Integrated Book Repair
by Gary Frost

Disconnection

The book repair services for a larger university library are usually divided into separate operations: book repair for circulation collections and conservation repair for non-circulating books. In my view as a book conservator, the first category of work has been known for its excellent productivity and poor quality while the second category has been known for its excellent quality and poor productivity.

Why do we have this partitioning of book repair? Is there an integrated approach that would improve service overall? Would a successful integration of book repair open the way for improvement of other preservation services?

Reconnection

At the University of Iowa Libraries we are in the process of integrating book repair for circulating collections with conservation repair for non-circulating collections. This is an initial aspect of a process of integrations of physical treatment for both print and non-print materials that is now just emerging. For the repair integration we are following various models, from the excellent combined book repair facility at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, to the production line model of Booklab. There is also a fair measure of experiment. The process will need continuing evaluation.

The immediate goal of integrating circulating and non-circulating book repair has been the improvement of technique and quality in circulating book repair. There is little need to focus on the excellent productivity of the circulating book repair unit which is supported by teams of attentive and dependable work-study students. So quality and technique are the focus. The steps taken so far will (1) improve training with a three-tiered sequence, (2) establish a mediating treatment category of "exceptions" and (3) integrate daily activity of staff and improvement of facilities of the Conservation Lab and the Preservation Book Repair unit.

Book repair training is augmented with our illustrated "Repair Procedure Manual" narrating all the repair.

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operations as well as our standard sample set of all the repairs. The training itself is organized in three tiers. The first tier is “minor repair” including techniques of tip-ins of replacement pages, construction of map and chart pockets, hand slitting for in-house double-fan binding and tape repair of tears and the tighten-in-case repair. The second tier is “major repair” including pamphlet binding, repair of books still in their covers, or “reback”, and the repair of books with covers detached. The third tier is “exception” including but not limited to, the in-house double-fan rebinding method, “quick bind” of preservation photocopies, repair of leather covered books, mold and flood damage salvage work, guillotine trimming of unopened books, paperback stiffening and boxes and enclosures.

The first two categories of minor and major repair mirror levels of reconstruction that occur in specifications for damaged, non-circulating books. But, how well do decisions about a damaged, circulating book relate to decisions about a damaged special collection book? Here inefficiencies, or at least anxieties, of treatment specification for rare books stand out. Conservators and curators need the clear assessment process that is established for circulating repair. We are moving in that direction.

We now see that the “exception” category is emerging as a mediating component in the overall integration of book repair. While the exception category keeps distractions off the production line for first two-tier circulating repairs, it can also be used to exclude distractions from the stream of non-circulating conservation treatment. Distractions from the conservation treatment stream are those books that could be batched for a standard conservation repair.

The single, intermediate repair specification that we are now using to accommodate “exception” is the “CMR” (collection maintenance repair) which was developed at BookLab in Austin, Texas. This specification includes new endpapers of Mohawk Vellum beige, 70 lb. text paper with options for a flange internal hinge for attachment of the original cover. This is a case-construction repair with an option of a tight joint case for laced construction repair. This single specification handles both the damaged leather covered books from the circulating collections and the batch oriented repair from special collections.

New View

So it seems that the “exception” category is actually a middle zone of the book repair spectrum. The needs of a middle category of materials, between those in general stacks and special collections was defined to me by Conservator Paul Banks at the Newberry Library in Chicago. This precept also suggests a middle zone of conservation practice. The relevance here is that the “exception” category now appears key to a seamless, integrated book repair service.

As far as the integration of treatment staff and facilities, the first step at the University of Iowa Libraries has been to shift supervision of the circulating book repair unit from the Preservation Librarian, Regina Sinclair, to the Conservator. This was a leap of faith, but it has worked well. From my perspective as conservator the change has added fun, challenge and relevance to my role and the upstairs-downstairs revolving scene is invigorating. The steady hands and experienced guidance of Anna Embree, Conservation Assistant and Susan Hansen, Book Repair Supervisor, prevent me from being a nuisance.

From a staff perspective we have realized an alliance of interest over the improvement of facilities, materials inventory, tool kits and working methods. There are no longer orphan workstations. Staff alliance is also strengthened since everyone in the Conservation Department must now pass through the training tiers and production experience in circulating book repair. As a counterpart of this requirement any work-study student who discovers a particular interest and aptitude in book repair will also find no obstacle to learning more about library and book conservation.

From a planning standpoint, integration of book repair is not a dead end. The exercise suggests something about development of non-print preservation services. Here the process of brittle books assessment is relevant, but the larger venture into the care of non-print collections will bring focus to the functionality of preservation and
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conservation assessment in general.

Lack of continuity does exist between assessment processes for circulating collections and assessment processes for non-circulating collections. Look at the disconnection, in spite of similar ingredients, between processes of specification for conservation treatment and assessment for brittle books. Perhaps the experience of integration of the assessment processes for circulating and non-circulating book repair can provide a background for a wider definition of preservation assessment.

But is all this conservation? What makes the effort of integrating book repair services conservation is the goal of improved quality. Efforts of improved efficiency and rationality are skewed without that goal. Comprehensive multiple media services for preservation of local collections can distribute themselves among various scenarios, various facilities and under various names. Their integration should be pursued wherever it will improve quality, in craft, technique and design of the product.

