

# Preservation Case Studies for Archives

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KEEPING AUDIOVISUAL CONTENT ALIVE



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Preservation Case Studies for Archives

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# Preservation

## Case Studies for Archives

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**P**reservation Case Studies for Archives is an innovative educational experience that places the student in the role of the decision maker, where one has to balance both resources and constraints. Through a dynamic process of idea exchange, students first learn about the situation, then identify and analyse the problems to determine the causes, and finally develop alternative strategies for a solution. Preservation Case Studies for Archives provides the context for teaching the real world issues confronting archives staff and managers in a dynamic and exciting way. The students do most of the talking and are stimulated by learning in a supportive environment. Each case study contains important activities that help guide the direction and focus of the discussion by the teacher who leads through questioning and observation. Students learn from their fellow students' experiences and perspectives in an exciting forum that puts them in the centre of real world situations and requires them to develop real world solutions.

To help students and trainers get the most out of their case based training session, this publication contains a Guide for Students as well as a Guide for Trainers.

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Archives do not exist in a bubble, and are impacted by the communities in which they serve. Sometimes their collections and staff can become resources used by special interest groups with different agendas. Technology can be used to provide a distorted vision, and archival resources can unwittingly become the basic building blocks for a reality that never existed. What is the ethical role of the archive and archivist when a producer with an agenda chooses to create a fiction using archival materials? This case study explores ethics in the archive and how staff can become part of an ethical transgression.

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Humans frequently remember where physical objects are located based on appearance. Once digitised, documents that previously had a physical location are now virtual and can no longer be distinguished by appearance or a unique physical identifier. Not all objects are adequately described and, in the case of AV objects, one physical object could contain many different sequences that, once digital, no longer may seem relevant. A digital migration can create unrealistic expectations for the users and a nightmare for the institution. This case study explores the relationships between physical objects and their virtual proxies, and the organisational changes necessary to bring both worlds together.

<b>32</b>
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### **The Odd Smell**

Volunteers and researchers can become the eyes, ears, and noses of collection management. Even though they may not be specifically trained, general staff may notice important things that managers may miss due to their other responsibilities. Instruments designed to document environmental conditions can only function properly when calibrated and deployed appropriately. In this case study, the instruments say one thing but the researcher's nose signals an entirely different situation. Good collections management includes paying close attention to the data that are provided by the instruments as well as the input given by those working with the collection.

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**38**

### **Roof Disaster**

Building construction is governed by general building code that frequently does not take the specialised needs of Museums and Archives into account. A general system designed to protect one asset may inadvertently damage another. As a building ages, the institutional knowledge of the design may be lost causing a collection to be inadvertently moved from safety to danger. Those in charge of saving life and property may no longer even be aware of the special issues involved. This case examines the multiple challenges of disaster management, from managing communications with press and protection, to proper facility utilisation.

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**45**

### **The Rights Stew**

Most users feel that all content should be on the Internet, and many assume it already is! Multiple barriers remain in the way of taking legacy content online and making it accessible to all. Agreements and laws that no longer make sense may govern content created in earlier years. An archivist is frustrated by content that can not be played back

on obsolete formats, eager stakeholders all wanting a piece of nonexistent profits, and a director with a mandate. This case examines the difficulty in providing access to content that was never created when the Internet existed.

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### **The Poet's Collection**

**51**

A donated collection arrives at the archive. Collections like this always show up in a mess but usually they are neatly catalogued in a few weeks. This collection, however, arrives in a mountain of brown boxes, none marked and all the same. While some boxes contain file folders neatly labelled, others contain VHS tapes mixed in with 78rpm records and newspaper clippings. And to make matters worse, the archivist responsible for sorting stumbles upon a box of candy and film – enjoyed by lots of ants. Where to start?

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### **Location, Location, Location**

**56**

A country's audiovisual collection is stored in the vaults of a vacant warehouse. When they had first been built everyone had thought the concrete block vaults would provide the stable secure environment the collection needed from the harsh tropical environment. But the humidity inside has a mind of its own. And every time a train drives past the electricity voltage drops. Sometimes the air conditioners stop and don't start up again. There's no shell space left in the vaults, so new arrivals have to remain in the old cardboard boxes they arrived in. What are the risks?

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### **Labels on the Floor**

**62**

When opening the vault door an archivist notices many labels scattered all over the floor, leaving the shelf contents a big jigsaw puzzle.

zle. Labels don't just fall off containers for no reason. How could this have happened? Could it be the central air conditioning system, with the less than perfect controls? Or maybe it's the small dehumidifier. Or perhaps building maintenance has made a mistake while testing the central air conditioning.

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### **Construction Catastrophe**

**68**

A Museum is honoured with the magnificent gift of the private collection of a modern minimalist artist and collector. To house this collection, a new wing has to be built. The construction is first welcomed with bubbling excitement but rather quickly becomes the Director's nightmare. The price of building steel doubles during the process, getting the Board to agree to anything goes from difficult to impossible and the many conflicting standards on preservation makes building a vault even harder.

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### **Out There**

**73**

An unusual purchase catches the Director's attention. It's an order for 15 "working 1960's vintage television sets with adjustable magnets" at \$30,000 each. Could it be that the donator of the current collection decided to mount a new exhibition on his own? The requestor of this purchase ordered it "out there" – a storage shed that has become the place where things go when there is no other place. It has heating and even mediocre air conditioning, but other than an alarm system, lights and a floor, little else. What should the Director do?

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### **Category 4**

**79**

An archive is situated in an area where hurricanes occur, so the archivists are prepared to some disruptions and inconveniences. This time, however, the archive gets hit by a Category 4 storm, the strongest ever

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recorded. The storm peels back the roof, one of the sidewalls partially collapses and all the front glass is gone. The vaults are a nightmare, all the shelving has fallen down and partially unwound tapes and discs cover the floor. How could the archive have prepared for this and how does it recover from it?

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### **The Whoop Whoop Cultural Centre**

**85**

The Whoop Whoop Cultural Centre has a small and tremendously diverse collection. It trains local volunteers on how to handle the collection. But access to the Centre is restricted and each request has to be approved by the Cultural Officer, who firmly refuses most of them. The much needed volunteers leave for a paying job opportunity as soon as they've gained some proficiency, taking some collection knowledge with them. Ideally another paid position would be funded but the council is not in favour. Because the collection can't be made freely accessible due to cultural restrictions, it's considered impossible to show how the money's spent to the auditor's satisfaction.

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# Guide for Students

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Preservation Case Studies for Archives

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**C**ase study is an exciting and different way to learn. Instead of being given facts and asking you to learn and repeat each fact, the case study approach requires you to apply the knowledge.

In case study, one can examine a particular set of circumstances and then using all the information you can find, analyse the situation and determine the best set of options. Case study provides a way to apply the other learning you have done just as one would do in a real situation. It is important to remember that there may be more than one strategy that may be effective and you should consider several options before deciding what you feel offers the most effective solution to the problem faced. As in the real world, there frequently are not single answer solutions. In case study the analysis and application of the information learned is key to the determination of successful strategy.

You will likely find that the role of the instructor in case study is different than what you may be used to. In case study the instructor will provide core information, but in addition the instructor is observer and director and often acts as a participant as well. Listen carefully to the instructor's observations and direction and be certain to apply the other knowledge taught.

In case study training the assessment your trainer will use will not only be based on your final work but also how you participate in the session. Are you contributing new ideas, or different angles of investigation? Are you building on others ideas or merely repeating what has already been said?

# How to get the most out of your case based training session?

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## **Be prepared to openly discuss the case with other class members**

The case study learning method enables you to learn from your fellow students. The discussion needs to be thorough and explore all the options. If you feel a suggestion could be improved then your point of view is important to the group. People may disagree with you, but that is part of the process. However, all discussion must remain respectful of each student and their contribution.

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## **Read the scenario and exhibits thoroughly**

Make notes and highlight all the relevant facts. Try re-describing the situation in your own words, but be careful not to change the underlying information! Make maps or diagrams if this helps you understand the information being presented. Thoughtfully read and consider the activities as they may help focus your investigation. Make certain to complete all activities assigned by the instructor.

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## **Define the central issue**

Use the core knowledge being taught as well as the exhibits to guide your investigation and thinking. Identify a single, crucial problem that the information in the scenario describes most completely. A case will contain more than one problem, however these may be contributing issues and not the central issue. Make sure your analysis is relevant to the core knowledge as well as the case. For example, a problem with a new piece of equipment may be significant and needs to be addressed, however the bigger problem could be the workplace culture that does not readily accept change.

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## **Define the goal against the organisation's mission.**

This may be thought of as "Where do we need to be?" Consider the mission of the organization: What does the organisation strive to achieve? How will the issue identified impact upon this mission? Consider what may be required to return the organisation to a state where it can continue its mission.

