

Position Paper

Proposal to de-accession cellulose acetate microfilm

Collection Care 2008

Introduction

At the cellulose acetate microfilm forum (CAMF) it hosted in May 2005, BL spoke of the amount of acetate film in its own collections and the short-mid term strategy it had adopted in response. In essence

- BL has approximately 23million feet of acetate film in its collections
- The majority of this is film of newspaper holdings
- BL agreed to top-slice from its annual preservation budget £200k each year for five years to support mass transfer of acetate to polyester as a short-mid term strategy
- BL's long term view is cold storage with transfer on demand

To view the whole presentation, and others from the conference, visit the CAMF web pages.

Mass transfer – Facts & Figures

Between 2004/5-2007/8

- approximately 2,000 x 1000ft cans of film were transferred to polyester
- this includes acetate film of over 1400 de-accessioned newspaper titles
- approximately 24,300 new 100ft polyester masters have been made
- a new duplicate negative was also made for each can transferred
- transferred film equates to less than 9% of total acetate in the collection

De-accessioning process

The BL proposes to de-accession, in FY2008/9, approximately 2,000 x 1000ft cans of acetate microfilm which it has transferred to polyester.

The Benefits

- reduced risk of collection contamination
- prioritisation of storage space
- reduced storage costs
- potential for research & development into the degradation & management of acetate collections

The Decision-making Process

Although surrogates are considered in general to be collection assets rather than collection items, their de-accessioning will be subject to no less stringent procedures, including

- assessment on case-by-case basis
- each case logged in central de-accessioning system
- quality check of the new surrogate
- existence/condition of original item
- senior management approval

Physical Disposal

The BL intends to dispose of the de accessioned acetate by recycling as far as possible and by external transfer

- recycle - aluminium film cans
- recycle - silver extraction from film
- external transfer - offer film to appropriate bodies for research into acetate film degradation

Consultation

If you have any views on the BL's intention to de-accession its old acetate masters by recycling and external transfer, please contact us through Sandy Ryan at sandy.ryan@bl.uk

If your institution would be interested in obtaining de accessioned film for conservation/preservation research purposes, please contact Sandy Ryan at sandy.ryan@bl.uk stating the name of your institution and the nature of the research intended.*

*Disclaimer:

The de accessioned film is not of archival standard. It is acetate-based and will continue to degrade over time. Any agreed transfer of the film is for research purposes only. It is not a collection donation. Film may not be incorporated into collections, as it poses a contamination risk. Neither may it be passed to a third party for collection use, nor used for reproduction for collection or commercial purposes.