold, AquaBrowser includes Hathi, ebooks for demand-driven acquisition.

Bill Wood (Brown) – will load titles into the database for patron-driven Collection Development

Barry Lipinski (Rutgers) – reserves have changed – instead of books, just using articles and other content in course management system

Bill Wood (Brown) – students are well-equipped to access information this way.