MAP COLLECTION SECURITY GUIDELINES

MAGERT Task Force on Library Security for Cartographic Resources
June 2007

I. Introduction

We live in a world where crime is reported daily on the front pages of newspapers, websites, and seen each evening on the daily media news. It has been stated that after international drug trafficking the second largest category of crime is within the fine arts market. Such crime is not limited to Picasso or Ruebens but also includes Blaeu, Mercator, Jefferson, and nineteenth-century U.S. government documents.

Increased security of our collections should be synonymous with increased responsibility. As librarians we have a responsibility to preserve the collections under our care and provide access to them in our institutional environments. Access to our collections has supported scholarship throughout the humanities, sciences, and social sciences and remains the key to intellectual freedom. Similarly, we must create an environment where primary source materials are respected, handled carefully, and returned intact to the collection so that they might be studied again in the future.

Institutions, and librarians, must reassess their collections and administrators must provide collections with an infrastructure and staffing that will allow appropriate access, preservation, and security. Now that we are in the 21st century we must realize that early 20th century materials are now over 100 years old, out-of-print, and essentially irreplaceable without some considerable investment. Maps in atlases and books are often very valuable and especially vulnerable as the removal of a map or two is not immediately apparent when the volume is returned. It is often difficult to know if a volume contains all of its constituent parts since few collections, if any, have the time or staff to collate all maps and illustrations. It is important that rare book collections, archives, and government document collections realize the thousands of valuable maps that are contained in the many volumes in their collections. Similarly, map collections and their curators must be more cognizant of the marketplace and the increasing prices of early maps and even twentieth century road maps. The following guidelines will allow librarians to better assess their collections, prepare requests to their administrations, and provide a more secure environment for their map collections.

II. Collections

Librarians and library staff must be able to clearly identify materials that belong to their collections. Identification methods include: marking, cataloging, and regular inventory. Positive identification of materials and ownership of materials will be required when attempting to recover stolen items. Digital imaging of rare and significant materials is rapidly becoming a process to increase security and identify missing items.

- Collection Processing

Materials should be processed (marked, indexed, cataloged, inventoried) in a space separate from areas accessible by users.

- Marking

All pieces should be marked with a clear property stamp. Items must be marked with an appropriate property stamp immediately upon receipt. The stamp should indicate the institution to which the items belong, not just the subunit which might have a generic name. They should not be stored in any kind of cataloging front log or backlog without a property stamp. Although it is possible to indicate ownership with secret or hidden marks they should never be used alone. An obvious, visible property stamp may be a good first deterrent in preventing theft. Stamps should be placed in locations where they do not obscure graphic or textual data. This placement also must be such that the stamp can not be cut away without leaving an obvious incision, such as in the margin. Multiple stamps may be necessary in cartographic volumes. It is important that individual maps, both folded and unfolded, included in volumes are property stamped.

- Cataloging and Finding Aids

Cataloging fills a number of roles. It alerts potential users that materials are available, assists in collection development decisions, and provides a framework of data that describes the extent of the collection. This framework should be fully fleshed out with descriptive data. Unique aspects of items should be considered as additions in local fields. For multi-piece titles, full holding and item records need to be constructed to create the necessary data/paper trail for inventory work. Atlases should not be described merely as “1 v.” A fuller enumeration such as “1 v., including 57 maps, no. 52 missing” should be created. A marked finding aid (index map) in itself is not sufficient to tracing specific items owned because indexes rarely include information about edition or date of sheet publication or unique qualities. A finding aid should only be used for collection access.

- Collection Inventory

Collections should be inventoried on a regular and ongoing basis. Inventories must be dated and retained to be used as a baseline for future inventory or for comparison should a loss or theft be suspected. For example, significant local materials should be inventoried more regularly, however, “spot check” inventories are often beneficial if only to identify misfilings.