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### **Identify the constraints to the problem**

Constraints are factors that limit the solutions available. Constraints may be resources such as staff numbers and capabilities, available finances, availability of equipment etc. Your strategy needs to acknowledge the constraints and offer solutions that work with the constraints in place.

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### **Suggest feasible alternatives**

There will be a range of strategies that will provide an effective solution. Do not constrain your thinking to one approach. Each strategy will have strengths and weaknesses that may not be immediately apparent. Do not jump to a single conclusion! Be creative in your thinking. Look at the problem from all angles before deciding to work on the most feasible approaches.

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### **Select the best options**

Critically examine each option you have developed and try to break it! The most robust options based on the available information will become apparent. However, if it is possible also consider the impact of other unknown factors. Examine which option also offers scalability or flexibility in the light of new information. Do not hold onto a favourite solution and try to make it work if the evidence suggests it is not as effective as other options.

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### **Develop a project plan**

Fit your strategy into a project plan. Consider the risks involved to the strategy. Consider the costs. Identify the critical steps. And most importantly, think of how the plan will be communicated.

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# Guide for Trainers

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**I**f you have never taught using the Case Study method or even participated in one, welcome. You will find that Case Study is a dynamic and exciting way to both learn and teach. If you have taught Preservation for Archives not using case study previously, you will likely be delighted at the excitement and the high level of student participation.

The case study method of training provides a flexible approach to teaching that may be tailored to suit a particular set of needs. The case study approach uses a scenario that contains situations that may be found in the real world. The students are introduced to the scenario and asked to analyse the information contained in various ways, discuss their findings and suggest strategies to deal with the situations with the broader group. The students may work individually or in groups. The key to the success of case study training is in engagement and participation by students. Students learn from each other as well as from the trainer.

Case study method fits within a larger curriculum structure. Case method instruction is not a substitute for core knowledge instruction; rather it is a real world context in which to apply it. Students will still require resources such as technical information to be able to understand and analyse the case sufficiently to develop feasible strategies. As instructor you will direct the students to focus their thinking and discussion about a particular aspect of a scenario that fits within a broader set of goals for the training. For example a case that discusses acquisition may also be used for other issues such as staff training, storage environments and health & safety.

The scenarios contained in Preservation Case Study for Archives cover a wide range of situations that students may encounter in their careers. Some suggested activities and approaches to analysis

are provided in the questions that follow each scenario. Because Preservation Case Study for Archives is designed to provide the context and not the core knowledge, we recommend that you prepare exhibits or evidence for each case to increase the relevance of the training to the core knowledge being taught. As instructor you may direct the students to include particular exhibits and activities in their analysis and strategy development.

Assessing the students' performance requires more effort than traditional structured curriculum based training where a formal examination may be used. Case based training requires the instructor to be more observant during the contact time with students. Participation and engagement is crucial to the success of case based instruction.



# What to be aware of?

In assessing the performance of a student the trainer needs to be aware of:

**The degree of engagement the student shows in the group or broader discussion**

Are they building upon the discussion or reiterating covered ground?

**The completion of activities**

Does the student complete all activities and incorporate case and core learning?

**Focus on relevant issues**

Does the student focus on the main issues or get distracted by detail that does not assist in problem solving?

**The use of exhibits**

Do the students apply the relevant core knowledge to the case?

**The depth of analysis and the issues the student raises in their responses**

Does the student bring his or her own experiences and methodologies to the analysis?

**The relevance and appropriateness of the strategies that the student proposes**

Can the student demonstrate and support the anticipated impact that the strategy will have upon the case?

**The supporting information they provide for their strategies**

Can they verify the information they are using or is assumption being used?

**The confidence with which the student offers information and participates in the group analysis**

Although this does need to be tempered with observations of culture, personality and general confidence within the broader group.

Assessment of the overall success of the training may also include an assessment by the students of the session and how they feel they fared in dealing with the Case and provide further dimension for discussion. This may be referenced against other sessions with similar scenarios.



# The Bishop and the Candidate for Parliament

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**I**t was a long day at the archive. First there were the meetings, and then the director came in with a VIP and everything had to be neat and tidy — hard to do with 40 boxes of film sitting in the lobby waiting for unpacking and cataloguing. So when the producer from the local TV station breathlessly showed up at the door, I knew it was going to be an even longer day. Election day was around the corner, and I could tell that the producer was on the hunt for something special. Television awards were often given for investigative journalism around election time.

“Do you have any footage of Bishop Rhinegold and Joseph Links together?”, he asked with a bit of a smirk. An odd request for many reasons, not the least being that Bishop Rhinegold had left the church many years before Joseph Links — a candidate for Parliament — was even born. “Unlikely”, I said, reminding the producer of the 20 some odd year difference in their ages. “Well then, do you have footage of Rhinegold and Links at all?” “Certainly,” I replied. “Let’s go to the catalogue and see what we can find”, wondering to myself what exactly this producer was thinking. In short order I had found at least 50 hits of the Bishop going back to the early 1970s, a few of which were readily available for viewing. Joseph Links was harder only because there was so much of him: there were 300 hits and I knew that was just the tip of the iceberg.

I put the links on a document and emailed it to the producer who was now busily and gleefully scrubbing through the files on the public access workstation. He seemed to be on a mission. As I watched him both use the mouse and eat his sandwich at the same time, I had a feeling of foreboding, both for the mess he would be leaving behind that I would have to clean up, and the mission he seemed to be on.

With a mouth half full he yelled across the room: “How about any footage with Bishop Rhinegold sitting in The Franks Auditorium - maybe on a panel or something?” It would be likely that something like that existed. After all, The Franks Auditorium had been used for almost a century for the local community board meetings and almost all important events that took place in town. It was the only facility in the area that would seat more than 200. I started going through the database knowing that The Franks Auditorium as a place showed up at least several hundred times. Going into Boolean search mode adding ‘AND Bishop Rhinegold’ I received two results, and sure enough one was on a VHS tape in the dreaded ‘catacombs’ downstairs.



How about any footage with Bishop Rhinegold sitting in The Franks Auditorium?

‘Catalogued yet forgotten’ best describes what we called the catacombs; you never really knew what you would find down there. Even worse, you never knew if you could find what you wanted there. Today we were lucky. The shelf number in this particular case was correct. And there it was, in its non-barcoded sleeve: item 47762 — a VHS tape not important enough to digitise but too important to throw out since no one really knew what else was on it.

I walked over to the now sticky workstation being operated by the producer and told him that I had indeed found the clip. “Great!”, he exclaimed, as yet more food was sprayed on the screen. He grabbed and stuffed our not so pristine master VHS into the user tape deck at the workstation. (I couldn’t remember if that one had ever been cleaned...)

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and stuffed our not so pristine master VHS into the user tape deck at the workstation. (I couldn't remember if that one had ever been cleaned...)

As the time code numbers whizzed by in fast forward, we were at the clip in no time. He slammed the deck into 'Pause' and there was Bishop Rhinegold, sitting at a table on the stage in the Auditorium. It was a Black and White clip, there was a name plate in front of the Bishop and he was sitting still for about four seconds.

“ Oh Man!  
Perfect!

“Oh Man!”, he exclaimed. “Perfect!” He opened up another window on the workstation that he had been searching through, and there was Joseph Links in a clip that was in colour and shot about three years ago when he was a council member sitting at a table on the very same stage. The clip was in colour, but otherwise looked very similar to the one of the Bishop.

“Check this out”, he said as he gleefully put the two windows next to each other. It just happened that the angle of the shot was so similar that if you stuck the two pictures side by side, it did look like they were sitting together.

The producer was so happy he could hardly contain himself. “What are you up to?”, I asked, half wincing and afraid to hear the answer. “Well, check it out”, he sprayed. “I can turn this colour one into Black and White, and stick them together back at the station. They will look like they were on the same stage at the same time.” Now I was getting nervous. “Yes... But why?”, I asked. “Well, because Joseph Links has been accused of giving a favourable decision to the church for that new building project downtown and now I can prove that they had an association!” The producer was now busily filling out a form for getting copies of the VHS and the file, and I just stared at the mess on the terminal.

