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TITLE: “Goodbye Doesn’t Mean Forever:” Space Issues and Selection Strategies for the Transfer of Slavica to High-Density Remote Storage.

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SUMMARY: The 21st century American research library faces a serious housing crisis. Today more than ever libraries must balance patrons’ needs for access with the responsibility of preserving and storing the deluge of published material. In response to the storage crisis, several of the nation’s top research libraries have constructed off-site, high-density shelving facilities. This paper first summarizes the discussion about the nature and function of these facilities. The paper goes on to document a case-study of how the Slavic collections at the University of Kansas Libraries addressed this issue. The case-study consists of four sections: 1) a brief description of the KU Annex, KO Libraries’ particular space issues, and the “Dewey” and “LC” reclassification project; 2) criteria for selection of Russian literary text for storage and implementation of those criteria; 3) problems and challenges encountered during the process; and 4) the importance of engaging faculty directly in the selection process. A summary of “lessons learned” concludes the case study.

KEYWORDS: library space; high-density shelving facilities; off-site remote storage; preservation; access, University of Kansas Library Annex; case-study; Slavic collection; Russian literature; selection criteria; faculty collaboration; browsing collection; open-stacks.

"The technology will not,
as was once thought,
solve libraries' space needs.
Instead, it creates new demands"¹

Today's patrons demand more from a library than ever before. In addition to collections, they demand technology. They also want social space, a comfortable environment where they can spend leisure time; they want rooms where they can gather; some want cafés where they can sip, chat, play chess, or listen to music. As demand for space expands, the cost of that space rises even higher. With such a high premium on space what are libraries to do?

ALTERNATIVES TO SHRINKING SPACE

The wave of published materials that flooded academic libraries following World War II had a widespread effect on the management of library collections. This is well documented.² Oxford's Bodleian library is a classic example.

"A landmark of vast riches, [it] has everything but space...For all its treasures – indeed, because of them – the Bodleian has faced a singular problem for most of its 400-year history: space...and that fact has forced it to take over existing buildings and regularly build new depositories outside this congested city."³

As librarians struggled to keep pace with the publishing industry, few if any would have anticipated the information explosion that lay ahead. The advent of electronic information technologies fundamentally changed publishing and collection management forever. Card catalogs, once the mainstay of bibliographic control, were forced into submission as computer terminals invaded the library. Once inside, these new friends were here to stay, occupying more and more territory once held by books.

¹ Walsh, p. 54-56

² Miller, pp. 318-328; see also, Branin, p. 23-32

³ Mooney, p. B4+

Solutions to space problems include various alternatives, such as: reorganization of collections within the existing library; compact shelving; automated storage and retrieval systems; renovation or additions to libraries; construction of entirely new libraries; off-site shelving/storage facilities; and cooperative management of collections. Cost, growth rate of collections, library goals and objectives, technology, and immediate versus long-range needs all factor into the solution. The question of whether (or when) to rearrange, renovate, or construct is a major concern for university research libraries.⁴ When it comes to shelving space, collection developers cannot just “clean house” of low-use volumes; they are “obliged to preserve those materials... because they have historical significance.”⁵ Weeding is not an option.

The biggest challenge to new construction and renovation is persuading university administrators that more space is really needed. And this often involves persuading the public as well. A shortage of space, even a severe one, may not be visible to patrons. They may notice overcrowded book stacks or reduced sitting areas, but most do not see the piles of books that are continually removed from the main collection in order to make room for new arrivals. Nor do patrons see congested staff work areas, outdated mechanical systems, and inadequate building insulation.⁶ During the planning process, collection developers must advocate for adequate space to house their growing and evolving collections.⁷

A growing number of American university research libraries have turned to high-density remote book storage facilities as a means of solving their space problems. Some professionals, as Scott Seaman reports, consider the remote shelving facility an inferior good:

⁴ For a discussion of cost-benefit analysis see Seaman, p. 2-3

⁵ Walsh, p. 54

⁶ Leighton, p. 5

⁷ Leighton, p. 7-10

The least circulated materials, as humanities and social sciences faculty frequently point out, are the research materials necessary for meticulous scholarship. The very strength of an academic library...are the extensive holdings of seldom-used research materials. Relegating such materials to a remote location—one that precludes browsing of the collection—undermines the mission of a research library.⁸

