


7. Krummel, Bibliographies, 90.


This work is the proceedings of an International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) conference held in Berlin in 2003 and includes essays on general aspects of disaster preparation and protection and specific examples of responses to disasters. Global in scope, this book contains discussions of libraries and disaster issues on several continents. Many of the authors stress that each institution’s situation is unique, but they also emphasize common themes and issues that all such cultural institutions face. Thus this book is valuable both for the specific suggestions offered and the overall mindset it inculcates.

The first section on national policy planning stresses the importance of cooperation among different types and sizes of institutions. No one library or museum will have the resources or know-how to prepare for and survive all types of disasters, natural or man-made. Sharing information and solutions in advance will enable all the participants to provide a more flexible and timely response to floods, earthquakes, or any other calamity. The authors also report on the importance of advance planning and surveys to determine what to save first and who to call for help.

A section on planning specific to institutions includes museums in Turkey vulnerable to earthquakes. Drawing on their own experiences as well as experts from other earthquake-prone areas of the world such as California and Japan, these institutions are able to set priorities for remediation of exhibit and storage spaces as well as make informed decisions regarding new construction. An article on disasters in Sweden stresses the importance of preparing for the psychological aftereffects as well as the physical ones. Patrons and staff can both suffer when a beloved library is lost to a fire.

Case studies of floods in Prague and a hurricane in Jamaica underline the importance of the practices pointed out by other authors. Being prepared by knowing what everyone is expected to do and who to call for help can make an enormous difference in recovery—both in the amount of time required and the financial resources needed to make good the losses.

Risk assessment and comparisons of collection recovery options are also discussed. Many of the essays include extensive lists of resources for libraries and other cultural institutions initiating or revitalizing their disaster preparedness plans and policies. Most valuable are the organizations, some global, some local or regional, that can assist institutions of any type or size in “preparing for the worst.”

This book will not replace a disaster preparedness manual, such as the one from ALA, but it is valuable in developing critical thinking about the specific issues facing cultural institutions. Many collections do not merely have great monetary value but are irreplaceable repositories of a cultural heritage. This is something everybody responsible for preparedness should bear in mind and communicate to their governing bodies and the disaster responders they will be interacting with should the worst happen.

Perhaps the most important point, raised in this work by several of the authors, is that disaster planning is a process. It does not end with the production of a thick binder that rapidly disappears in the back of a filing cabinet or the top shelf of a busy director’s office. Public-service librarians as well as conservators should be thinking about the possibilities inherent in new acquisitions and new construction. Thinking critically about what to do in a worst case scenario should not be a constant obsession, but it should be an important factor in any new initiative a cultural institution undertakes. By bearing in mind the examples provided in this volume and taking advantage of the many resources included in it, your institution will not automatically be better able to deal with seemingly overwhelming catastrophes, but if you can ensure your constituents and yourself that you have done all that can be done to prepare and react to disaster, you will have taken the first steps to recovering and rebuilding both your personal and institutional confidence.—Dan Forrest, (dan.forrest@wku.edu), Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green.


This slender volume—which, speaking of cost analysis,
comes to about $0.81 per page—when used by library managers to determine preservation costs could rapidly pay for itself, as an indirect cost of an item (after first determining whether it is supply or equipment) that could be amortized out over at least five years!

In all seriousness, this is a valuable work for any person in charge of preservation efforts, with too many resources needing preservation and too little money and staff to do all the work. The digital side of preservation (such as scanning heavy-use, hard-copy materials in order to have the hard-copy items less handled and therefore preserved) is included in the concept of preservation work.

The focuses of the writing style are clarity and brevity, with use of tables, examples, and bulleted lists to make points clear with a minimum investment of the reader’s time. For example, Chapter 1, “The Role of Cost Analysis in Preservation” (1–2) is two pages long and is remarkably to the point. Chapter 2, “A Methodology for Cost Analysis” (3–5) is almost as brief; it lists and expands upon the eight major steps of the costing process—define item to be costed, understand purpose of costing exercise, determine cost basis, gather information on work process, identify and quantify cost components, calculate cost, document assumptions, and perform reasonableness tests. In Chapter 3, “Identifying and Calculating Costs” (7–28), we get to the difficult work of costing supplies and equipment, services, labor, and indirect costs, and in Chapter 4 (29–39) there are two costing exercises, one for deacidification and one for phase-box creation. The latter is especially helpful because it gives two different costing examples, one for in-house work and the other for outsourcing of the work.

In Chapters 5 (“Review of the Literature on Cost Analysis,” 41–46) and 6 (“Selected Annotated Bibliography,” 47–56), the authors perform this reviewer’s work, by listing related works and discussing them. While there has been extensive work on cost analysis of library operations, there seems not to be any other publication exactly like this one on cost analysis of preservation in libraries. The last chapter is divided up by subject (preservation literature, subdivided into general, binding, deacidification, digitization, and microfilming; library literature; technical services literature, subdivided into general and cataloging; and business literature). Each citation has an approximately one-hundred-word annotation. The digitization section of two pages (the largest section in this chapter) includes the major works with which this reviewer is familiar, plus several more citations which the reviewer intends to pursue.

This is a work that will immediately be put into use in this reviewer’s collection. While reading the work, occasionally I would think, “But that’s an obvious point,” and then realize it was obvious only because I have worked in libraries for thirty-five years and for the last ten of them have relatively frequently performed cost analysis of providing services. For persons new to doing cost analysis, this work can shortcut the learning experience and make it possible to avoid painful learning experiences.—Mary Lynette Larsgaard, (mary@library.ucsb.edu), University of California, Santa Barbara.


In 1993, the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS) Catalog Form and Function Committee (CFFC) developed plans to produce a series of briefing papers to track aspects of the development of the online catalog and its effect on users as it continued to evolve during the 1990s. The CFFC wanted the papers to provide timely and authoritative information for professionals to help them keep up with developments. To this end, the CFFC solicited topic ideas and selected authors to write a series of eighteen short papers that were published in the ALCTS Newsletter from 1995 to 2001. This monograph republishes all eighteen papers in their original forms with the addition of an introduction written by Arlene G. Taylor. The introduction describes the history behind the papers, provides a copy of the guidelines for the series, and gives a brief synopsis of each paper describing why it is significant. The papers “are a microcosm of the developments of the online catalog as it moved from being a system for identifying what is owned by a particular institution to being a system for providing access to information in all forms regardless of ownership” (3).

The book succeeds admirably in providing primary source documents related to the history of online catalogs. The papers ably track the significant issues surrounding online catalog development as it was happening and reflect the concerns of their time. Many of the papers discuss the problems of the day, such as the paper by Harriette Hemmisi, David Miller, and Mary Charles Lasseter on the implementation of the MARC fields and subfields for form data in 1998. Thomas Dowling discusses the initial problems in 1997 created by the switch to Web-based online catalogs. There are papers that address online catalog requirements by Peter Graham, Michael Buckland, and Ellen Crosby that are purely historical at this point, yet represent the thinking of the time.

Many of the papers make recommendations. It is interesting to read these articles and see which of their solutions were followed and which have gone in unexpected directions. For example, Mary Micco’s two papers, written in 1995, discuss subject authority control on the Internet. They call for authors of Web documents to provide subject classification numbers and for expert systems to use those.