**Activity 1 — Consider the scenario from an ethical point of view.**

- A. Discuss the implications of providing access and the unexpected consequences that may occur.**
- 
- B. Discuss the archive's position in the final use of the material. Can access be withheld in this instance? Can material ever be withheld?**
- 
- C. Discuss the archive's responsibility to the rights owner of the material to inform them of this intended use.**
- 
- D. Discuss the rights of Bishop Rhinegold and Joseph Links. Do their rights change because they were or are public figures? Do the rights change if the footage was at a public event that was news at the time?**
- 
- E. Prepare draft policies that would help to prevent the archive being accused of collaboration in this type of fabrication.**
- 
- F. What might change if the producer's piece had been fictional in nature?**
- 
- G. If the archivist had known the intention of the producer beforehand, should he have been allowed access to the collection? And using what guidelines?**
- 
- H. What is the role of the archivist when collection materials are being used for political purposes?**

## Activity 2 — From a collection management point of view.

- A. Describe how the provision of access may have impacted on the collection in this case.**
- 
- B. Prepare draft policies and work practices to lessen the impact on the collection in this case.**
- 
- C. Discuss how policies may restrict access to the collection and consider the dilemma of access on preservation.**
- 
- D. Describe different ways of providing information to the client without impacting on the collection.**



### Activity 3 — From a collection organisation and use point of view.

- A. What are some of the problems of using free text search for moving image materials?**
- 
- B. What is a Boolean search and why did it work?**
- 
- C. What are some of the ways to organise physical assets and how can one link them to their digital proxies?**
- 
- D. What are some of the issues of collections that are split in different physical locations?**
- 
- E. The producer viewed the only copy of that tape. What are the issues with allowing a single copy being viewed on a machine with unknown mechanical condition in a messy work area?**
- 
- F. Write a sample policy that would restrict access when only one copy of a tape exists.**

# Dominos

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**T**he tapes stood like little dominos, all lined up in a row. For decades, those little black boxes all seemed to know exactly where they were supposed to be. First labelled in pen and later with zebra striped labels, each knew their place. And best of all, I knew what was where. The tapes in the collection and I were friends. I took care of them and they took care of me. Ask me where the famous stock shot of the Presidential Palace is, and I could tell you straight away: third row, fourth tape from the left. The day it snowed: bottom row, fifth tape. And while I somewhat resented knowing all of that information in my head, as a practical matter I was sought out and irreplaceable because I knew where everything was. Of course there was a card catalogue, but who had time or wanted to look when all they had to do was ask me!

As the 'tick, tick, tick' on the clock sounded more and more like 'retirement, retirement, retirement' I was comfortable with my world and liked things how they were. Then came the invasion of the geeks, and I just wished every day that the clock ticked faster. It started in an innocent enough way. An intern decided to make the catalogue accessible to the entire company and it wasn't all that hard. In a couple of weeks with lots of cutting and pasting we had it all into the File Baker database and it was actually fun putting in search terms and seeing what it would come up with. Even though I knew most of the answers anyhow. It made my life easier too. Instead of getting phone calls asking me questions (which I answered at my leisure), the phone rang less often because clients could just look things up themselves. What could be better? Clients did not waste my time, and I could correct the catalogue entries with fewer interruptions. Then one day, things started to go very wrong.

The first phone call was simple enough. They had used the catalogue to find the clip they wanted (second shelving unit, third row, second

tape from the right — of course), but they wanted to see it at their desk. How lazy could they get? Just because they had the catalogue they now wanted to see it at their desk? I gave them the usual. They would have to fill out the form and I would send the master out for duplication. They could have it in five business days. I was going to hang up when they asked why they could not see it now. I told them the obvious. We had the masters down in the corporate library and access requests had to be filled out and duplicated at a video duplication company. They said they did not have time. I wished them a nice day and went back to work. I did not expect the thunder and lightning later that afternoon.

When I got back from lunch, I had a phone message from one of the Senior Vice Presidents in the marketing department. He wanted the footage immediately. They were having a major presentation to top management the next day and the footage was to be an important part of it.

This was clearly not my problem. The marketing people never knew how to plan anything. Nevertheless, the marketing department was very powerful these days, and had money too. I called back the Senior Vice President and explained the way things were in a very nice way, but he was less than friendly in his reply. He said something about prehistoric times and that since he could watch just about any popular TV show on his computer, he did not understand why he could not see our videos in a similar way. He made it clear that the entire reason for having the videos was to use them for marketing purposes and that if they were not readily available then there was no reason to have them and — by implication — me. Not a happy story. I made an emergency call to



He made it clear that the entire reason for having the videos was to use them for marketing purposes

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the video duplication company and they helped me out. But I could see that this was now an issue that was not going to disappear.

What do I do now? I have all these tapes, an angry Senior Vice President in the marketing department asking the impossible. It seems like more people are asking me for access to a collection that few even knew existed before. They want to make them digital. But worse, why will they need me after I were able to even get them digitised? And if I did, then what do I do with my friends the tapes?

**Activity 1 — Consider how an archive may support the work of a larger organisation.**

**A. Discuss the potential clients of the archive and their needs.**

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**B. Describe the methods that may be used to communicate the archive's role and limitations to clients.**

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**C. Discuss how an archive might use increased profile to their advantage.**

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**D. Prepare a skills gap analysis on the archivist in the scenario.**

**Activity 2 — Consider how the current practices impact on the collection.**

- A. List and describe the risks to the collection, both as a whole and individual objects.**
- 
- B. Discuss the records that could be kept that would help manage the collection.**

### Activity 3 — Consider how the collection is used.

- A. Discuss who is using the collection and how.**
- 
- B. Discuss the client requirements in both delivery methods and time.**
- 
- C. List the types of digital files that may be necessary to satisfy preservation and access demands.**
- 
- D. Discuss the options. Could one type of file serve both functions? If not, why?**
- 
- E. Discuss who else would need to be involved in creating the system envisaged by the marketing department. What role should the archive play in developing the system?**
- 
- F. Discuss what should be done with the tapes once the collection is digitised.**
- 
- G. Describe the preparation necessary before digitising the collection. Are there any critical steps in the workflow?**
- 
- H. Discuss who should be responsible for the digitised collection.**

# The Odd Smell

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**I**t had been wet, even for the rainy season. Fortunately, the temperature and humidity readings that the collection manager sent through each Friday showed that things were stable in the vaults. Though we called them ‘vaults’, they were in fact just wood and plaster walls built inside the old garage building to separate the collection of films and video tapes from the other odd assortment of objects that had been donated.

We had been given the garage to house the collection when the archive was established twenty years ago. The company next door wanted to rent out part of their property including the unused garage and this seemed a very good solution for us at the time.

We were aware that it was not an ideal building, but it was better than where the collection was stored previously, before the archive was established. At least this building had four walls and a roof without holes in it!

On Monday one of the researchers came into my office complaining of a ‘funny smell’ coming from the vaults. My first thought was decomposition of the films — vinegar syndrome. “No”, the researcher said. “It wasn’t a vinegar smell... just odd.” We grabbed some umbrellas and walked through the muddy puddles across to the building. As we opened the door I didn’t notice anything unusual about the smell. The vault building always had a ‘dusty’ smell when you entered. I guessed that this researcher was new and not familiar with the smell of a collection. Anyway the researcher was adamant that this was not usual so we entered the actual vaults themselves.

The first room was fine. But in the second vault, where incoming collection items were stored prior to being registered, there was a stronger than usual smell. Cardboard boxes full of our latest



donation - a collection of U-matic tapes from the national university - were piled high against the back wall. I sighed and wondered how we were going to deal with these tapes. Our only U-matic machine was no longer working and the technician we used had said he couldn't fix it anymore. The first few boxes we checked seemed okay. But definitely the closer we got to the bottom of the pile the stronger the smell was getting.

As I was picking up one box the researcher gasped and pointed at the box. I looked down and saw that the sides and back of the box were covered with a mass of green and black mould. At least we now knew what the smell was. I remembered reading somewhere that mould needed the RH to be above 65 per cent to grow and yet the readings we took every Friday had consistently been exactly 55 per cent. Not ideal admittedly but the best we could do.

I went looking for the collection manager. It was 11 am so she would probably be having her morning cup of tea. She was at her desk at the other end of the building surrounded by piles of the tapes she was labelling as part of the registration procedure. She was as surprised as I was at the discovery of mould. I asked to see the humidity gauge that she used to make the readings. After shuffling the papers in the top drawer of her overflowing filing cabinet, she pulled the unit out. She smiled as she handed it to me. "I keep it in here for safety. These are expensive gadgets and the locks on the doors are not that good." The display was showing exactly 55 per cent. I wondered about calibration. "No need," the collection manager said. "These come calibrated from the factory and the batteries are changed every twelve months as the manual says to."