Others, like Margaret K. Powell, draw attention to the superior preservation environment of the high-density facilities and improved electronic access to low-use materials.⁹ Regardless of ones position, the high-density” trend has fundamentally changed the way research libraries serve patrons. Danuta Nitecki points out that the growth of remote facilities has forced research libraries to manage services at a higher level than before; if remote facilities are to be successful, they must be "fast, reliable, economical, sustainable, convenient and accurate." ¹⁰

The success of the Harvard Depository (a client-owner model) demonstrates why many other research libraries have turned to high-density remote storage facilities. Over time the facility has gained acceptance among faculty. This is due in part to "reliable daily service, virtually error-free retrievals of materials stored, and the promise of extending the life span of scholarly resources."¹¹ In particular, as Nitecki points out, remote access and timely delivery are two major advantages of the off-site system. Even though traditional browsing is unavailable, an activity preferred by many, wider acceptance of the system may be a matter of developing better electronic browsing skills. In addition, the costs of storing and retrieving materials from the Harvard depository were significantly less than other alternatives.¹² One of the attractive characteristics of remote facilities is their adaptable infrastructure. When remote storage

⁸ Seaman, p.1

⁹ Powell, p. 24

¹⁰ Nitecki, p. 2-3

¹¹ Nitecki, p. 12

¹² Nitecki, p. 14

facilities fill up, there is little doubt about how to proceed – build a new module. Harvard has already added five modules to its depository.¹³

While the design and use of the remote facilities have attracted considerable academic attention, an equally important consideration has received less attention: that is, how to determine which materials will be moved to remote storage and which will stay in the main collections. The small body of literature that discusses this dilemma, including articles by Margaret K. Powell, and Dan Hazen mostly consists of case-studies in selection.¹⁴ In like manner, the succeeding portion of this paper is a case study of strategies for the selection of Slavic holdings that will either remain in KU Libraries' open books stacks or be transferred to the new high-density remote storage facility, the KU Library Annex..

THE KU LIBRARY ANNEX: A CASE STUDY

Description

The KU library system consists of two main libraries, seven branch libraries, and one high-density remote storage facility, the Library Annex. The KU Library Annex was designed and built to be:

A high-density storage facility for low-use library materials. The transfer of such materials to the Library Annex increases the space available for users in the main campus library buildings and provides conservation-level environmental controls for books and journals, archives and manuscripts, and rare and fragile materials. All materials in the Library Annex are represented in the Library catalog and may be requested for use. The Library Annex is located on KU's west campus and designed on the Harvard model. It will have an initial capacity of 1.6 million volumes.¹⁵

¹³ Since the first module began operating in 1986, Harvard has built 5 other modules, for a total capacity of 161,000 square feet. Early modules filled up before anticipated, with growth over the past decade averaging 20 percent.

¹⁴ For a discussion of general library selection strategies, see articles by Hazen (2000) and Powell (1998).

¹⁵ <http://www.lib.ku.edu/annex/>

Watson Library is the largest facility in the KU the library system and the facility with the most crowded book stacks. Fortunately, the Library Annex opened just as Watson began to reach critical mass (2006). Watson's space problem is exacerbated by the fact that its holdings are split between two classification systems. The bulk of the holdings are classified according to the Library of Congress (LC) system; whereas a significant portion of older material is classified according to the Dewey Decimal system.¹⁶ In general, the Dewey books circulate less than books in LC classification. The first step in Watson's "weight-loss program" was to decide which Dewey books should be integrated into the LC collection and which sent to the Annex. It was anticipated that 10 to 20 percent of the Dewey collection would be selected for re-classification. As it turned out, the selection rate for "LC class P – Language and Literature" was approximately 30 to 50 percent.¹⁷

The ongoing Dewey reclassification project is a collaborative effort between library staff and teaching faculty. The selection process follows a three-step procedure: KU's bibliographer for history, Richard Ring, first selects items in all subjects based on circulation statistics; subject bibliographers then make their selections, followed by teaching faculty with their recommendations. The process was intended to remain flexible in order to reflect real research and disciplinary needs. Formally, Ring identifies titles that have circulated a minimum of five times, including at least one circulation since 1999. In practice, Ring selects titles that have circulated at least once since the early 1990's, including multi-volume sets. He also selects reference books, since these are frequently consulted in-house. Slavic bibliographers oversee the

¹⁶ Many small and medium-sized public libraries still use the Dewey Decimal classification system.