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Inexpensive Spine Lettering by Patsy L. McCarty

When I was taught how to replace the torn spine of a hard-backed book, I was instructed to save the spine and attach it to the new one. Sometimes, however, this is impossible as the old spine is missing or so worn that you can’t read it and a new spine has to be made. To make the title like the original requires a foil-stamping machine and a number of fonts of brass type in a variety of sizes. In most school libraries funding for repairing books is limited, if not nonexistent, so this is not an option. Here is a much easier, cheaper and quicker way of making a complete spine replacement or new cover complete with title.

First, you need a computer and a laser or inkjet printer. The best is a laser printer that will accept hand feeding the sheets and will direct them straight through the printer (like the HP LaserJet 4). Most new printers don’t have the straight-through envelope feed and bend the sheet around the drum. This seems to work, but it may also create a ghost image on the sheet. Test your printer to see if there are any problems.

Gather together various colored sheets of book cloth. If you’re using an inkjet printer make sure the sheets are not plasticized. Laser jet printers can print on both types of cloth. You also need a can of Krylon™ Clear Spray or artist’s fix, and the rest of your normal spine-replacement tools.

Pick three or four books of the same color so you can group their titles on one piece of cloth. Take a piece of book cloth that matches the color of those covers, and cut a piece 8 1/2 x 11”, as the height of most books (including the head and foot turn-ins) will fill that width. If the books are taller, then create your titles landscape style on the computer. When using a regular laser printer you’ll be printing black on the color of the cloth, so make sure that the two colors are a good contrast. If you’re using a color printer, then just select the proper color for the title for a good contrast with the cloth, remembering that the light colors won’t print on dark cloth. Using a lighter cloth than the cover will also let you do a neat-looking quarterbind rather than a spine replacement.

On a sheet of 8 1/2” x 11” paper, mark off the widths of the spines (starting 1” from the top of the sheet) plus the side turn-ins for each, and continue down the vertical sheet leaving at least 1” of extra space at the bottom. Find the center of each of those measurements as the centerline for the title running up the center of the spine, and mark its length from the top of this paper pattern. If you need to print landscape because you are working with taller books, measure the width of the spine from the left edge of this pattern sheet toward the right edge. Now, measure the height of the letters in the original title of the first book if you
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still have an original spine, or estimate the height if you don’t. Then center that height on the centerline of the first (or top) spine on the pattern. Remember that there are 72 points to one inch, so use the following formula to give you the correct point size of the type. Let’s say that the original title is 3/16” high: 72/16 = 4.5 x 3 = 13.5 (or 14 point). If the title was 3/8” high, you would figure: 72/8 = 9 x 3 = 27 (or 28 point).

Turn on your computer, space down the page on your screen until you are on the line that matches the center line of your first title, select the proper font and size for that title, and type it in, starting about 1 1/2” from the left edge (not the margin) of the sheet. This should leave enough space at the right (which is the bottom of the spine) for the call letters and other library information to be added later. Space down to the centerline of the next title and repeat the procedure for that title, continuing down the screen until you’ve done the last one.

Print your cloth sheet, and spray it with the coating to protect the title. After it’s dry, measure off your spine widths (working from the center of each title), cut the title strips apart, glue on spine stiffeners, and put them on your books.

Patsy L. McCarty, Book Group, P.O. Box 27716, Las Vegas, NV 89126 702 870-0131.

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**EZ Pamphlet Binder**
with acid-free stitched cotton cambric with remoistenable adhesive

Archival Products has improved the material and structural quality of this extensively-used binder. Perfect for student assistants to use, the EZ pamphlet binder is made of quality materials and is competitively priced. This inexpensive pamphlet binder is constructed of non-coated gray/white archival board, c-cloth and acid-free remoistenable adhesive cotton cambric tape. Quantity prices are available for large contract orders. Other c-cloth spine colors can be chosen from in-stock colors for orders of 1,000 pieces and above.

- Binding structure uses acid-free stitched cotton cambric with remoistenable adhesive.
- Front cover may be gray/white archival board or 20 mil polyester at no extra charge!
- Distance between covers is 5/8” to allow for versatility of materials to be bound.
- Unique design of spine allows you to bind normal pamphlet materials up to 7/8” in thickness.
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Archival Products Focus

Pamphlet Binders

Archival Products Spine Wrap Pamphlet Binder, designed for quick application and for an aesthetically pleasing appearance on the shelf, is constructed of high density, acrylic-coated board with blue C-1 cloth spine and cambric spine reinforcement. The pressure-sensitive adhesive strip is the most defining feature of this pamphlet binder. The strip folds around the binder, adhering to the outside of the spine concealing the binding structure, giving a finished look to the bound document. This pamphlet binder is so unique that LBS was granted a United States patent in 1988 for the design.

The Quick Bind Pamphlet Binder was economically designed as a response to the need of librarians with smaller budgets. We use the same high quality materials as our original patented spine wrap pamphlet binder but eliminate the spine wrap and cambric liner. The inner hinge as well as the outer hinge is covered with C-1 grade book cloth for strength. The aesthetic difference between the Spine Wrap and Quick Bind Pamphlet Binder is that the sewing or stapling is visible on the outer spine of the Quick Bind Pamphlet Binder.

Both styles of pamphlet binders are available with spine scoring of 0, 1/8, 1/4, 3/8 and 1/2 inch.

The Archival Folder, designed to be an even more affordable alternative for pamphlet storage, is constructed of acrylic-coated grey/white board and light grey C grade book cloth.

The Spine Wrap Pamphlet Binder, Quick Bind Pamphlet Binder and Archival Folder are all available with clear polyester or board fronts.

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