**Optimal Copies, Accessibility, and Impact on Shared Print Decisions**

*Summary of a CRL/GRF Web Meeting held January 10, 2012*

Speakers

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On January 10, 2012, the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) hosted a web meeting open to libraries that are members of CRL or CRL’s Global Resources Forum (GRF).

Roger Schonfeld presented an overview of optimal copies concepts and issues for print materials following their digitization. Key points included:

* What user needs and preservation objectives do libraries need to meet for various materials?
* What is the risk tolerance and what level of investment is needed and appropriate to guard against possible loss?
* The earlier What to Withdraw/Yano study found that, under the ideal scenario for scholarly journals, the library community would need 2 "perfect" page-validated noncirculating copies to secure a preservation horizon for 20 years.
* In thinking about this type of systemwide analysis, the phrase “minimum number of copies” is more precise and accurate than “optimal copies”.
* Through its actions (“revealed preferences”) regarding scholarly journals, the library community seems to have implicitly decided against page-level validation and noncirculating status.

He noted that establishing shared knowledge of user needs and community preservation objectives, combined with system-wide analysis, could yield a shared understanding of appropriate preservation and access requirements. . This system-wide responsibility for materials, knitting together disparate print preservation projects, can occur without central assignment of responsibility, and would result from an information-sharing infrastructure to make better decisions locally and regionally.

Lizanne Payne presented an overview of current shared print agreements and system-level infrastructure that is being developed:

* Print archives metadata standard through a project sponsored by OCLC
* Print Archives Preservation Registry (PAPR) knowledgebase being developed by CRL

Discussion among the participants centered around these questions:

* Should we establish a significantly higher number of minimum copies to retain than the analysis would suggest, for conservative planning that can be rethought over time?
* Will there be different numbers for different categories of materials? Can different categories be defined based on artifactual interest of older materials? E.g. materials for which no copies should be withdrawn?
* Can materials be preserved if they are allowed to circulate? Or does access require a larger number of archived copies?
* Is there a way to define the needed number of copies centrally or systematically, or will individual libraries and consortia define this locally?

Participants reached general agreement around this principle:

Libraries and consortia are likely to continue to make print collection preservation and access decisions according to local and regional parameters or, in some cases, within domains or communities of interest. These decisions will be informed by research on user needs and preservation objectives and by system-wide analysis based on shared information. In the aggregate, our goal is to ensure the availability of a collective collection shaped by common approaches and shared information.