Each of the remaining boxes was covered in mould along the back and sides, and the boxes sitting on the concrete floor had mould underneath as well

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We went back in the vault and pulled out the rest of the boxes. Each of the remaining boxes was covered in mould along the back and sides, and the boxes sitting on the concrete floor had mould underneath as well. We sat on the floor and started pulling the tapes out of all the boxes and looking at each to see if we could see mould inside the cassettes. It was strange. There was no mould on the inside of the boxes or on the cardboard tape covers, but inside many of the cassettes we could see some sort of white powder on the actual tape. "Must be mould", said the collection manager. I agreed but wanted to be sure. This white stuff somehow looked different to the mould on the boxes. "Isn't the accountant's wife a conservator or something at the museum?", I asked. "We could get her to look at these." It seemed a good idea to get some external advice.

We pushed the cassettes back into the covers that were scattered across the floor and put them all back into the cardboard boxes and restacked them. "We'll figure this out tomorrow", I said. "I have a meeting to go to."

**Activity 1 — Consider the situation from a personal health and safety point of view.**

**A. List all the risks involved in this scenario.**

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**B. Discuss how each of these risks could have been mitigated.**

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**C. Develop and present a project plan that could be used to conduct the search for the smell.**

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**Activity 2 — Examine the scenario from a collection management point of view.**

**A. List all the risks faced by the collection.**

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**B. Discuss how each of these could be mitigated.**

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**C. Discuss the work practices and workplace culture in the archive, and how these have affected the safety of the collection.**

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**Activity 3 — Consider the building and why the mould may have grown.**

**A. Why might the mould form despite the lower than necessary RH?**

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**B. Discuss the temperature and RH measurement system. Are they satisfactory?**

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**C. Discuss how you would investigate the problem.**

# Roof Disaster

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**T**he last thing I needed on the way to work was another traffic jam. As I came around the corner, I expected the usual crowd of construction trucks clogging up the street to the Archive. But this time it was different: there were many more trucks and some were fire trucks! This didn't look good. I parked down the road, grabbed my ID badge and headed into work with a sick feeling in my stomach. Unfortunately, there was good reason for the stomach ache.

My badge got me through the barricades to the street, but the Archive was still quite far away. Local news crews were on the scene and one of them noticed my ID and I asked him what happened. "Well," he said, "it looks like the workers on the roof were not quite as careful as they should have been, and the butane torch they were using set some of the beams on fire." "Would you care to comment for the 6pm news?", he asked. I told him proudly that we had a fire suppression system in the building and there should be no loss.

From that distance my colleagues and I could not see any flames or smoke. It seemed like most of the emergency — or whatever it was — was over. What I did see was a small stream of water running down the street amongst the hoses all running towards the building. I thought correctly that the closer I would have been able to get, the worse it would have been.

Years ago, when we had the chance for a new building, we decided to put the vault on the top floor. We had enough experience with mould and floods before, and the opportunity to build a new building gave us the ability to learn from our mistakes in the past. The new vault was state of the art. Thick prefabricated insulated panels provided good protection with a refrigerator type door to provide a good seal.

The FM-200 Fire Suppression system cost a fortune, but I was hoping the cost was justified seeing what was now happening. Still, a fire in the roof did not sound like good news, no matter what.

It took almost until lunchtime before we were allowed to get near the building. The police and fire brigade were sympathetic yet firm, and my building pass did not do much of any good at all. Finally after lunch, long after the trucks had packed up the hoses and left, we were allowed into the now dark building. We had no idea what happened to the power, but I realised that the building that I had worked in for five years seemed totally different when pitch black inside. The emergency lights were of no value at all having lost their charge hours ago, and the halls were dark, smelly, and slippery. We all went back out after trying to use our mobile phones as flashlights, which did not work well. We went to the hardware store and bought all their flashlights.



We had enough experience with mould and floods before, and the opportunity to build a new building gave us the ability to learn from our mistakes in the past

Now armed with flashlights we made our way in, noticing a newly formed stream of water exiting the front door. We soon found that we were walking in a sea of slippery muck, the carpet underneath us felt like a sponge and, as we opened the door to the stairwell, a small wave flowed into the top of my sneakers. “Ugh!” Up the three flights of stairs, finally coming out in the hall, the muck was higher than downstairs and I had to be careful to not slip as I walked towards the vault.

Oddly, the door to the vault was open and it seemed brighter in there than outside in the stacks. Looking up we saw the source of the light: a not so neat rectangular hole had been cut in the ceiling of the vault

and the roof above, letting the light in, and presumably letting the smoke out at one point or another. We could not get in much further. Almost all of the film and tape had been knocked off of their shelves and lay in a series of very high wet heaps on the floor. The FM-200 may have done its job because we did not see any burnt film or plastic, but what we did see was not all that much better. Everything was soaked, cans were open, reels were all over the place sitting in a small lake of water which had no place to go but down into the rare book collection in the floor below.



**Activity 1 — Consider communication in an unfolding disaster.**

- A. Discuss how an archive could ensure that they receive information about disaster situations that directly affect them.**
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- B. Discuss the appropriateness of the comment on the situation without full knowledge. Who should be making comments to the media about the archive?**
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- C. Discuss the significance of time delays in responding to a collection salvage operation. How could the delay time be best spent?**
- 
- D. Discuss who outside the archive staff need to be informed after a disaster has affected an archive?**
- 
- E. Describe the communication systems that could be put into place during and after a disaster has occurred.**
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- F. Discuss the risks to the communication systems during and following a disaster and how these may be minimised.**

## Activity 2 — Consider collection salvage and recovery.

**A. Discuss how salvage and recovery differ.**

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**B. Develop a plan for when staff are first allowed back into a disaster site.**

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**C. Describe how this first visit can be made most beneficial to recovering the collection.**

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**D. Describe the tasks that will need to be assigned to staff to conduct an effective salvage operation.**

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**E. Discuss the budget considerations in a salvage operation. How will these considerations change as the recovery stage begins?**

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**F. Describe the resources that would be necessary to salvage the collection in the vault. Consider staff, equipment and consumable items.**

### Activity 3 — Consider project management of a disaster recovery.

- A. Describe the major steps necessary in returning the archive to as close to normal as possible following a disaster.**

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- B. Discuss the risks in the entire recovery project from salvage to business as usual.**

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- C. Describe how a recovery project can be monitored and kept on track.**

## Activity 4 — Consider preparing for disasters.

- A. List all the risk factors and determine where the mitigation systems may have been improved.**

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- B. Describe the steps following after a disaster plan has been developed.**

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- C. Discuss how prepared for an actual disaster the archive appeared to be. Where could improvements have been made?**

# The Rights Stew

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Sometimes I feel like I am a cook in a restaurant. Everyone wants to eat something different and they are all hungry at the same time. When I started in the National Archive I thought the main course was film, as that was the reason for the collection's existence. But now it is more like technology stew. We have everything, from old huge disks to Mini-DV tapes. Even worse, everyone wants something different. Some want a compressed file by email, some want a print from the show, some want a disc, and everyone wants online access. Producers from the TV station want our master tapes and expect us to trust that they will return it safely.

It is hard to keep everyone happy and still make our Director happy. Our Director decided that we needed to be more independent, so this year's push is to start making money on the copies we provide. I am not sure that our institution can ever function like a commercial entity in that way. We have many different stakeholders who use our materials in many different ways. They often have different ideas about what we are supposed to provide. Some are from the university doing research — they think that everything should be free. The producers from the TV station think we should be paying them for providing access to their tapes that they dumped in our lap a few years ago. Lately, even widows from the musicians for some of the music in our audio collection have decided that they should be paid also. Almost everyone wants to be paid and no one wants to pay!

Just because we have the tapes, it does not mean that we even know where the releases and permissions documentation are anymore. Our catalogue was created a long time ago and this information was rarely included. Some of our tapes have old TV shows recorded on them — can we make copies of these too? Our Director says yes,



Just because we have the tapes, does not mean that we even know where the releases and permissions documentation are

we need the money. I suppose that if no one knows, there is little harm done. After all, I have no idea where the kids get their music these days — and, honestly, I don't like to know. Still, we expect producers to give us copies of their new productions and I am

concerned that one day we might give out a copy of their new shows by mistake.

Then, there is the practical side. There is no way we can make duplicates of all these different things, so we need to send the materials out to be copied. Our old plan was to make sure we had at least two copies of all our materials: the master and something to make copies with. But these days, no one will pay the higher prices required. So, we have gone back to making the copies directly from the master.

And then there is the Internet, where most of our clients now expect that all of our materials should be readily available.

It has become an impossible situation. How do we decide what to do first?

