Preserving print collections: the New Zealand university libraries and collaborative storage

The eight New Zealand university libraries have a history of collaboration and wanted a shared solution to the problem of storing their low-use print collections. The New Zealand situation tends to align with international trends: following a growth in student numbers in the 1990s and the emergence of the hybrid library, accommodation for print collections came under pressure. Libraries needed to release space for new services and they needed storage for legacy collections. Early in the process, the university librarians agreed in principle that a single copy of low-use print would, in most cases, be sufficient for the country’s research communities. They sought a solution that was cost-effective and that would continue to ensure access to the print resources. The paper describes the background to the New Zealand situation, the process of investigation that was undertaken to evaluate the options and the conditions that made the solution acceptable to the university librarians and also to their vice-chancellors. The libraries have agreed to outsource storage of print serials in the first instance and have selected a commercial provider with facilities throughout the country. The paper discusses the reasons for selecting this option and the considerable challenges of implementation across a group of libraries, particularly de-duplication of the eight collections to retain a single jointly-owned copy. It describes the means of access to the stored collection, outlines the impact on university library collections nationally and anticipates a collaborative solution for the storage of books.

Paper outline

Background: profile of the universities, geographical distribution, growth in library collections, current capacity and problems, pattern of collaboration, willingness to reduce to single copy and share storage.

Stages of the process: first attempt in the early 2000s, funding from government to investigate options, identification and assessment of options, financial advice from building consultant.

Preferred solution: cost-effectiveness of outsourcing, RFP process, role of UNZ, distinction between books and serials and respective storage needs.

Implementation: categories of material for storage, preparation of lists, consecutive lodgement and reduction to a single shared copy, access for the research communities.
Brief biography

Helen Renwick is Associate University Librarian at The University of Auckland and has spent most of her professional life in New Zealand university libraries. She began as serials cataloguer in the Engineering Library at The University of Auckland, then became Science Librarian and later Engineering Librarian at the same institution. During the 1990s, she was University Librarian at Massey University. After a short break, she returned to The University of Auckland to manage the Library’s services to faculties, which are delivered through its teams of subject librarians. Since 2009, she has been working on print collection projects for both The University and the Council of New Zealand University Librarians.

Contact details

Helen Renwick
Associate University Librarian

The University of Auckland Library
Private Bag 92019
Auckland 1142
NEW ZEALAND

h.renwick@auckland.ac.nz
Ph: +649 923 8049
Fax: +649 373 7565