¹⁷ The combination of ongoing acquisitions and reclassified items from the "Dewey" collection necessitated the creation of two overflow areas.

selection of Slavic titles.¹⁸ Russian literature and history comprise the largest portion of the Slavic Dewey collection and pose the greatest challenge for Slavic bibliographers. This case-study focuses on strategies for handling Russian literature within the Dewey collection.

Criteria for Selection

General. Every title was examined and considered separately. In general, items that duplicated holdings in LC were sent to the Annex while reference works were integrated into the main collection.

Faculty/Student Research. Works directly or indirectly relevant to ongoing faculty research and teaching were incorporated into the main collections. For example, KU Russian faculty research focuses on Pushkin, Lermontov, Chekhov, Nabokov, the Silver Age artists and writers, intellectual history, and Slavic folklore. Graduate student research both past and present was also a major consideration.¹⁹

Belles-lettres. Selection of *belles-lettres*, including emigre literature, was based on the following criteria: frequency of circulation; significance in the Russian literary canon; whether the item is unique or rare;²⁰ physical condition; and membership in an important series.²¹

Belles-lettres in general comprised a major portion of the items that were selected for reclassification, including multi-volume collected works. Small volumes of poetry were

¹⁸ Jon Giullian, bibliographer for East and West Slavic languages oversees the selection of material Russian, Belorussian, Ukrainian, Czech, Slovak, and Polish materials; Malgosia Stamm, program assistant and selector of Polish materials, assists with the Polish collection; and Geoff Husic, South Slavic Bibliographer oversees the selection of material from the South Slavic region and the Balkans. The process is ongoing. The Dewey collection in Russian history is slated next for evaluation.

¹⁹ For example, all holdings on Vladimir Mayakovsky shelved in the Dewey collection were selected for integration into the main collection since a graduate student is currently writing her dissertation on the enigmatic Futurist poet.

²⁰ Rare items were sent to special collections, housed in Spencer Research Library.

²¹ Such as *Zhizn' zamechatel'nykh liudei* or *Biblioteka poeta*. KU Libraries currently hold 270 volumes of the series *Zhizn' zamechatel'nykh liudei* and 182 volumes of *Biblioteka Poeta*.

earmarked for the Annex since the text of most poems can be found in larger works or on the internet.²² Single volumes of prose and poetry by socialist realist critics were transferred because of low use.

Collected Works. All definitive editions of collected works were selected, as were other important collected works; smaller collected works that duplicated LC holdings were sent to the Annex.²³ The latest editions produced by the Russian Academy of Sciences were also preferred. For major 19th century authors (Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy), at least 3 collected works were selected to remain in the open book stacks. When sets of collected works appeared to be similar, those in the best condition were selected to remain in Watson Library. Collected works on acidic paper, particularly those published in the late 19th century and well into the 20th century, were earmarked for the Annex, unless they were unique items. Fortunately, most of the collected works that exhibited acidification were duplicate copies.

Publication date was an important consideration because of censorship issues. For instance, collected works published during the Stalin years were sent to the Annex as long as another, similar collected works could be found. The projected use of these sets is minimal, and researchers who need to compare editions can readily find them in the online catalog. The works of socialist-realist authors were also a special consideration. Although they are not heavily studied, a significant number fall into the major canon of Soviet-Russian literature. Scholars need the definitive set to be readily available in the open book stacks since they frequently consult the volumes to verify citations and check notes. Accordingly, the decision was made to retain one set of collected works for the most significant socialist-realist authors. A sample of selection decisions for Socialist-realist writers appears in Table 1:

²² See the internet library of Maksim Moshkov (Biblioteka Maksima Moshkova) at <http://www.lib.ru>

²³ For example, the 90 volume Jubilee edition of Leo Tolstoy's collected works was selected for reclassification.

