

Please stand by for realtime captions.

>> Hello. We are doing a one final sound check before we get started. We will get started in about three minutes.

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>> Good afternoon, and welcome to the seminar. Acknowledges power, assessing collections for preservation plan. Ashley Dahlen is with us , so if you have any technical issues, contactor in the chat box. Our presenter today is David Walls. I'm going to walk you through some housekeeping reminders. If you have any questions or comments on the presentation, put them in the chat box in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen and I will keep track of the questions that come in and at the end of the presentation David will respond to them. We are recording the session and we will email you a link. We will also be sending you a certificate of participation using the email you used to register for today's webinar and if you need additional certificates because additional people watched this webinar with you, email us and let us know the names of the people needing certificates. If you need to zoom in on the slide you can click on the full-screen button and to exit the full-screen mode, mouse over the bar so it expands and click on the blue return button to get to the default view. At the end of the session we will be sharing a survey. We would very much appreciate your feedback after the session is done today. Also, please keep in mind to reserve your comments and use the webinar chat box for questions you would like us to ask the presenter and to report any technical issues you encounter. I will now handle microphone over to David.

>> Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to knowledge is power. Assessing collections for preservation planning. I am David Walls I am the Preservation Librarian, U.S. Government Publishing Office . I would like to share my thoughts on doing collections assessment for preservation planning. As librarians we are surrounded by an awful lot of stuff. The books and other materials that make up our collections are valuable information assets that users rely on. Yet the sheer size of the collections makes it difficult if not impossible to know about the overall physical condition and whether valuable information items in the collection need attention to keep them usable into the future. We may see older volumes and fragile unbound materials that come to our notice when they are returned to the circulation desk or they are collected and re-shelved from other areas of the library. And looking at the items in the photos we can see that there are old bound volumes with fragments of brittle paper and torn bindings. One item is unbound and is unsupported by a wrapper of any kind. It looks like this item had to be unfolded for the user to access the information on its. Are these publications an indication of what everyone in the subject class looks like? We can go to the stacks and look for others like these, but that would be a not statistically accurate picture of this collection. There was a recent discussion about unsupported materials like these in library collections. It is a very interesting suggestions and if you saw these items lying on the table, how many more like these are in your collection? Materials like these may be in good physical condition overall, but the way that they are presented for users will resolve in a high degree of potential loss. They have to be folded and refolded and unless the people in this library are different, there is creative folding going on to get this back into the box. If this is the only box like this, that is fine, but what if there are dozens more just like this one? We may also have older publications in our collection that we know are valuable special collection items. This is a picture of a serial set from the 1850s. We are Valley -- we know they are valuable and we want to keep them and what preservation intervention do they need? Collection assessment is the process to which you turn all of your personal experience, your observations, your anecdotal evidence, your feelings, and even your worries about your collections into actual evidence. In a collection assessment survey evidence is gathered to a statistically value data collection process. Most important, this is evidence you can use to document collection needs that affect changes to procedures, processes, and the resources you have available. A collection condition assessment can tell you many things about the collection. It can tell you the number