- Determining Value

Value can be defined in a number of different ways – monetary, personal/emotional, research, contextual. An item that has a high value in one location may have a relatively low value elsewhere. Some items have comparatively high values, in particular monetary, regardless of location. These items can be tracked through dealer catalogs, reports of auction results, and tools such as *Antique Map Price Record* and *American Book Prices Current*. Be aware that new publications can be as rare or expensive as old publications. Although it may be useful to compile, based upon inventory work, an estimation of collection value and the value of especially noteworthy items (especially for insurance and fundraising purposes), however, at no time should a "shopping list" of holdings and associated values be compiled and distributed. Monetary values placed on collection items should not be discussed with readers or visitors. Librarians need to remember that values are not static and that items which may appear to be commonplace, including early 20th century US federal government publications and highway maps, are aging, becoming less common, and increasing in value.

High-value materials should be transferred out of vulnerable situations (open stacks) and into closed stacks or restricted access areas such as remote storage. Cartographic materials may be determined to have high value because of their market value, age, physical characteristics, condition, and/or research value. Transfers should be made following clearly documented procedures, and all individuals and offices involved with a transfer should know where the impacted materials are at all times.

- Copying and Scanning

Excellent copying and scanning areas should be provided within the cartographic collection space. Self-service copying and scanning facilities, when located in the map collection area, reduce the need to loan materials or send materials elsewhere for duplication. Research collections should provide for high quality oversized scanning and printing, however, antiquarian materials should only be handled by collection staff. Collection staff must have and exert the authority to deny copying or scanning of fragile and damaged items. Equipment needs to be placed so that use can be monitored and collection staff can provide assistance.

Scanning done by collections/holding institutions serves multiple purposes. Like catalog records, images placed on the Web function as advertisements, drawing potential users to the collection. As the quality of images available through the Web increases and the cost of full-size, high quality, color printing decreases, many cartographic users' needs may be filled using digital surrogates, thus protecting valuable and fragile originals. Digital copies, especially those that capture unique aspects (stains, marks, tears), can be useful in identifying items which have strayed from the collection. Digital images should be deposited in online repositories and linked to appropriate records in the online catalog.

III. Facilities and Security

Facilities and facility organization need to be structured to maximize security while providing for use of materials. Security protocols should be obvious to collection visitors but should not be discussed and should have minimal impact on access to collections

- Physical Configuration

The arrangement in public areas of furniture, collection storage equipment (map cases, vertical files, shelving), walls, supporting architectural structures such as columns, and the relationship between reader and staff spaces should be such that there are no impeded lines of sight. There should be a minimal number of egress points and only a single controlled entry that is used by both readers and staff. A cloakroom with lockers should be available for readers to leave belongings such as outerwear, bags and carrying cases, and large volumes or stacks of paper outside of the collection space. A specific area in which readers consult materials that is continuously monitored by staff, from multiple angles if possible, should be designated. Chair backs should not be higher than the tops of the tables. There must be nothing at all in room arrangement or décor that obstructs staff members' line of sight.

- Monitoring Access

Doors should be monitored by staff members that check research materials being brought into the collection by readers on their way in and out of the facility. If a staff member can not be at the door at all times, it should be locked and buzzed open by staff as needed. Additionally, the door should be alarmed with both an audio and visual alarm to alert staff to any door opening. Security gates at doors are useful to detect objects that have been security stripped.

If cameras are being used for security, they must be strategically placed to cover as much of the area as possible. Signs need to be posted to tell readers that they are being recorded. If a camera is in place it must be running. "Decoy" cameras are a liability.

When readers are using the collection, the staff member assigned to monitor the reading room should be doing no other task at the same time. Readers and the materials that they are using should be in clear sight of the room monitor.

- Keys, Keycards, Passwords

Access mechanisms such as keys, keycards, and passwords are often a weak point in collection security because they are easily lost or shared. A minimal number of keys should be issued, only to those staff requiring them, and records of key distribution must be kept. All combinations, keys, and passwords should be changed on a scheduled basis and must be changed each time that there is a change in staff, and security should be notified of departing employees' last day.

- Locked Spaces

Restricted and vault areas should be securely locked at all times except if a staff member is in the space.

Offices should be locked if the assigned occupant is not present and access to the space is not required for normal operational procedures.

IV. Staff Members

Staff members are the greatest asset in protecting a collection and at the same time, potentially, the largest risk to the collection. Staff, through their work with the collection and users of the collection, become intimately familiar with holdings, and it is they who may give the alert that things are missing. But because of this intimacy, staff have insider knowledge of what is available, what is not appropriately protected, and weaknesses in the collection's security planning. Regardless of this dichotomy, staff needs to be given the trust, and to be told that they are trusted, so that they can do the jobs they have been hired to undertake. Additionally, importance of the staff role in providing collection security should be emphasized in training and ongoing communication.