Table 1

<u>Author</u>	<u>Summary of collected works and selection decisions</u>
Bednyi, Dem'ian	8v. (1963) in Dewey selected for reclassification. 5v. (1953-1954) in Dewey sent to Annex.
Fedin, Konstantin	10v. (1969-) in PG 9v. (1959-1962) in Dewey sent to Annex.
Gladkov, Fedor	8v. (1983) in Dewey selected for reclassification. 5v. (1950) in Dewey sent to Annex. 5v. (1958) in PG will be sent to Annex when PG is evaluated.
Lunacharskii, Anatoly	8v. (1963-) in Dewey selected for reclassification.
Mamin-Sibiriak,	10v. (1958) in PG is comparable in content to 12v. set in Dewey 12v. (1915-1917) in Dewey sent to Annex; 8v. (1953-1955) in Dewey sent to Annex.
Serafimovich	4v. (1987) in PG is newer. Serafimovich is not often consulted 7v. (1959) in Dewey sent to Annex;
Simonov, Konstantin	6v. (1966) in PG; all sets in Dewey sent to Annex.

The works of lesser known authors along with individual volumes of socialist-realist literature were also sent to the Annex. With few exceptions these volumes had never circulated.

Major Literary Criticism. A large number of critical monographs in Dewey were integrated into the main collection. Scholars want the best secondary literature on the shelves since they frequently consult these works. They also want their students to read the best critical literature available. In particular, we retained Russian Academy of Sciences imprints, other important Slavic reprints, as well as primary materials that contain introductory articles by noteworthy literary personae.

Other criteria. Books with very brittle pages we chose to transfer to the Annex because they will survive longer in the new climate-controlled environment of the Annex. Duplicate copies in poor condition were also sent to the Annex, as were translations of Russian originals

into non-English languages, such as French, German, Italian, Polish, etc. These items, which are infrequently used by linguists for comparative purposes, would be readily accessible via the online catalog.²⁴

Problems and Challenges

Our team faced one serious problem of implementation. KU's split (LC/Dewey) collection made it difficult to determine whether Dewey books duplicated holdings already on the shelf in the LC call number range PG. Because the volumes in PG are located in a different book stack, on a different level, on the opposite end of the library, immediate physical comparison was impossible. Consider the following example: Bernard Guilbert Guerneý's anthology, *A Treasury of Russian Literature*²⁵ was reclassified from Dewey into LC for three reasons: it has been checked out numerous times; it supports the undergraduate curriculum; and it contains important critical commentary. We later discovered that the copy in Dewey classification was a second copy of Guerneý's anthology. Had we been able to see the other copy on the shelves in PG, we would have sent the copy in Dewey to the Annex.

In our attempt to address this problem, we did request a laptop computer that would have enabled us to check individual titles for duplicate copies located in PG, but our request was denied on grounds that such checking would be too time-consuming. In my opinion, had we been allowed to use a laptop, we would have saved time in the long run. It also would have saved premium shelf-space immediately. Because book stacks are rapidly approaching 100% capacity, a separate overflow area had to be created to handle reclassified items and new acquisitions. When the time comes to move items into the Annex from the PG call number

²⁴ Examples include an history of Russian literature in Italian and the French language edition of Henri Troyat's biography on Lermontov.

²⁵ This work includes a foreword along with biographical and critical notes by Guerneý.

range, we will again face the problem of a collection split between two physical locations on opposite ends of the library.

Two minor inconveniences are also worth mentioning. The first relates to the timeline. Selections from Russian literature took place at the end of the term, when book returns poured into the library. The wave of returns delayed the selection process as selectors waited for book trucks to become available. The second inconvenience relates to environmental conditions. Because books deteriorate and collect dust as they sit on shelves, selectors found themselves sneezing and scrubbing their hands after every selection session. The use of a face mask and thin white gloves helped alleviate part of the problem.

Working With Faculty

Most faculty cherish the ability to browse the open book stacks, and they were very concerned about the loss of immediate accessibility of materials transferred to the Annex. Physical browsing provides the most immediate and highest level of access and allows serendipitous discoveries that would otherwise be impossible, or at best, improbable. Given this concern, it is essential that librarians prepare their faculty for the selection process and reassure them about the need for and function of remote storage. Librarians must solicit faculty input during the selection process and make it an essential component of their selection strategy.²⁶ When faculty understand the issues and participate in the process of selection, they generally agree that moving some material to remote storage is necessary.