## Activity 1 — Consider how materials may enter an archive.

- A. Discuss the agreements that should be in place to clarify the terms under which an archive may provide access.**

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- B. Discuss if an archive could or should specify which formats it will accept.**

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- C. Discuss the formats that could be targeted to give the best options for future access.**

## Activity 2 — Determining rights management.

- A. Discuss what effort is necessary to track down copyright owners if there is no clear documentation.**

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- B. Discuss if it is acceptable to assume that, since the material is old, there is less importance in ensuring rights are cleared.**

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- C. Discuss if it may be acceptable to assume that Internet rights would be included in old agreements written before the Internet became a viable avenue for access delivery.**

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- D. Discuss the other types of rights that may need to be considered other than copyright.**



### Activity 3 — Collection fraud and security.

- A. Discuss the impact that the ready access of material without proper rights management may have on the reputation of the archive.**

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- B. Describe the documentation that would be required to demonstrate proper rights management.**

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- C. Discuss how unauthorised access to content by pirates or corrupt archive staff may be prevented.**

## Activity 4 — Consider how access is currently given.

- A. Describe the risk factors to collection objects in the way the archive is providing access.**

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- B. Discuss the potential methods for the archive to simplify the way it provides access to the collections.**

# The Poet's Collection

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“Just what we needed....”, I thought as the beep, beep, beep of the van backing up to the loading dock made me wonder what new treasure the Director had burdened us with. He was there too, arms crossed over his chest, face beaming, as the new acquisition in the van slowly made its way in reverse towards me. He couldn't wait. As soon as the beeping stopped, he threw open the van door to reveal a mountain of brown boxes. None marked and all the same. “Oh Great, another problem” I sighed.

Jacquelin Porteau had been a famous local poet for years. Starting in the 1950's in coffee houses with readings, she had brought more notoriety to our town than almost anyone else. She was well known, and when she died 4 years ago there was wide press coverage. Interviews with her husband, made her sound like Sainthood was in the offing. Fortunately for all concerned, that was not the case, and in the ensuing years he happily spent the vast amount of her fortune on a wide variety of activities, best left unspoken. When he died last year, the estate was essentially penniless but did contain a vast array of objects. It seems that unknown to most, Jacquelin in addition to being a poet was a compulsive collector.

“That's all of it!” the director exclaimed. To which I quietly questioned “All of it?”. The director replied: “Absolutely, every scrap, I even got her collection of salt and pepper shakers!” and with that he congratulated himself to the Board Member he was standing with as they both headed off to his office on the top floor to a nice lunch. I had not been invited. “Salt and Pepper shakers” I whispered, “great, just what we need”.

As more and more boxes were unloaded, more than a few of them tinkled or thumped on their way to the carts lined up for their journey to our vault. The Director had told me about his latest triumph, of course, but I was expecting paper. Paper does not go

tinkle and thump in the box. With a mix of fear and curiosity I had to take a peek inside a few of the boxes, but I wish I hadn't. I was not new to the profession, and I was quite proud of my sorting and accessioning abilities in the past, so I was not necessarily intimidated by the arrival of a new collection. They always showed up in a mess but usually in a few weeks they were neatly catalogued and became part of the bigger collection. What I had here though was an entirely new situation. It appeared that no care had been taken in packaging, and when the Director said "everything" he really was serious. While some boxes contained file folders neatly labelled, others contained the famous salt and pepper shakers. Other boxes had VHS tapes mixed in with 78rpm records of Louis Armstrong and newspaper clippings of other poets and performances. Dozens of scrap books were mixed in with small soaps and shampoo bottles from hotels that had a significance I didn't understand. My favourite was what I called the "tango box", containing signed red shoes with a matching dress that was just amazing, along with a heavy rusty film can with the title "Evangeline" by Canadian Bioscope on it. In one box I found candy and film cans. In another carton were 2 more collections, little rolls of what appear to be home movies mixed in with old Candy Bars, including a real chocolate bar from the 1930's that had been glued to a cardboard plaque presented to Jacqueline on the occasion of her 100th reading at the famous "Candy Bar" coffee house. I did not need to be an entomologist to know what was in the box enjoying all the contents candy and film alike - ants, and a lot of them. I am sure that the Director heard my scream three floors above. What a nightmare, where do I start?



Paper  
does not  
go tinkle  
and thump  
in the box

**Activity 1 — Consider the scope of collecting activities that may be required to make a representative collection.**

**A. Discuss the profile of the incoming collection, which objects may assist in interpretation of the collection as a whole and which may just be interesting:**

- Coffee mug from The Beat Club
  - Wedding photographs from the poet's first marriage
  - Bolex movie camera labelled "Property of The Factory"
  - Guitar signed by Jean Reinhardt
  - Assorted nylon stockings
  - A notebook page with the following handwritten text "In my hungry fatigue, and shopping for images, I went into the neon fruit supermarket, dreaming of your enumerations!"
  - A notebook page with the following handwritten text "Coffee, Dog Food, Celery, Carrots, Milk, Eggs, Almonds"
  - Volkswagen car keys
  - Empty perfume bottle with the label #5 Ernest Beaux
  - Empty liquor bottle with the label Johnnie Walker
-

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**B. Describe the key elements of a selection policy. What factors should the policy be based on?**

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**C. Describe the structure of a prioritisation scheme for dealing with individual incoming collection objects.**

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**D. Describe how non-selected objects may be dealt with.**

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**E. Discuss the ethics of selling non-selected objects as memorabilia to raise funds for the archive.**

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**F. Describe the features a database or collection management system might need to handle a mixed collection.**

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**G. Prepare a basic collection policy that would cover the collection of the poet.**

## Activity 2 - How should an incoming collection be handled?

**A. Describe all the steps of a workflow to examine an incoming collection.**

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**B. Discuss the issues that need to be addressed in examining an incoming collection, mixed or otherwise.**

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**C. Describe the skills that are required to manage an incoming mixed collection.**

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**D. Prepare a skills gaps analysis survey that is based on the skills described above.**

# Location, Location, Location

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**A**fter years of writing proposals and submissions at last the news came back from the Minister's office that the archive would be granted some money to improve our storage vaults. Not as much as we had hoped for, in fact it would be barely enough to do the most basic improvements we had been hoping to do. Still it was something and any improvement would make a difference to the collection.

I looked out of my window at the corrugated iron building with the peeling paint and patches of rust and wondered what could really be done. When the vaults had first been built in a vacant warehouse everyone had thought that the sturdy concrete block vaults inside the warehouse shell would provide the stable secure environment the collection needed from the harsh tropical environment. But the humidity inside each vault had a mind of its own and even the addition of small air conditioners to each vault had done nothing to reduce the humidity, especially during the typhoon season when the storms whipped the sea up and threw spray across the docks and train station onto the rusting warehouse building that held our countries audiovisual collection.

The front doorbell rang and I walked down the stairs in the administration building to answer the door, it would be the guys in the van from the TV station wanting the gate unlocked to get access around the back to the vaults to drop off yet another load of tapes. Even though it was fairly small, the van barely fitted around the side of the building, but the tapes couldn't be unloaded from the street as there was nowhere to park.

The lights flickered as another train lumbered into the goods yard directly behind the vaults. Every time a train went past the electricity voltage dropped, sometimes the air conditioners would stop and not start up again when the power returned. Once one air conditioner



had nearly caught fire when the motor jammed after such a power outage.

Sure enough the team from the TV station were waiting impatiently, their van was blocking the street and a queue of large delivery trucks were honking their horns as they tried to get into the paint factory next door. The van squeezed through the narrow driveway between the archive's administration building and the high security fence and backed up to the warehouse doors. As the warehouse doors creaked open I could see that another section of the plywood ceiling had fallen down over night and the holes in the rusty roofing tin were letting the outside in. The solvent smell of the paint factory mixed with the odour of the ships in the harbour and the slightly vinegary tang coming from the vaults.



I could see that another section of the plywood ceiling had fallen down over night and the holes in the rusty roofing tin were letting the outside in.

Another load of barely catalogued tapes to be processed, added to the old database and squeezed into the overcrowded vault. There was no shelf space left, these tapes would have to remain in the old cardboard boxes they arrived in.

The team from the TV rummaged through a few of the vaults selecting objects from their handwritten lists in no particular order. As usual I had to remind them to close the vault doors and to write down the titles of the tapes they had collected in the movement book. How many times had I spoken to them about this! They loaded the van throwing the boxes in and after slamming the van doors shut they headed back out into the street. I could expect another visit sometime later today repeating the performance. I refastened the chain and padlocked the gate, at least this was secure.

As I entered the administration building another train groaned past and the lights inside the building flickered. There was so much to do.

