

Western Libraries Physical Collection Preservation and Storage Strategy

Completed in 2018. For review in 2020 by the Collections and Content Strategies Team

Context and Rationale

Western Libraries' collections are developed and maintained in alignment with *Engage. Empower. Excel: Western Libraries Strategic Plan: 2015-2020*. The objective of this collection preservation and storage strategy is to provide researchers and scholars with access to world-class collections. On-going management of the physical collection is undertaken in consideration of current and anticipated use with relation to academic program support, collection growth, space management, and quality and nature of material. Management of the physical collection is a collaborative effort which requires consultation with and support from the CMDA Collections and Content Strategies sub-team, the Administration and Operations Resource Support Services sub-team, and the User Services Collections Maintenance sub-team.

An important component of collection maintenance is identifying physical material that is not required in the publicly accessible collection and can, therefore, be stored and preserved off-site. Since library resources may retain value for future research even when they have become dated or are not in current use, the Physical Collection Preservation and Storage Strategy provides an over-arching description of why, how, and where Western Libraries stores and preserves these physical resources that may be essential for future scholarship. Level of use is defined differently depending on resource type and needs to be determined on a case-by-case basis. A general "rule-of-thumb" for identifying low-use material is to identify items that have not circulated in the past 10 years. This definition can be adjusted to identify medium-use material or based on the need to identify more or less material for transfer to storage. The definition does not apply to non-circulating items. At times consideration of preservation and storage must also take into account the potential future need for recalling material from storage for reinstating into the publicly accessible collection. This need impacts which storage option is selected and will be considered on a case by case basis.

The Strategy should be considered in tandem with the following documents:

- [Principles and Guidelines for Collections Management \(March 2016\)](#)
- [ARCC and Off-Site Storage Transfer Guidelines](#) (June 2010)
- [Collections Policies](#)

Scope

This document addresses physical material owned by Western Libraries that is either under consideration for transfer or already located in preservation/storage facilities. This includes print, recordings, microforms and other material that takes space in the libraries. It does not address shifting collections between different locations within public spaces (either library to library or between floors in a single library) or preservation of digital material, but may include physical originals that have been digitized.

Objective

The Physical Collection Preservation and Storage Strategy describes the factors considered when changing needs for access to physical collections raise the possibility of transferring material to preservation and/or storage facilities. Distribution of the collection needs to be dynamic and responsive to competing needs, such as user needs for access both to resources and to study space.

Key considerations when material is a candidate for storage and/or preservation:

- Emerging needs for access to library resources and space (E.g. planned renovations),
- Historical, current, and anticipated future needs of Western researchers and scholars,
- Uniqueness of resource and likelihood of future need for research,
- Historical significance of individual resources,
- Digital availability and whether the digital version resides in a trusted repository and represents a suitable electronic surrogate,
- Availability of a shared print copy,
- Archival and Collection Development policies of Western Libraries.

Western Libraries Preservation and Storage Facilities

Current preservation and storage facilities house material that has been identified as low or medium use based on definitions set at the time of transfer.

Archives and Research Collections Centre (ARCC): Located adjacent to Weldon Library since 2003, ARCC includes the High Density Storage Module, rare book room, and the ARCC reading room. It houses Archival collections, Special Collections, University records, and, 442,746 low- or medium-use general collection library items identified for storage and for which there is a rationale for close proximity to the general collections. It's anticipated that in the future ARCC will have less space dedicated to general collections and more committed to archival and special collections and University records.

Command Services: A third-party storage solution located off-campus in London, Command Services houses low-to medium-use material transferred out of the general collection due to changing access requirements. Non-print resources, such as education kits, are stored here and it is a possible future storage location for films and other multi-media. As of October 2018, 1,260,537 are stored in Command Services and this includes printed materials, Cd's, LP and music scores.

Keep@Downsview: A low-use print preservation facility owned and managed by University of Toronto, Keep@Downsview houses physical materials shared by Queen's, McMaster, University of Ottawa, University of Toronto and Western. Ideally, all Western low-use print serial and monograph resources will be transferred to this facility in the future or Western will share an existing Downsview copy and discard the local version.

Research Depository Library (RDL): Located in the Dental Sciences Building, RDL was used for storage prior to construction of the ARCC and has sub-optimal conditions for long-term storage. It houses a static collection of 307,376 print items. Western Libraries anticipates vacating the space in the near future and a plan for the removal of materials from RDL needs to be developed.

Conclusion

Decisions regarding storage and preservation of physical materials will take into consideration the factors listed above. The aspirational goal is to contribute all newly identified low-use general collections to Keep@Downsview and this will be the first location considered for future storage and preservation of print material.

For material that is medium-use and no longer required in the publically accessible collection or other material that is not suitable for Keep@Downsview, off-site storage at Command Services' facilities will be the location of choice in the near term.

In the long-term our goal is to rely entirely on ARCC and Keep@Downsview as Western's preservation and storage solutions. Reducing our dependence on a third party storage solution will require creation of space in ARCC by transferring some of the low-use general collection material currently stored there to Keep@Downsview (for example, journal backfiles for which we have access to a reliable digital equivalent). As we continue to rationalize our preservation and storage collections and make better use of the Keep@Downsview facility, we anticipate less medium-use material will need to be moved to storage and the small amount that may still require storage or preservation can be housed in the ARCC along with special collections, archival material and university records.

Since storing material in Command Services facilities does not contribute to the commitment made with our Keep@Downsview partners to develop a shared preservation collection, one of our first steps will be to stop sending material to Command and ultimately we hope to begin moving medium- and low-use collections from Command Services into ARCC or Keep@Downsview respectively. A second early action is to begin the process of shifting material from RDL with the intent of vacating the space in the near future.