²⁶ For a general discussion of strategies for getting faculty involved, see Powell, p. 26, 28.

KU Libraries offered faculty the option of browsing the Dewey titles online and/or in the book stacks. Instructions for making selections (given below) were posted on the library's website:

Mark using flags or forms. A flag, with your contact information, should be inserted in each volume recommended to stay in the browsable collection. Please place the volume on its spine, with the flag facing outward, so we can easily retrieve it. A form submitted either via email or left at the Service Desk, can also be used to indicate your recommendations.²⁷

Librarians communicated options to their faculty and welcomed collaborative consultation. In the case of Russian literature two senior faculty consulted with the bibliographer. While making selections, one faculty member frequently explained why she would (or would not) prefer that an item remain in the open book stacks. This is useful for understanding faculty needs and use patterns. For example, at present Anatoly Lunacharsky's literary and critical *oeuvre* generates little interest; yet Lunacharsky figured prominently in the politics of literature and art during the 1920s, and scholars need to check facts and citations in his collected works. In addition, the commentaries and annotations of old Soviet editions hold a wealth of factual information

A second faculty member expressed concern that access to the Russian literary journal, *Grani*, would be limited. Like collected works, journals also experience a high level of "in-house" use. Scholars consult bibliographies, tables of contents, notes, and names, checking and double-checking citations. Dead journals, like *Grani*, were prime candidates for transfer to the Annex because they occupy large sections of shelf space. The faculty member's concern subsided when we informed her that *Grani* is indexed at the article level in the MLA

²⁷ <http://www.lib.ku.edu/annex/schedule.shtml>

Bibliography, the contents of which can be searched electronically. Needed volumes of *Grani* would be available for use within twenty-four hours of requesting them from the Annex.²⁸

Not all issues were this straightforward. Recently one of our Slavic faculty requested help in locating a specific text written by General V. A. Suvorov, the famous 18th century Russian military man. I was unable to locate the text or the 18th century literary journal in which it was published using electronic catalogs and indexes. My next strategy was to browse through volumes of Suvorov's works, of which we have very few; again to no avail. I then proceeded to search secondary works about Suvorov, hoping to find a reference to the text in a table of contents. Before giving up, I decided to look at one last book, a seemingly insignificant little volume with pages that had turned brown and brittle due to acid in the paper. To my surprise, this thin volume published in 1943 contained Suvorov's text! Because of its physical condition and low use, this thin volume is a prime candidate for transfer to the Annex. Yet without the ability to see the volume's table of contents, either in hand or reproduced in its bibliographic record, access to the content of this little volume is significantly reduced.

This episode demonstrates the chief concern that faculty have in regard to material sent to the Annex: it limits their ability to find relevant resources by browsing. This episode also justifies faculty concern over the loss of access to this and other materials. If you cannot find the text, then it might as well not exist. The episode also demonstrates that cataloging for books sent to the Annex is inadequate. Books sent to the Annex need to be indexed at the table of contents level.

Lessons Learned

²⁸ If requested in the morning, books are typically delivered the same day. If requested in the afternoon, books are delivered the following day

Selecting for remote storage means making hard decisions that will make some stakeholders unhappy. Most academic libraries do not have the manpower or the money to provide "table of contents" level cataloging for all books slated for remote storage. the University of Kansas certainly does not. This will frustrate some users. Faculty fear the loss of important materials and "browsability" to the storage facility. So what can we do to improve the process for everyone? First, before we start "operating on our patient," we must know our collections; we must also know the present needs of our patrons and anticipate their future needs. We must plan carefully and develop thoughtful strategies for selecting those materials that will be sent to "cold storage," as it were. We must address faculty fears and concerns early-on and engage faculty directly in the process of selection. Timely and regular communication and transparency are key at every step of the process. We must also set a realistic timeline that will allow both for faculty feedback and steady progress. In our effort to preserve as much cultural heritage as possible we must not lose sight of the need for access to that cultural heritage. As preservation librarians like to argue, there is no reason to store or preserve a book unless its content is accessible. That little volume on Suvorov will probably be sent to the Annex at a later date. But before that happens, I plan to slip the table of contents into its electronic bibliographic record in order to ensure that Suvorov's poem will not disappear from the human cultural record.

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