

Guidelines on the Retention and Storage of Local Newspapers and Microfilm by Libraries

1. Introduction

1. This matter has been the subject of concern expressed by the Panel recently. Many libraries do not have sufficient space to store newspapers. Some local authorities have sought to dispose of newspaper titles. Such action is an implicit acknowledgement that local authorities do not see the retention of original copies of newspapers as part of their core function.

2. The process of disposal of original newspapers may be considered more actively by local authorities, once it is known that one of the libraries in the region has either paid for the filming of its own copy of a newspaper, or it has purchased a microfilm from another library (e.g. the British Library Newspaper Library).

3. The concern of the UK & IRELAND NEWSPLAN PANEL is now focussed around the implementation of the NEWSPLAN 2000 Project. In its Phase 1 operation lasting until 2004, the NEWSPLAN 2000 Project plans to film some 1,700 local newspaper titles. It is possible that local authorities will consider more actively than previously the disposal of original runs of newspapers in their ownership, once microfilm has been made of the newspaper, and is available locally to use instead of the originals.

4. The UK & IRELAND NEWSPLAN PANEL has considered its position with regard to the past and present situation. It has formulated a set of national guidelines for the retention of files of local newspapers after microfilming.

5. The UK & IRELAND NEWSPLAN PANEL considers this matter to be of particular relevance to Single Regional Agencies in England, as various government led initiatives are being planned to ensure greater cross-sectional collaboration between libraries, museums and archives organisations within each region.

6. The UK & IRELAND NEWSPLAN PANEL regards microfilm as the principal preservation medium for newspaper texts, rather than digital files. However, the UK & IRELAND NEWSPLAN PANEL is monitoring the matter of digital archives of local newspapers; the recommendation of the PANEL is for individual local authorities to engage with newspaper proprietors in the first instance, as copyright permission may be required to hold digital archives. Advice should also be sought from a national library, from the Newspaper Licensing Agency, or from the Newspaper Society, as appropriate.

E M B King
Secretary
UK NEWSPLAN PANEL
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1. Negative microfilm

1.1 First generation (master) negative microfilm is the principal microfilm archive copy. A duplicate negative microfilm should be made from the master negative. Each set should be stored in separate buildings under controlled conditions, and in conformity with:
B.S.1153:1992 Recommendations for processing and storage of silver gelatine type microfilm and BS 5454: 2000 Recommendations for the storage and exhibition of archival documents.

1.2 The investment made by organisations in making two copies of negative microfilm (a master and a duplicate) requires regular monitoring of the storage conditions, to ensure maximum longevity for the microfilm. If this work cannot be done in-house by conservation staff, then investigation of suitable conservation organisations will need to be made to provide a service to do this.

1.3 Remedial action should be undertaken as necessary by local authorities to protect their long term investment to ensure that film can be copied in future without loss of text.

1.4 The National Preservation Office Guide to Preservation Microfilming provides guidance on best practice in all aspects of preservation microfilming.

1.5 Where the master (and duplicate) negative microfilm has been made by a national library, this fact should be recorded locally.

1.6 Negative microfilm(with master and duplicate) made by a national library may be assumed to be retained permanently in appropriate storage conditions.

1.7 All master negative microfilm held locally should be registered with the Register of Preservation Microforms.

2. Hard copy original newspapers

2.1 The four national libraries, the British Library, the National Library of Scotland, the National Library of Wales, and the National Library of Ireland are all committed to the permanent retention of newspapers published in their area of responsibility.

2.2 Local authorities should co-ordinate information through the regional NEWSPLAN Committees to ensure that one set of each local title is retained in hard copy within the region. Where possible, this should include copies of variant editions of newspaper titles.

2.3 Local authorities (or other repositories that own collections of newspapers) intending to dispose of newspapers that were published outside the locality should consult the relevant local authority before the disposal of the hardcopy.

2.4 Local authorities should make adequate provision for the collection, storage and preservation of hardcopy local newspapers published in their area.

2.5 Complete newspaper runs should be kept together in order to facilitate re-filming should this become necessary.

2.6 Re: source in England, through the Single Regional Agencies (MLACs), and the relevant national agencies in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, should consider how they can best support and contribute to the aims and objectives of NEWSPLAN and to the preservation of local printed newspaper archives as part of the distributed national collection.

2.7 The Single Regional Agencies (MLACs) in England, and the relevant national agencies as above, should form appropriate links with the regional NEWSPLAN committee for their area. The regional NEWSPLAN committees should be seen as expert focus groups and agents for the relevant regional MLAC/national agency on NEWSPLAN and local newspaper matters.

2.8 The Single Regional Agencies should incorporate into their regional strategies policies for NEWSPLAN and for newspaper collection, storage and preservation in their area, including provision of regional newspaper depositories.

2.9 There should be periodic consultation between local libraries, museums and archives with the relevant national library about newspapers to be retained locally. Every effort should be made by the relevant local and regional bodies to support archival retention of local hardcopy newspapers published in their area.

2.10 Storage conditions for hard copy original newspapers should conform with the Standard B. S. 5454 : 2000 Recommendations for the storage and exhibition of archival documents.. Newspaper volumes should be stored flat. The standard applies to newspapers whose paper condition ranges from very poor to good. The aim is to secure storage conditions that are

stable, within the ranges stated in the standard, thus slowing the rate of degradation of the paper.

2.11 Where positive microfilm exists locally for original newspapers, the originals should not be used by the public.

UK & IRELAND NEWSPLAN Panel
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