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**A. List and describe the risks that the archive may have been able to control.**

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**B. Describe how the risks that the archive cannot control may have been minimised.**

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**C. Discuss any uncontrollable risks. What is the impact of these risks on the archive?**

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**D. Prepare a disaster plan based on your analysis of the risks.**

## Activity 2 — From a preservation point of view

**A. Using the collection profile and other information, describe the highest priority parts of the collection.**

Format	Number of objects
1" video tape	1,200
¾" U-matic	4,000
Betacam (oxide and SP)	6,300
VHS (research library)	10,00
Digital Betacam	5,000
DVCam	1,000
16mm	3,400
¼" audio	8,000
Compact cassette	15,000
Vinyl records (radio library)	20,000
CD's (radio library)	12,000
DAT	800
Audio recorder (.wav files)	200 (hours)

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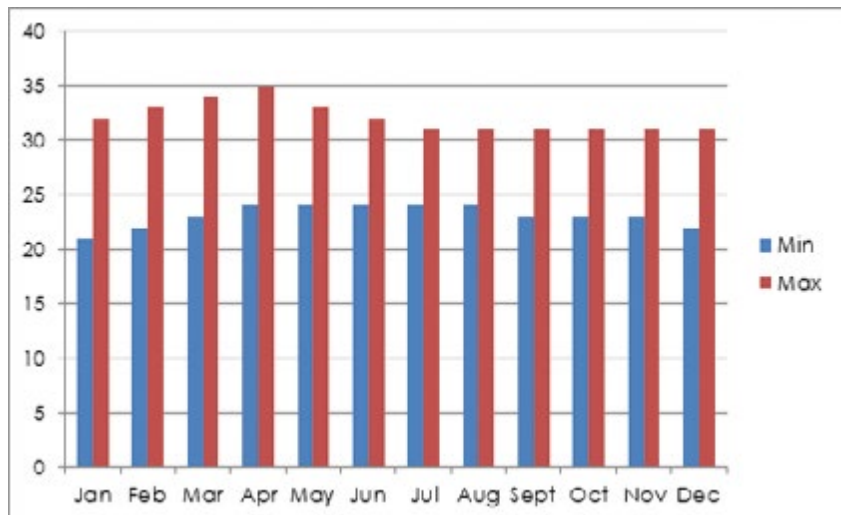
**B. Describe how the collection could be brought under control.**

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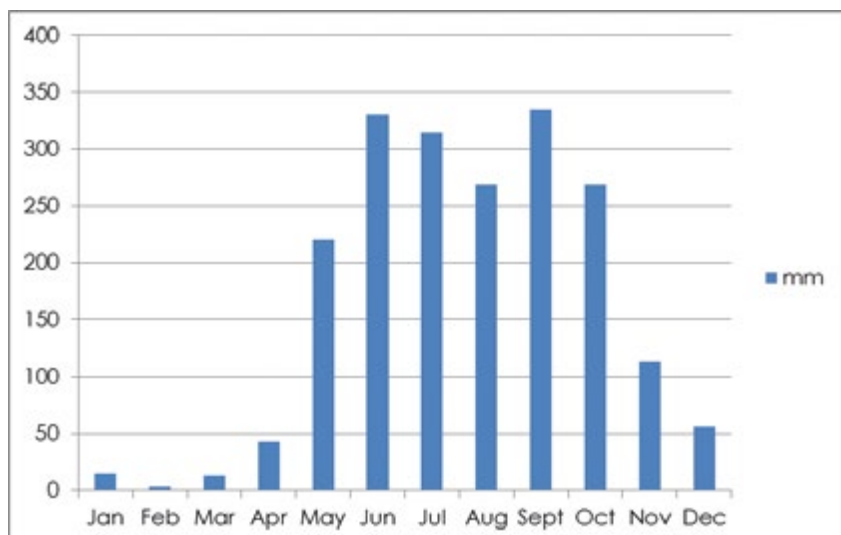
**C. Describe the improvements that could be most cost effective in ensuring the maximum life for the collection. Place these in a priority order with reasoning for each decision.**

**Activity 3 — Using the climate data below, consider the issues involved in a new preservation vault for the collection.**

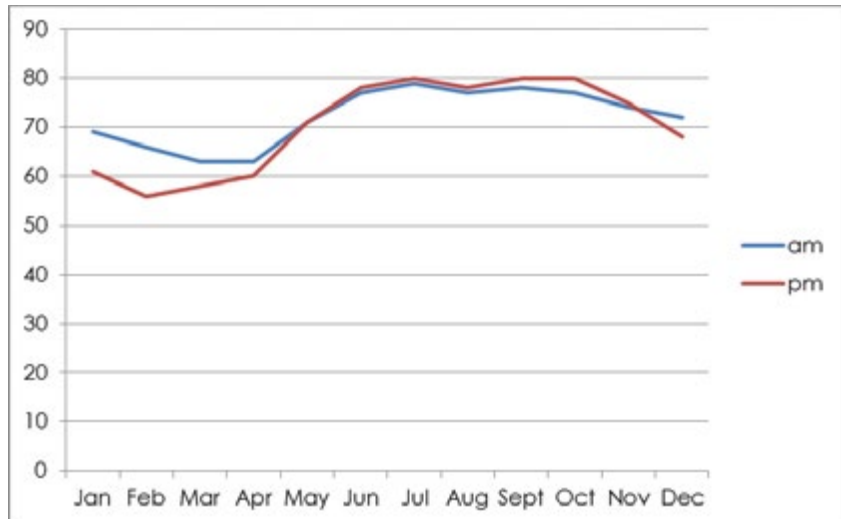
**Fig. 1: Temperature**



**Fig. 2: Rainfall**



**Fig. 3: Relative Humidity**



# Labels on the Floor

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**I**t was Monday morning and I was not in the mood for practical jokes. Opening the vault door revealed many labels all over the floor, like fallen leaves. I thought that maybe a box of new labels had spilled on the floor. A glance at the shelves revealed the real horror story. Those labels were not new but were the labels formerly on the containers, now they were scattered all over the floor.

Not all of the labels were on the floor, but enough to now make the contents of the shelves a big jigsaw puzzle. While identifying each unlabelled object could be done using the database and the location (and hopefully the labels INSIDE the boxes were all there), this was a new major project that I did not need. As I carefully walked down the aisle avoiding stepping on as many labels as possible, I wondered how this could have happened. Many of the other labels on the boxes were puckered and in some cases they had half peeled off the boxes. Other labels looked fine. A quick glance at the thermometer showed me that at least right now everything was perfect. Although we had not installed the Temperature / RH datalogger yet, our trusty thermometer from the 1950's showed a cool 18 °C. Still, I was suspicious, labels do not just fall off containers for no reason. I made a note to myself, it was time to talk to our building maintenance department.

We had upgraded our vault in recent years, when we could. In the beginning we only had a window, followed by an air conditioner in the window. While that was a good start we eventually raised enough money for a central air conditioning system that worked well when it was on, although the controls were less than perfect. We always knew we needed some kind of humidity control, and our 30th Anniversary Fund Raising Appeal was successful enough for a free standing small dehumidifier. It wasn't the kind of visible thing that most donors were interested in supporting, but our general appeal had provided

just enough for the unit, so we were able to go to a discount store where the dehumidifiers were on sale and get one. We did not have a drain in the vault, but the unit had a reservoir inside and when filled the unit would shut off. Although every now and then there would be small puddles on the floor, for the most part it seemed to work well enough and started up immediately whenever we emptied the little reservoir later that morning, but that still did not explain the label situation.



Every now  
and then  
there  
would  
be small  
puddles on  
the floor

The meeting late in the afternoon with the building maintenance department was not all that eventful. It turned out that during the weekend they had been working on the cooling tower that provided air conditioning for the entire building including our vault. It was time for a seasonal test and so they had decided to cool the building down to make sure that all systems were working properly. They had a call on their cell phones and were about to leave when I asked them if they happened to check the vault as part of the test, at which point they said they had, and turned down the thermostats like all the others to make sure the cooling was working. With that they were off, it seemed that the circuit breaker for the coffee pot in the Directors office was a larger emergency.

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- A. Discuss how stable the environmental conditions in the vault are likely to be.**
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- B. Describe the design elements that will affect the environmental conditions inside the vault.**
- 
- C. Research stand-alone dehumidifiers and discuss how effective these may be in controlling the RH in the vault described in the scenario.**



**Activity 2 — From a preservation perspective consider the impact on collection items stored in the vault.**

- A. Describe the impact of fluctuating conditions on the different types of collection objects. Will all objects respond the same way?**
- 
- B. Describe how environmental records may be used to help manage the collection.**

### Activity 3 — Consider the communication issues.

- A. Discuss how building maintenance services impact on the preservation of a collection. Are the actions of building services critical to the collection?**

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- B. Discuss how decisions by one section of an organisation could be better informed by the collection managers in regard to the impact on the collection.**

**Activity 4 — From a collection management perspective.**

**A. Discuss how the labelling scheme may have been made more robust to minimise the impact of such an event.**

# Construction Catastrophe

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The Director stared nervously at the pile of official looking papers on her desk on top of the oversize blueprints. How had the construction gone so late and so over budget? What started out as her biggest accomplishment was now her biggest nightmare. Lunch with the benefactor of the new Museum Building provided even more bad news. Who could have predicted that the price of building steel would double in 36 months? Yes, the Director reminded herself, thirty-six very long months.

