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**2017–2018 CARLI Preservation Committee Annual Project:  
Communicating the Value of Preservation**

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The theme of this year’s CARLI Preservation Committee’s Annual Project is communicating the importance of preservation to users and stakeholders. It is easy to think that most stakeholders in cultural institutions already understand this importance, but that may not always be the case. Members of the Committee wrote blog articles throughout the year discussing how vital this communication is. As a preservation professional, you might provide the first exposure to preservation for a student worker, facilities manager, or user. You may work with other staff or administrators who have a vague idea of preservation, but lack specifics. These articles address the various and vital stakeholders and how you can approach them to increase their knowledge of preservation activities and gain vital allies along the way. The following blog articles written on communicating the value of preservation, which were shared in the CARLI Newsletter as Preservation Tips, culminated in the creation of a *Communicating the Value of Preservation* webpage on CARLI’s website at <https://www.carli.illinois.edu/products-services/collections-management/communicating-value-of-preservation>:

- “CARLI Preservation Committee 2017-2018 Annual Project: Communicating the Value of Preservation Introduction”;
- “Environmental Monitoring”;
- “Disaster Response”;
- “Working with Facilities”;
- “Staff Training”;
- “Student Worker Training”;
- “Digital Preservation Program”;
- “Users and Stakeholders”;
- “CARLI Last Copy Program”;
- “The Preservation Elevator Speech”;
- “Summary of Annual Project”.

**2017-2018 Committee**

Mary Burns, Northern Illinois University  
Susan Howell, Southern Illinois University Carbondale  
Jennifer Hunt Johnson, Illinois State University (partial year)  
Emma Lincoln, Augustana College (partial year)  
Ann Lindsey, University of Chicago  
Jamie Nelson, DePaul University  
Bonnie Parr, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Co-Chair  
Meghan Ryan, National Louis University  
Melanie Schoenborn, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville  
Anne Thomason, Lake Forest College, Co-Chair

Elizabeth Clarage, CARLI liaison  
Nicole Swanson, CARLI liaison



→ **Introduction**

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→ **Environmental Monitoring**

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→ **Disaster Response**

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→ **Working with Facilities**

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→ **Staff Training**

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→ **Student Worker Training**

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→ **Digital Preservation Program**

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→ **Users and Stakeholders**

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→ **CARLI Last Copy Program**

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→ **The Preservation Elevator Speech**

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→ **Summary of Annual Project**

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## We're All in This Together – Communicating the Value of Preservation to Users and Stakeholders

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**Meghan Ryan, National Louis University**

Library materials are a shared resource. So, the importance of preservation awareness and proper care of materials cannot be understated since they will ultimately impact user and stakeholder activities such as research and instruction. There are a few ways to communicate the value of preservation to users. One approach is to develop and implement policies and procedures for the use of library materials and to make those policies accessible. In some environments, such as in archives and special collections, making sure users have read and understood proper protocols is key. Policies can clarify that the use of library material supports preservation activities and is based on the department's preservation goals. Outreach activities are another way to raise preservation awareness. Garnering interest in library preservation activities through exhibits or social media can be fun and creative ways to get the word out. Exhibits, tutorials, and social media posts can showcase the ways in which preservation activities are critical to ensuring that library materials will be used by future generations.

Developing policies that specify proper treatment of library materials is a great way to not only be consistent, but also convey the importance of preservation to users and stakeholders, especially when dealing with the realities of less than desirable environmental conditions. Handling of materials can impact their condition and structure; therefore, proper practices are necessary. In order to articulate these practices to users, it is critical for a preservation program to develop a solid policy and create a statement about how to care for library materials. In an archives and/or special collections environment specifically, policies should outline "handling and care" instructions that are made visible to users in some capacity. In addition, they should communicate that these practices are mandatory since the materials are rare or unique and are difficult or impossible to replace. Examples of what to include in a "handling and care" section can include, but are not limited to:

- Staff will retrieve materials from the stacks and re-shelve them.
- Materials may not be removed from the building at any time.
- Researchers must use pencil if taking handwritten notes.
- All users must wear gloves when handling photographic materials.
- No food or drink near collection materials.
- Make sure your hands are clean.
- Keep materials on a flat surface.

A policy with these specific instructions would be difficult to implement across the board for all library materials, and is not necessary. Items from a library's main circulating collection are likely easier to replace; therefore, a fee for items returned damaged or lost would be one way to encourage proper handling. Also, it is a good idea to make these policies visible to users by adding them to your library's website.

Another way to convey the importance of preservation of library materials to users and stakeholders is through outreach. For example, online tutorials and exhibits can showcase preservation practices and how the implementation of procedures can benefit library materials. Tutorials can demonstrate how these materials are used and shared, the various ways one may contribute to the degradation of the material, how to prevent it, and how library funds may be used to replace damaged items. Exhibits can be a great way to present a library's preservation methodologies by showing specific activities, such as creating housing for materials and which tools are used. Exhibits are also an opportunity to display before and after images of treatments- showing the user the impact of preservation practices.

Using social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, or department blogs, is another way to communicate the value of preservation. For example, [Northwestern University Library's Preservation Instagram](#) has a great mix of highlights from their collections and various ways they are working to preserve their materials. For more ideas about spreading the word about preservation awareness to users and stakeholders, the Association of Library Collections & Technical Services (ALACTS, a division of the American Library Association) has some ideas on their [Preservation Week](#) page. While Preservation Week is a preservation awareness campaign that typically takes place at the end of April, many of the ideas can be implemented year round!

## Resources:

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Association of Library Collections & Technical Services. [Preservation Week](#). nul\_prescons. [NU Library Preservation: Preservation and Conservation at Northwestern University](#) [Instagram posts].

Please view all 11 articles from the *Communicating the Value of Preservation* webpage at: <https://www.carli.illinois.edu/products-services/collections-management/communicating-value-of-preservation>.