A background check should be done and all references contacted as a regular part of the hiring process. Beyond the training needed for performing assigned tasks, staff members must be trained in appropriate security measures and procedures; the training should include information on legal rights and responsibilities. All staff members should be issued and carry photographic employee identification badges.

In many library settings, there are personnel from other library operations or facilities support operations that need access to collection space. These might include preservation staff, custodial staff, facilities maintenance workers, computing systems employees from both library and non-library offices, library security forces, and contractors for construction projects. All of these individuals should be known to the collection staff and should carry appropriate identification. The schedule for regular visits to the unit by non-affiliated staff such as custodial workers should be known and posted and monitored by a staff member or security staff. All other visits should be scheduled in advance. If non-staff members need access to secured areas of the collection they should be accompanied and monitored by a staff member at all times.

- Staffing Levels and Numbers

Hours should be commensurate with staffing levels and infrastructure. A single employee, regardless of rank or level of appointment, is not sufficient to provide appropriate collection security while serving readers or undertaking other tasks. A minimum of two staff are needed to have a cartographic collection open to readers. Depending on factors such as physical configuration, line of sight, storage locations and door security measures, more staff may be required. If staff are not available, some services and portions of the collection may not be accessible.

V. Readers

Because of the possible monetary value and irreplacibility of cartographic materials, readers will need to identify themselves. When readers arrive at a collection to use materials, they should complete a user registration form including: name, address, institutional affiliation as appropriate, and signature. The registration form may also include a statement of collection access and use policies. A form of photo identification should be requested. Registration forms as well as request or page slips for materials housed in restricted areas should be kept on file indefinitely. Ideally, registration would be done using an online form that would create an archival database of users.

Objects being carried into the collection will be inspected prior to entry by a staff member. Bags, carrying cases, coats/jackets, large volumes or stacks of paper should not be allowed into the collection area but must be left in a locker space outside. Some collections may elect to not allow loose sheets of paper but instead will provide colored paper for note taking that is cut or pierced in a way to facilitate checking for stray collection items when the reader leaves.

In many instances, historical cartographic collections, and collections of early books with significant cartographic holdings, will have closed stacks; readers will not be able to retrieve materials on their own. Access to cartographic collections should be completely moderated by a member of the staff who discusses with the reader the region needed and types of data desired. When a map collection has open access, readers should not be allowed to carry any materials into the stacks area besides slips of paper for jotting down notes.

When leaving the collection space, readers' belongings that have accompanied them into the unit will be checked at the door by a staff member before readers are allowed to depart. Books, folders, and laptops should be opened and stacks of paper leafed through.

VI. Policies and Procedures

Policies regarding cartographic collections should be posted and all staff must be thoroughly familiar with the policies and able to articulate and enforce the policies as needed. Policies should be enforced consistently and should not be changed for unique circumstances, special readers, friends, or dealers.

- Open and Closed Stacks Collections

Closed stacks storage of historical cartographic materials is highly preferred over open stacks. A closed stacks policy prohibiting non-staff members from retrieving materials on their own provides greater collection security than an open stacks policy. Closed stacks policies also facilitate better collection management and preservation/conservation of materials.

There are degrees of "closed-ness." In the least restrictive, readers browse the collection with staff members and select at the drawer the items they wish to inspect; staff members do the physical retrieval (sometimes with assistance from the reader). This situation is more appropriate for newer, more common materials and for materials that are in good physical condition. Older, more valuable, less common, and physically fragile items, or folded maps in volumes, need to be held with greater protection. These items should be housed in areas restricted from reader access, and only staff members should be at the drawer or shelf browsing and retrieving items. Readers also should be prohibited from accessing areas in which unprocessed items are stored. There may be some items that are of such great value that they are housed in a vault-like situation where only specially designated staff may enter.

Regardless of policy regarding closed or open stacks, no access should be allowed to the cartographic collection unless a staff member is present. Having student employees can assist in extending collection accessibility hours but this may not necessarily include access to all parts of the collection.

