

# From Off-Site to In-the-Center

Repositioning large scale library  
storage as an enabling service

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# Broad trends in collections storage

- Optimizing the usage environment and the storage environment
  - Aligning resource expenditures with service goals.
  - Making collection management a necessary and integrated part of the library's vision for its service.
- Consolidation and cooperating built on storage sites and sharing networks
  - From “off-site” to “in-the-center”

# Significant Differences

## People

- Oxygen, 20% by volume
- Temperatures 70-80°F
- Relative Humidity 40-60%
- Light, between 390 to 700 nm and 250-500 lux
- Free space of 24"

## Books

- Inert gases or very little Oxygen, under 15%
- Temperatures 40-60°F
- Relative Humidity 30-50%
- Darkness
- Free space of  $\frac{1}{8}$ "

# Basic Math

**For 95% of Assoc. Research Libs... including a few I know pretty well**

- Annual circulation of 4-8%
  - If half the collection is used in any year, must assume 7:1 browse to check-out ratio
- Assume 80% unique usage
  - 3.2-6.4% used per year
  - 16% - 32% every 5 years
  - 52% - 64% every decade
- **After 10 years, half the inventory may be unused.**

**For a big storage facility, connected to one of those ARLs...**

- Annual circulation <2%
- Unique usage >80%
  - Less than 20% of usage is a repeat
  - Of those repeats, most are for ILL or local article scanning
- **After 10 years, 84% of inventory was unused**
  - In 100 years, all the inventory likely to be used

- Annual circulation of 4-8%; we'll use 5%
- Assume 80% browse to 20% circ (4:1)
  - 20% of the collection used per year
- Then assume 20% repeated use, year to year
  - **Five years from now, every book will have been browsed (84%) or checked out (21%)**
- Does this match reality at your library?
- Has every book in your collection been touched in the last 6 years, and have one in four been checked out?

- Annual circulation of 4-8%; we'll use 5%
- Assume 80% browse to 20% circ (4:1)
  - 20% of the collection used per year
- **Then assume 80% repeated use, year to year**
  - In 15 years, every book will have been browsed (80%) or checked out (20%)
- Does this match reality at your library?
- Has every book in your collection been touched in the last , and have one in four been checked out?

- Annual circulation of 4-8%; we'll use 5%
- **Assume 20% browse to 80% circ (1:4)**
  - 6.25% of the collection used per year
- **Then assume 80% repeated use, year to year**
  - In 75 years, every book will have been browsed (20%) or checked out (80%).
- Does this match reality at your library?
- Has every book in your collection been touched in the last , and have one in four been checked out?

# This is a library.

People

Books and Media

Computers

Collections and Reference Signs







Is this a library?

Photo by: Carol Highsmith, Library of Congress



# Is this a library?



Photo by: Carol Highsmith, Library of Congress





Photo by: Carol Highsmith, Library of Congress





# Is this a library?



Photo by: Carol Highsmith, Library of Congress



Is this a library?



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# Is this a library?



Photo by: Shawn Miller, Library of Congress

# Advantages of Consolidated Storage

- Better preservation outcomes
- Reduced risk of flood, fire, or other disaster
- Better inventory control and security

# Storage *is* Library Science

*Books are for use*

1. User-friendly spaces, suited to multiple modes of engagement have been, are, and will be the *primary focus of library capital resources*. Storage strategies should liberate user facing spaces.

*Every reader their book*

3. This points to a diversity issue that must be addressed cooperatively and at scale: no library has a fully comprehensive collection or all the readers needed to ask every question.

*Every book its reader*

*Save the time of the reader*

**4. *Let's continue...***

*The library is a growing organism*

2. Storage can be an effective and appropriate secondary focus of capital resources, especially as a consolidated or cooperative, environmentally-optimized, and high-density service.



# Fuller accounting for time

## Place-centric model (deprecated)

1. Travel time to library
2. Search time
3. Retrieval time within stacks
4. *Travel time to circulation (opt.)*
5. *Travel time to a reading area (opt.)*
6. Travel time to return the item

## Proximate library model (current)

1. Search time
2. Travel time to library
3. Retrieval time within stacks
4. *Travel time to circulation (opt.)*
5. *Travel time to a reading area (opt.)*
6. Travel time to return the item

## Fulfillment-centric model (emerging)

1. Search time
2. *Travel time to library circulation (opt.)*
- ~~3. Retrieval time within stacks~~
- ~~4. Travel time to circulation~~
5. *Travel time to a reading area (opt.)*
6. *Travel time to return the item (opt.)*

*Saves the time of the Library staff*

*Saves the time of the user*

# Regional Print Book Collections\*



Imagine that autonomous trucking becomes routine by 2030, fully decoupling shipping from a person-workday schedule. A book from California can be packed up Friday night and in the Mid-Atlantic by Sunday afternoon. For the user, they could realize at the very end of the week that they need something, and we could have it ready and waiting at the start of their next work week. Imagine how cooperative library networks might be reshaped at these technologies develop.

\* Circles are scaled to reflect the number of print book publications in each regional collection.

Lavoie, Malpas & Shipengrover for OCLC Research. 2012.

**FROM OFF-SITE TO IN-THE-CENTER**

# Goals we can all support...

Increasing the scope of resources we offer, to support ever more diverse uses for information.

Ensuring that collections are preserved in useful formats, with a natural emphasis on digital services.

Serving as partners with and advocates for libraries nationwide.

# ...becoming possible through collective effort

- An off-site but in-the-center model, where...
  - facilities optimized for preservation and distribution are hubs of a library collections service network, and
  - proximate libraries are designed to address real in-person service needs.  
*(browsing collections included, but that's a longer talk).*
  - better preservation outcomes including materials condition, inventory control, and security.  
*(which ensure higher user satisfaction: more requests filled when expected by materials in usable formats)*
  - preservation outcomes achieved at scale for lower per-item cost, a better return on scarce preservation resources, and more sustainable costs over time.

Questions?

**THANK YOU.**

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