of items that need basic collection care or further conservation treatment. Special collections may need extra protection and boxes can also protect damaged items from further treatment until further treatment can be done. The number of items with brittle paper may not be an issue, unless of course they are in regular use. Volumes with dijs -- volumes with little pages can be -- it can also help to preserve the original item. A condition assessment can also provide information about the collection environment. If books in the survey sample are particularly dusty or evidence of pests are found, then collection maintenance is an issue. Evidence of mold on volumes is also a strong indication that the storage environment is not what it should be. Books with faded covers may be an indication that the window nearby needs light filtering materials. There was a tendency in surveys together lots of data that may not actually be all that useful when the survey is over. It may seem odd at this point to talk about outcomes from the assessment, but in my experience having an accurate idea of the kind of results you want to achieve help you to design an accurate survey instrument. You want to do an accurate definition of the condition categories, a ranking of what categories are important, you want to determine a statistically viable number of items with each category when you count them, and you want to figure out the percentage of total items surveyed within each category and the projected numbers within each category that may actually be within the total collection. I'm going to go over one example of one type of common survey design. There are many different types of examples out there that you can probably do research and find. The categories and ranking that are shown here will be used when evaluating each book or item selected for the survey. The ranking is the level of action that you need to take to resolve the condition issues that you find. It is vitally important that you can define what each of the condition categories are before you actually begin the survey. In other words, define what is fine, what is good, what is fair, and what is poor. So one suggested definition of fine is that no real action is required. The publication looks new, the binding is tight with no signs of visible wear, the pages show no signs of dirt or mold and all the maps and pulled out our present without any tears. If there supplementary material, is there without any sign of where and it is housed in the original pocket or enclosure. This is the easy category. Good can be a low priority, the binding shows normal signs of use, but all the pages are tightly bound and binding boards or covers in the corners may be bent but no other damage is present. The maps and pulled out may show where, but there are no tears and the supplemental material if there is any has been used and may have been mis-folded when return to the enclosures. Looking at fair, the cover boards and the spines get loose but are still attached. The end pages or pre-pages before the title page may be loose or missing, the cover board may show signs of dirt or other stains. The spine may be pulled away where people grab a book and pull it off the shelf and pages maps and pulled out may be torn, but there is no lost information. Is all there. Unbound material is stored folded or unbound materials are bent from sagging on the shelf or in boxes like we saw in the previous photograph. Defining poor and this would be a high priority. The binding shows evidence of severe where such as loose or missing cover boards or a missing spine piece. The textblock or the block of pages within the binding is loose and many pages are torn or the pages are brittle and they cannot maintain an attachment to the binding cost of the issue there is potentially lost information. Maps, fold outs, and supplementing material are missing. It is also good when surveying the actual physical items on the shelf to look at the shelving conditions where the items live. Some basic conditions about the environment that books live in are good to know to determine the overall preservation of the item. You may also notice that the books on the other shelf are faded from sunlight, which may require UV protection and you may notice that the tops of books that are pulled off the shelves are pulled away from the binding and that might be an indication that the items on the shelves are packed too tightly. People have to pry the books off the shelf and they will be breaking the tops of the bindings as they pulled him off. Use is also a factor and that can be considered when surveying the condition of collection items. Items with moderate to high use and in fair to poor condition would be in a higher category for intervention than items with low use. In designing your survey instrument I recommend finding

examples for each category of the conditions that we talked about, fine, good, fair, poor, and take photos to create a visual dictionary of these types. This may seem a lot of extra work, but this practice increases the survey accuracy by avoiding category dish and sensitization as people conduct the survey. If you survey a lot of collection items, everything can begin to look bad or everything can begin to look overly good. So this keeps the survey instrument in the process of the data collection more accurate. Let's talk about sampling methods. There is accidental or grab sampling, systematic sampling, and the more commonly known, simple random sampling. Grab sampling is used when testing a very small population. Such as the books on one particular show. It is also useful for testing a ranking and condition category definitions. One of the common areas and conducting a survey is to say that the population was randomly selected and then describe a process that is actually systematic sampling. Systematic sampling can be worthwhile, but what makes it systematic introduces a bias that can affect the overall results. Always selecting the middle book on the reserve shelf is a system, but that system may also introduce a bias because it removes from the survey conditions experienced by other books on other shelves. If you want to get books from a variety of shelving positions within the collection. A simple random sample, in my experience, is not very accurate if you're trying to characterize the condition of the overall collection. In the library environment it can be difficult to conduct a survey that is faithful to the methodology of allowing every single book or item in the library collection to have the same probability or opportunity of being chosen as any other. Books and other items tend to be shelved in libraries in clumps and clusters or any particular room. Cluster sampling, therefore, can be a better method. Cluster sampling allows you to conduct random sampling within these groups as long as both the groups and the items surveyed are both selected truly randomly. The intent is to be as random and neutral as possible to avoid selection bias while still covering all the possible physical locations. In a nonrandom fashion to avoid the accidental skewing of data. Along with cluster sampling there two-stage cluster sampling. If you consider a population a number of clusters in total, in the first stage the number of clusters are selected using ordinary cluster sampling and the second stage is simple random sampling is usually used. It is used separately in every cluster and the numbers of elements selected from different clusters are not necessarily equal. The total number of clusters selected and the number of elements from selected clusters need to be predetermined by the survey designer. One way to approach this is to systematically identify all the potential clusters of books, now I cluster can be a shelving range, a cabinet, a special collection room that is apart from other items in the collection that use a random number generator to select the clusters and the numbered volumes that you are going to survey. You can find random number generators on calculators and on the web. Random repeating integers can be selected up to a certain value that you need and if you know there are only 10 shelves from the floor to the ceiling in a stack range, then that is the set value of numbers that you're going to randomly select from. So you can go ahead and say you're not going to randomly select anything higher than 10 because there is no shelf beyond 10. Determining the sample size. The sample size of the number of items that you need to survey is very important because it allows you to have the confidence that the number of items that you survey is able to represent the total number of volumes that you estimate are in the whole collection. There are many sample size calculators available on the web and this is one example, which is a table from research advisors and you find a number of these that allow you to say, well, if you have an estimated total number of books that you believe is in the collection and you want a margin of error of plus or -1 to 5%, and eight interval of 90 to 95%, you can see the blue rectangle on the screen, that is the number of books that you would need to survey to look at individually to achieve the confidence that the sample that you looked at represented between 95 and 99% of the whole books in your collection. Let's talk about performing the actual survey. Your survey recording sheet should include the call number of the item, ideally, and the condition or stacks and shoving they are actually selecting the item from. As well as the condition that you want to record. I recommend taking a carton to the stacks and surveying from a survey team in pairs one person selects the item, does the physical