Getting the Museum Board of Directors to agree to anything had gone from difficult to impossible, but after a year of meetings, the Director had finally convinced them that a new exhibition area had to be built for several reasons, not the least of which was the magnificent gift of the modern minimalist artist and collector Spiro Valente.

She remembered the look on the Chief Curator's face when he had heard the news that Valente had chosen their museum as the winner and beneficiary of his private collection. He was ecstatic! Although the curator had the collection inventory beforehand, no one had thought to really consider the space and special requirements

“

No one had thought to really consider the space and special requirements needed

needed to both exhibit and store Valente's work as well as his rather large collection. Rather than becoming an expected problem with the Board, it became a focal point to start fund raising for the new wing that had been proposed for decades but never seemed to get onto the long term agenda. The normally stubborn board was now bubbling with excitement and the opportunity of having their name over the door that housed the Spiro Valente collection encouraged them to personally donate to the fundraising, a previously unheard of action.

After the new wing for the Valente collection opened, the less visible but critical renovation and face-lift for the main building could occur. Once the money became available the project became a hectic series of events. Meetings with committees and architects were followed by city planners and community meetings, some of them were quite heated. It seemed that everyone had something to say but no one had solutions that made everyone happy.



A white stone box,  
boring enough  
for everyone to  
agree on

Several community groups were more concerned about the loss of the community garden that was to be cleared to build the new wing, than the importance of the Valente collection. Three architectural firms and five design reviews later, everyone appeared to grudgingly agree that it could be OK, but the design for the new wing grew less inspired the more people had their input. What started out as a controversial yet inspirational design that appeared to be a huge metal and crystal tree sure to get the museum the international recognition it wanted, now was a white stone box, boring enough for everyone to agree on. At this point, it was more about getting it done than it was about being inspired.

Of course the staff was thrilled, who wouldn't be? The chance to move out of a dingy tired space into bright, clean, and open workspace was a morale booster for the entire museum. Even more, the chance to have worked in a Museum that would now have international recognition had everyone dreaming and polishing up their resumes, just in case the opportunity for a more prestigious job arose. Instead of the staff getting focused on the project at hand, the Director became more and more disheartened by the new lethargy exhibited by the staff. Even deciding what coffee to buy became a tiresome exercise of everyone having to comment on things that ultimately did not matter all that much. For the director, the coffee

purchasing became emblematic of the slowness that all of the work now took on. Things that used to just happen, now were discussed endlessly, with no decision or action being the result of almost any meeting.

The vault that was to house the Valente collection was no different than anything else being planned. The preservation task force started



For the first time they realised they were having a proper vault, not just a closet with the letters “vault” painted on it

out with good intentions. For the first time they realised they were having a proper vault, not just a closet with the letters “vault” painted on it. They dutifully started talking to others in their position at other institutions, talking to vendors as well as architects, referring to international standards that

everyone seemed to think was international law. But nothing got decided. As the meetings dragged on month after month, the Vault project came to be known as the No Vault project and now was the central joke in the Museum. Minutes from the meetings went on for pages saying little worth reading. It seemed that everyone had a document of one sort or another justifying doing one thing or another, and these documents, whether they be Standards or other people’s experiences all conflicted with one another. Paper needed to be kept at one temperature and antique clothing at another. Film should be frozen, videotape never should be frozen, and humidity specifications changed frequently as the planning dragged on.

At the end of it all, the Director now had a building that was at least three years behind schedule, costing almost double the initial estimate, and the staff could not decide on anything. Maybe, the Director mused, the old building was not so bad after all.

**Activity 1 — Consider the development of the new wing and vault in terms of project management.**

**A. Describe the scope of the project.**

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**B. List and describe the risks to the project.**

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**C. Discuss how well has the communication between stakeholders has been.**

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**D. Develop a communication plan based on the scenario.**

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**E. Develop a time line of the project so far.**

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**F. Discuss why the project has run so far over schedule and above budget.**

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**G. Develop a simple project management plan based on the information given in the scenario above.**

## Activity 2 — Using standards.

**A. Describe how appropriate standards may be selected.**

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**B. Discuss why conflicting standards may exist.**

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**C. Describe how standards are developed.**

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**D. Describe how the conflicting standards may be reconciled to one another in the project described in the scenario.**



# Out There

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The purchase order would not normally have been seen by the Director, but considering its unusual nature and amount, the head of the purchasing department thought that a short email might be appropriate. London Prop Shop was not a typical supplier for the Museum, and an order for 15 “working 1960’s vintage television sets with adjustable magnets” at \$30,000 each had caught the attention of everyone who saw it.

Getting past the construction did finally happen, and while the benefactors complained about the delay and the cost increases, they certainly appreciated the opening ceremonies and celebrations and international recognition they got. The initial exhibition was a great success and no one seemed to even notice the closing of the main building for a year. There were enough new things to look at in the Valente collection to sell tickets for months, and everyone enjoyed new things to see and talk about. Attendance had almost doubled from the same period last year and everyone seemed happy.

This purchase order was more than a bit strange. Spiro Valente had visited the exhibition department a little more than a week ago, and the timing of this purchase order seemed no coincidence. Considering his stature and new found importance in the still small Museum, Valente had seemed to find a new home with lots of eager young apprentices, and while it was exciting for a while, the Director was beginning to wonder whether the Museum was turning into his personal studio. Had Valente decided to mount a new exhibition on his own?



She was beginning to wonder whether their Museum was turning into his personal studio

There was a place in the Museum where the Director preferred not to go. Usually described as “out there” in staff meetings, the storage



### The disarray was distressing

shed became a place where things went when there was no other place. Many things in the permanent collection - like sculptures - and even a new collection like Valenti's stuff were just too big to fit in the vault, and not fragile enough to be harmed by the environment (in most cases). The shed did have heating and even mediocre air conditioning, but other than an alarm system, lights, and a floor, little else. After talking to the purchasing department head, it seemed that the requester of the purchase was "out there" in the shed. Time for a visit from the Director.

The Director suddenly remembered why her last visit "out there" was several years ago. The disarray was distressing. Bits and pieces of sculpture, some disassembled to maximize storage space were mixed in with shelves that held a wide variety of things. From paper towels to copier paper, many things needed to be stored in the museum that just did not fit in other places. Sticky paper with bits of peanut butter seemed to be in the corners, and there probably was a reason. She did not want to really know what else was hiding in there.

The recent downturn in the economy had provided opportunities where the Museum was able to buy things in much larger quantity at very reduced prices that it could not avoid taking advantage of. After all, bleach did not spoil, so an opportunity at an auction to buy 30 cases of it was a fantastic buy, but then ended up "out there" for storage. Because of a general lack of storage, "out there" had become a mixed media vault in the worst way. From office supplies to audio cassettes with oral histories of famous artists and even a very valuable sculpture, one could find almost anything and everything. As the Director walked through the storage area with the new exhibit curator he took her over to a pile of television sets that were about 5 feet high. "I give up," she said. "Did a local hotel have a deal we could not refuse when they installed new flat screens?"

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“Not really,” he said. It turned out that one of Valente’s early works, *Pyramideo*, involved stacking 15 televisions into a pyramid and displaying images of an actual Pyramid. These televisions had been in Valente’s garage for 40 years, and now came to live at the Museum. It had transferred the masters to DVD long ago, after being assured by the preservation department that this was as good as the original video tape. The only problem, the Director learned, was that when turned on as a test, the first set caught fire causing more than a bit of excitement at the time. “What do we do with these televisions,” she asked herself. “And how do we again exhibit Valente’s now seminal work?”



