Some books' lives in academic libraries resemble a paraphrased version of Thomas Hobbes's state of Nature: Their lives are nasty, brutish, and short. This is a fact of library life, and we routinely replace this category of common, heavily-used, worn out stock with reprint copies from whichever publishers can provide them, and we write it off as the cost of conducting the business of our educational enterprise.

Unfortunately, we too often find another category of book for which a dismayingly trio of circumstances makes the routine of simple replacement-with-reprint impossible. This sad triangle is bound on one side by the fact that the book is out of print (o.p.) or out of stock indefinitely (o.s.i.). Secondly, the paper of the copy in hand is too inflexible, or brittle, to allow for routine repair. The third and most important line completing the triangle is that the book, common or obscure, continues to be in demand as a book for a number of reasons.

The resultant problem - or "challenge" to those preferring more positive euphemisms - is an irreparable book, reported o.p. or o.s.i. by the Acquisition Department, still needed in book format by the library's readers.

A solution: The creation of a replacement edition of one or a few to meet demand. Although this solution is no longer a new idea, it remains a practical option that requires a systematic approach to work well.

At the Ohio State University Libraries this systematic approach involves the review of hundreds of bibliocasualties every week, most receiving a triage exam after returning from loan, or as the result of being identified by public services or stacks maintenance personnel. The Libraries' conservation specialists skilled in the practice of triage know the range of options available that best serve the collection, and they route the injured books to the appropriate work station for action.

Paper flexibility is the critical factor in deciding what further action is feasible. If the book's paper still has flexibility, it is routed for either conservation treatment (repair), or given a trip to the library's contract bindery for recasing or rebinding.

The brittle books take one of two different routes. One route can look suspiciously like procrastination and is called "phase boxing"; done because there are too many to handle. The other route for brittle books takes them through a search-for-replacement continued on page 2.
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process that yields sufficient information for a
collection manager to make a rational decision on
their fate. The obvious preferred choice for, say, a
1908 brittle monograph is the reprint edition
available from AMS or another reputable publisher
or reprint house. Unfortunately and more
occasionally, Books in Print and Guide to Reprints
are found to be large works of fiction, and their
erroneous or outdated listings dash the hope of
purchasing a reprint.

There is another factor to consider. The
results from the search in OCLC or RLIN for the
listings of a master microform
of the title, e.g., the Library
of Congress, or Yale, or
University Microfilms has
preserved the title on film. A
check to see if the informational
content of a book has been
preserved in the national and international
preservation effort can be of interest, and can
influence the collection manager’s decision on
how best to preserve the book. (We recognize the
importance of contributing to the Nation’s efforts
to preserve important books on film.)

Nevertheless, collection managers always
recognize important features in the book in hand
that would not satisfy the local reader were the
book reproduced as a microform. Some of these
characteristics are:

- the existence of color, continuous tone, or half-
tone illustrations as plates or in the text crucial
to the meaning of the work;
- maps that will not reproduce faithfully to be
  useful in context within microform;
- the format of the book, which dictates its
  continued use as a codex (field guides and
  music scores, for example); and
- books in high demand, whose circulation
  records show several circulations each year in
  the recent past.

Enter the “xerographic replacement” option,
which allows the library to satisfy its readers’
desire for attractive, usable copies of books they
need, while keeping special features such as maps
and color plates and the codex format. The
replacement is produced on alkaline, permanent
paper, and library bound for durability and
openability. The work is done by an outside
contractor (the Archival Products Brittle Book
Replacement Service or another firm) after the
book is collated and special features marked by
the library staff. Of course, all copyright related
regulations are carefully observed.

This option is extraordinarily popular among
collection managers and readers, but it doesn’t
mean that we have found the perfect solution.
Our new “edition of one” is still highly vulnerable
to theft, damage, and loss, and (unlike
preservation microfilms) there is no backup
except the so-called leaf master, the original
leaves of the brittle books themselves, which we
generally do not keep. We should be planning the
next improvements now.

In the future, how can we improve the
operations of the process so that our “edition of
one” will never go out of print and so will always be
available? We need to prepare more aggressively to
maintain a machine readable (digitized) copy of the
texts so that they can be printed and bound on
demand at a lower cost. We also should work
toward better service. In our future
libraries, those books in
demand as books will have a
prominent place, but
enhanced availability and
accessibility is crucial to
their value.

On our way to that future,
photocopying selected brittle
books for preservation, and
continued access to
them as books, is now a
very valuable
option.