examination, and another records the information. If you want to record on paper first and then enter the information later into a spreadsheet for statistical compilation that is fine, or if you have the ability to take a laptop and already have your spreadsheet data there on the laptop, that eliminates the need to record the information later. There are programs that allow you to have a barcode wand or something that you can attach to the laptop, so you might have the ability to simply record one field on the survey form the actual barcode number of the item as a way of keeping track of what you looked at. And approaching the survey overall, though, it is good form a survey team of individuals that are committed to doing it. To go ahead and create the visual dictionary I talked about earlier of the condition types and create the survey form with the spaces to record all of the information, and to, of course, have a random number generator to select the clusters and the shelves and items that you will pull. It is important to survey in pairs and to compare judgment and when you send teams of staff how to do this, be aware that fatigue is a factor in skewing results. If you start -- you cannot do this more than several hours a day. The results will inevitably be skewed by the simple fatigue of recording the information. Let's talk about recording the results. You can produce a report of your findings when you compile your data, when it is all added up to show you how many items seem to be high use, if that is a factor that you want to add in as well. It is good to begin with a general description of the value of the collection that you surveyed and the significance. Put a summary of the total findings and a summary of the recommendations or priorities and describe your survey design and the implementation and describe and illustrate your complete findings and recommendations in a separate section that you can give to your library management. It is good to develop charts and tables and graphs to illustrate your findings and what you concluded. Some people respond more to numbers, some respond more to charts. Include your visual dictionary as an appendix and other resource material to document the methodologies that you have used in creating your survey. This is very important because people will scrutinize this and they want to be sure that the survey was conducted in a statistically viable manner. If you uncovered specific interesting items or conditions in the stacks about pasts or other particular concerns, go ahead and photograph those and include them as illustrations in the report. This is what allows the report to have a greater impact and communicate the work that you did. All right. So if all of this seems too daunting at this point, and you would rather be an observer of the process and get the findings then putting all of this together, there are many organizations that you can outsource a collection assessment survey to. All of these organizations offer this as a menu of services that they offer to libraries and the conservation center for art and historic artifacts will give you estimates on treating certain specific collection items that you might want to bring to their attention. The American Institute for conservation of art and historic art statistic works does not by themselves provide options for doing a survey, they can put you in touch with conservators in your area who have experienced during library surveys and you could contract individually for a conservator to work with you to do a survey. And Lyricist is also another company that does this as well. I will give you some URLs to look at. And I realized that it is nominalist, it is lyricist.org. Just some additional information. There is a number of sample size calculators for statistical surveys, random number generators and other tools that you can find and these are samples of one's that I looked up things on Google. At the time that I put this webinar together these were all live links and they'll work in the should not be too difficult to find others like these that are out there. And some additional information -- sometimes in describing the parts of the book it is good to use the same terminology and this is a very valuable resource, the ABCs of bookbinding which is an illustrated glossary for collectors and conservators and this has illustrations and descriptions of the various parts of the book that you can use to describe the damage that you may be observing. And with that, I will wait and see if we have any questions.