- Documenting Distribution of Keys and Passwords

Paralleling degrees of physical access to the collection, keys and passwords should be distributed on an as-needed basis; not all employees need access to the entire collection.

Records of key and password distribution, to be retained indefinitely, should be kept. These records should include name and rank/status/position of employee, date of distribution, date of return, and circumstances or reasons for return or termination of access.

The unit head should also have a list of all other individuals or locations where keys to the unit are housed. This may include offices such as facilities and maintenance, shipping services, custodial services, and central library administration. Individual teaching and research faculty who are not unit staff member should not have access to keys.

- Changing Locks and Passwords

Locks and passwords should be scheduled to be changed at least annually. All individuals must turn in their old keys to receive new ones. If a key is reported lost or stolen, locks must be rekeyed immediately. If there is any evidence that a password has been breached, it also must be changed immediately. Locks and passwords must also be changed when an employee is dismissed.

- Reader Access Policies

Readers should not have access to collection facilities unless a staff member is present. Readers must follow unit policies regarding closed and open stacks areas as well as directions pertaining to areas in which materials may be consulted, personal belongings which may be brought into the collection area, and restricted areas.

All readers should be required to complete a reader registration form as well as request or page slips, completed by staff members, for any materials retrieved for their use from restricted areas. These records will be kept on file in the unit indefinitely and will be updated on an ongoing basis for regular or repeating readers.

- Materials Usage

Except in open stacks situations where readers retrieve their own materials, readers should not be presented with large quantities of materials to review at one time. A sensible and track-able limit of items needs to be established that balances collection protection against research needs. The item limit may differ from area to area within the collection with the number of allowable items decreasing as the security needs of the items increase. Very rare, valuable, or fragile items should be restricted to single item use, one item viewed and then returned before another is delivered for viewing, except under special and staff monitored circumstances that require comparison of similar items. Some materials may be designated as being restricted to use in only very specific areas of the reader space. Prior to giving items to readers, they should be examined for physical condition and completeness. They should be examined again upon their return. When materials are returned and if they can not be refiled or reshelved immediately they should be placed in a secure area away from the reader space. Rare items that will be used over a period of time should not be left in public areas and a secure non-public holding area should be designated for these items.

- Interlibrary Loan

In general, interlibrary loan, as well as exhibit and in-house research loans, of original cartographic materials (maps, aerial photographs, older materials of all formats) is not recommended. It would be preferred that copies or high-quality scans be sent instead. Copying should be done by staff within the cartographic collection or in facilities where appropriate measures have been taken to protect, store, and transport materials safely.

Significant materials should be limited to significant exhibition events that can support insurance, transportation, and building security guidelines. Rare items should not be loaned or exhibited on a regular basis.

VII. Administering the Security Plan

It is critical that an institution create a communications plan whereby all parties (administration, librarians, and staff) know how to react when a theft occurs. Most institutions have created a disaster plan, review it regularly, and a similar process should include planning for an incident of theft.

Initial and immediate contacts should be with local safety officials. This would include protecting a building from a theft if it has been breached by a natural disaster or other incident. Collections should be connected to local safety officials through alarms and panic buttons so that any emergency can receive immediate attention. Once the building is declared secured, librarians and preservation staff should evaluate the situation and determine the status of the collections. Local law enforcement officials should be contacted immediately if a theft is suspected and collections sequestered for further review.

Agreed upon channels of communication will make this process move more smoothly. Scheduling meetings after the incident to decide on a plan of action loses valuable time and provides the perpetrator additional time. It is critically important to establish an early warning system as the map trade moves much more quickly than we might imagine. The general marketplace (i.e. EBay) moves even faster.

The value of our collections, both monetarily and historically, continue to increase and our role of open access make them especially vulnerable. Recognizing this vulnerability, should allow us to plan a course of action that falls into place the moment an incident is verified. The following websites and listserv's are important communication devices that should be used to alert the map trade and librarians:

Map History/History of Cartography – http://www.maphistory.info
MapHist – maphist@geo.uu.nl
Map Trade – maptrade@raremaps.com
Maps-L – maps-l@listserv.uga.edu
ExLibris-L – exlibris-l@listserv.indiana.edu

VIII. Sources

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