Mr. Boomgaard is Preservation Officer
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Columbus, Ohio.

ARCHIVAL PRODUCTS PRODUCT LIST

- Academy Folders
- Archival Folders
- Brittle Book Replacement Service
- Compact Disk Holder
- Custom Four Flap Enclosures
- Dark Tan Archival Board
- Davey Acid-Free Binders Board
- Acid-Free File Folders
- Four Flap Enclosures
- Grey/White Archival Board
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AN IMPORTANT SAFEGUARD
Public records, personal memoirs, and historic documents can be saved through Brittle Book Replacement

College and university libraries have typically had the greatest demand for photocopied editions of books and other printed material. But recently public libraries, city and government departments, public service organizations, and private collectors have discovered some of the advantages in Brittle Book Replacement.

Last year the Bayport Volunteer Fire Department in Bayport, Long Island celebrated their 100th year of service to the community. Part of their celebration included distributing twenty-five copies of a compilation of the first recorded information about the organization. The hand-written notes consisted of a register of members, records of dues and meetings, and brief anecdotes about the department. Because archival quality paper was used in the copies, the information contained in these ledgers will be available for the next 100 years.

Like university librarians, archivists from state historical societies and city and county libraries have also found a special challenge in keeping their aging and heavily circulated books in good condition. 100-year-old city directories from the Rockford Public Library in Rockford, Illinois were saved through Brittle Book Replacement, as well as other city directories from the Montana Historical Society, The Public Library of Steubenville and Jefferson County, and the Sawyer Free Library in Gloucester, Massachusetts. Because so many patrons used these directories, the brittle pages were quickly falling apart and the information contained on them was in danger of being lost. The BBRS advanced xerography copiers captured the detail in some of the old advertisement engravings, and often the yellowed page color and frayed page edges were not noticeable in the copies.

Alan Hall of the Public Library of Steubenville, Ohio sent their only copy of Twelve Against the Underworld for replacement. This book was very popular with Jefferson County residents, as it chronicled the efforts of twelve local ministers who in 1947 campaigned against organized crime in their area. Copies of other popular books detailing local history and Ohio’s involvement during the civil war were also sent for photocopying. By working with other librarians in the state, Mr. Hall was able to receive several facsimile editions to serve the large readership demand.

The Tone Family of Des Moines, Iowa may not have a large readership demand, but they do recognize the importance of preserving historic information. Their single volume of History of the Tone Family was becoming brittle, and archival quality editions were necessary to keep their records intact. The Tones were able to obtain fifty copies from the original volume and distribute them to family members for the holidays.

Whether printed information becomes valuable to a family, an organization, a community, or students at a university library, the Brittle Book Replacement Service can help preserve those passages for future readers.
Manuscript Folder Developed With Help From Milbank Library

Last fall Miranda Martin, Conservator at Columbia Teachers College, called Archival Products with an idea for a new kind of protective enclosure. This product would not be a binder, yet be unlike the existing Four Flap Enclosure. Several months and experiments later, the Archival Products Manuscript Folder appeared in the 1992 product catalog.

Librarians at Milbank Memorial Library have been making this kind of folder for about ten years. The staff feels the folders are a versatile tool for any document slated for preservation, especially when it becomes necessary to change material formats. Their use is threefold when it becomes necessary to microfilm pamphlets. When pamphlets are first pulled for filming, they are stored and organized in the folders. During shipping to the microfilmer, the material is well protected inside the covers. And when the material is returned to the library, the pamphlets are ready to be labelled and shelved.

For shelving purposes, binders are not always the best choice and many documents at Columbia University are stored in the folders for both circulating and special collections. Occasionally, preservation photocopies are kept in the folders when copied material is too thin to make hardcover binding a workable option.

Admitting to the convictions that exist against separating materials that were once bound together in book form, Ms. Martin concedes that they also use the folders for very large maps and foldouts from books that are being stored in phase boxes. The two enclosures are then kept together whenever possible.

As a conservator, Martin finds that the folders provide an easy way to keep important documents intact and still allow for patron use.

“The design of these wrappers is good for storing material in a non-damaging way. Nothing unnecessary touches the document, and the sleeve protects the material from rubbing against anything when sliding it in and out of the envelope.”

Thanks Teachers College, for sharing a valuable conservation idea.

Call Archival Products’ toll-free number for a free sample of the new Manuscript Folder in your choice of size and style.