>> So this is Jamie. If you have any questions for David, please type them in the chat box at the right hand side of your screen. So far we have received one question. Eileen asks with the same survey method work for digital collections and how would it vary?

>> Well. I would need you to tell me more information. Usually, the condition of a digital collection is based on a number of other factors than be able to assess anything physically because it is digital. What I would recommend is if you have concerns about digital collections you contact me separately at the contact information that I think is still up on the screen and tell me specifically what your concerns are. We do digital collection assessment in a very different way and that is usually looking at a number of things about the repository where you're holding the items, what kind of risk assessment you've done to those items and it is a very different situation. So please contact me with that question and we will talk separately.

>> Okay. And please remember, if you have a question to put it in the chat box to all participants so everyone can see it. Otherwise, I don't think I am missing a question. One more. Once came in. Since there are many different digital copies are libraries less likely put money and time into preservation?

>> I think that is a concern. There is also -- there are two feelings. One is that the FDLP collection in the Federal depository library collection, I'm not saying that this is what you think or that what I certainly think but I've heard administrators they will these collections are all alike and it is redundant. So I don't think that is true. I think that there is a lot of discussion out there from administrators who think that everything is on the web and we also know, and you know as well that is not true. So if you're looking at the specific items in your collection that may be the most valuable, they would be the local collections that you collected that would be very specific information, federal information that was collected about your particular state or area that may be unique to your library.

>> That was a good question. Have you ever used pH testing as part of your surveying?

>> I have. There is the risk of pH testing simply telling you that the paper is old. And if you know that, then what? PH testing will tell you -- the indicator pins or strips will tell you a threshold value of the point at which the color indicator changes. So that can be anything beyond 7.5 -- I'm sorry. Anything lower than 7.5 in the acidic range. There is a lot of paper that can come out acidic, but a lot of books that can be acidic but the paper has not started to decay. I'm not as inclined to place as much value on that as you might imagine, just because the difference between 7.5 or lower is more of an indication of the use of the item and the age of the item. You can assume that the way most government publications were printed, they were printed on very cheap paper, it was supposed to be low-cost to the American taxpayer and a lot of that paper, if it is more than 30 years old, the pH is going to indicate to be in the acidic range. But that really isn't going to tell you very much. It may overly alarm you because you may discover that your entire collection or the majority of items is ultimately acidic, but that doesn't necessarily mean that everything is high risk.

>> We have another question. Are there particular sampling methods that federal libraries use?

>> I am not aware of any particular guidance or practice at the federal level that libraries used to survey collections. I know that some national libraries have hired some of the organizations that I mentioned, as well of -- as well as private conservators to survey collections. It can either be the whole collection, a certain part of a collection, or the special collection items that are deemed to be of high intrinsic value.

>> Okay. While we are waiting former questions, if there are any, I'm going to tell you about a couple of upcoming events for the FDLP Academy. On March 29 at 2 PM we have a webinar for census data accessing geographies we dish on April 4 we have U.S. customs and border protection's and then on April 10 adapting the FDLP certificate program for training student workers and library assistance. So I will go ahead and place a link in the chat box for you if you are interested in signing up for that. And then Ashley has also sent out a link to the webinar survey, so if you have any feedback you would like to give us for the FDLP Academy, or for the presentation, the free to fill this out. It helps us with programming. I am not seeing any more questions. All right, then. We will email you the certificates for attending as well as the link will be -- the archived version will be placed very soon. If you have any questions, you have David's email and thank you for participating. Thank you, David.

>> Thank you.[Event concluded]