When turned on as a test, the first set caught on fire, causing more than a bit of excitement at the time

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**A. Discuss the suitability of the mission statement to justify the expenditure on the televisions.**

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**B. Discuss the problems with technology based art and formulate a collection policy for it.**

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**C. Is there an “out there” where you work? Discuss some of the policy issues in managing the storage area.**

## Activity 2 — Consider the interpretation of the work Pyramidio.

**A. Discuss the differences between the original work and the new installation.**

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**B. Discuss the importance of the artists intent in the exhibition of the work and the order for the televisions.**

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**C. Discuss why custom made televisions that were so expensive had been ordered.**

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**D. Discuss the issues of preservation of the original video on DVD.**

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**E. Discuss what is more valuable and why: the tape or the DVD.**

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**F. Should the Director approve the purchase of the new televisions?**

**Activity 3 — From a preservation perspective consider the use of “out there”.**

**A. Discuss the collection policy and if it would permit such a mixed collection storage facility.**

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**B. Discuss the following objects that were seen in the storage area “out there”:**

- Bleach
- Sticky paper with bits of peanut butter on the floor
- Television sets
- Copier paper
- Cardboard box labelled “For You Prince Rogers Nelson” containing big tapes
- Audio cassettes
- Employee motorcycles
- Gardening supplies including fertilizer, insecticide and tools
- Victorian era costume collection
- Bronze sculpture signed “Henry Moore”
- Propane
- Electric service main panel for the Museum
- Xylene
- Shipping crate approximately 3 meters by 4 meters tagged “Tabut E Sakina”

# Category 4

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**I**t was after dinner and I was relaxing when my phone rang. It was a colleague from work “Turn on the weather news” she said, “looks like some bad weather is coming our way.” A large storm, possibly even a Category 3 Hurricane, was coming directly towards us and it should hit us in a couple of days, probably about Thursday.

Hurricanes did occur and we were prepared, but we knew from experience that this would bring disruptions to work. There would certainly be flooded roads and power cuts. Most people will not show up for work when the storm is due, heeding the advice from the government to remain indoors and limit travel. Likely after the storm there would be the usual mopping up of puddles in the offices and clearing the windblown debris that would be littering the front of the building. No one really minded doing this as it was a bit of variety in their daily routines.

The next day we did the usual walk around the building to make sure there was nothing obvious that could cause a problem during the storm. All the trees were trimmed well back from the building and power lines a few months ago. We had learned our lesson about trees and storms several years ago when one old tree had lost a branch that had smashed through the front glass doors of the building. Some of the staff started to prepare for the inevitable clean up by collecting all the mops and buckets they could find around the building and bringing these into the main office area, where most of the leaks were. Our preparations were complete; it was now just a matter of waiting until the storm passed.

Storms are sometimes unpredictable and this one hung off the coast for an additional twenty-four hours building strength and finally crossing the coast about 30 kilometers south of our building

on Friday night. Just prior to crossing the coast the Weather Bureau upgraded the storm to Category 4 and over the next six hours winds gusted to 260 kilometres per hour, the strongest ever recorded in this part of the country! It was terrifying.



The closer I got to the archives the worse the damage seemed to be

My house shook violently and the storm shutters blew off one of our bedroom windows showering glass across the room.

Fortunately no one was in that room at the time but it could have been serious as large fragments of glass were embedded deeply in the opposite wall. It was still raining at dawn when I went to check outside. In the early morning light I could see a scene of complete devastation. All the fences had been blown over and branches and sheets of roofing material covered the entire street. Even if I had been able to get my car out of our garage there was no clear way to drive it anywhere. Still my family was safe and, apart from the window, the damage was minimal.

I began to wonder what condition the archive would be in! I tried to phone the security company, which monitored the alarms in the archive, but of course the phone lines were down and the mobile phone network had failed under the large amount of calls. It was only a few kilometres to the archive from my house, so I pulled my bicycle from the garage and started to ride, dodging between the fallen branches and other debris. Crossing the bridge was very difficult as the floodwater was rushing over my knees when I walked my bicycle across. The closer I got the archive the worse the damage seemed to be. When I finally arrived at the archive I still wasn't prepared for what I saw.



The roof had been peeled back and what remained looked like a bird with a broken wing. One of the sidewalls had partially collapsed inwards and all the front glass had gone. I looked for the keys in my pocket and then realised I wouldn't need them. As I entered the building the first thing I saw was the pile of mops and buckets we had put out to clean up, just visible under some of the collapsed side wall. Picking through the debris I made my way to the back of the building where most of the collection was stored.



There was still more water pouring in through huge gaps in the ceiling

The first vault was a nightmare, all the shelving had fallen down and partially unwound tapes and discs covered the floor mixed with leaves and bits of smashed building rubble. There was also a truck tire lying on the floor, where had that come from? The other two vaults were in a similar condition - it looked like the entire collection had been affected to some extent.

I searched through the offices. Filing cabinets had been blown or knocked over and papers were scattered everywhere, building rubble had smashed several of the computers and those that were apparently undamaged sat in pools of water with still more water pouring in through huge gaps in the ceiling. The loudest sounds to be heard were ambulance sirens.

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**A. Describe the workplace culture with regard to disaster preparedness.**

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**B. Discuss the ways to integrate disaster preparedness into a workplace culture.**

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**C. Discuss if this disaster could have been better prepared for.**

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**D. Prepare a comprehensive disaster preparedness plan for this archive.**

**Activity 2 — Consider this from a personal health and safety point of view.**

**A. Discuss the actions of the manager, were his actions justified?**

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**B. Describe the health and safety controls that may be necessary during the recovery.**

**Activity 3 — Consider this from a disaster recovery point of view.**

**A. Describe the first steps needed in recovery from this disaster.**

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**B. Discuss what communication action is required so the recovery project may be achieved.**

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**C. Prepare a recovery plan. Include salvage of the collection, conservation treatments and the resources that may be necessary.**

# The Whoop Whoop Cultural Centre

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I love working at the Whoop Whoop Cultural Centre. I started to work here as an intern in my final year of college and have been here ever since. My classmates had been amazed at my decision to return to the centre after graduation, as it was very remote and did not offer anything in the way of a career. My friends had all sought work in the large museums and galleries and some even found positions overseas in very prestigious organisations. They just didn't understand the importance of the collection to the local people, or the nation.

The small and tremendously diverse collection attracted me. Almost every audio and video format from the past twenty years was in the collection, and this list was growing as new materials were donated. Every day was exciting. I could be working on something entirely different every day, which meant that the collection was better preserved and became more accessible.

Access was restricted at the Whoop Whoop, and each request had to be approved by the Cultural Officer. If I had not been there, access to the collection would have been unlikely. When I first arrived it was in a terrible state. There was no catalogue, and the collection was sitting in metal filing cabinets in an outer office with no climate control at all. Not even a fan! I was proud that many would be able to learn about their unique heritage through this collection as well as my work to organize it and make it accessible.

“If I had not been there, likely access to the collection would not have been possible”

One of the advantages of being in this remote location was the internet access, we had fast broadband access via satellite. We were so remote that we fell under the government's "Access For All" policy and our community had better access to the internet than

many people in the major cities! This had proven a major benefit to our collection.

I joined as many special interest groups as possible, covering every aspect of our collection and even some that were only slightly relevant. I didn't really know what a telecine was until months after I joined the list. The knowledge I gained from the discussion groups has been far more useful to me in my work than the one class on audiovisual materials at college.



The knowledge I gained from the discussion groups was far more useful than the one class on audiovisual materials at college

The disadvantage of the remote location was that everything had to be sent in or out by truck or by plane, adding a huge cost to anything heavy or bulky. Shipments could take weeks or even months to arrive. At times the township was cut off from both the main road and the airstrip by monsoon floodwaters. But the countryside was so beautiful I did not mind the occasional inconvenience.

The collection contained many recordings that were sacred. As an outsider I wasn't allowed to listen, touch, or even watch these. I had asked to be able to at least handle the objects to do a condition report on many occasions but the Cultural Officer had been firm in refusing my requests. The objects contained some of the spirit of the people and ceremonies that they had been performing, and as such the tape or film had gained special status as a sacred object. This was frustrating but I respected the situation.

I would train local volunteers on how to work with the collection. Frequently when a volunteer started to gain proficiency, a paying job opportunity would arise elsewhere and they would leave the Centre, usually they would even have to leave the community. Each time an experienced person left they took their collection knowledge with

them and I had to start again with a new person. Ideally a second paid position at the Centre would be funded so I could actually employ someone and get some stability, but the council was not in favour of this. Any spare money went to the hospital or on road repairs. I had tried for a government grant with all of the funding options offered but without success.

The problem was unusual. Because the collection could not be made freely accessible due to cultural restrictions, it was considered impossible to show how the money had been spent to the auditor's satisfaction. It was strange that the copyright laws made other collections, that had been successful in obtaining funds, equally as difficult to access!

**Activity 1 — Consider the scenario from a preservation point of view.**

**A. Discuss the idea of a collection being preserved if it is not freely accessible.**

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**B. Discuss ways that the collection in this scenario could be shown to have been preserved.**

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**C. Discuss the sustainability of the collection under the existing model.**

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**D. Describe a sustainability model that could be applied to this collection.**

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**E. Write a preservation plan for inaccessible sacred objects.**



## Activity 2 — Consider the issues of training.

**A. Discuss how a more effective training process could be developed.**

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**B. Describe the key components of a suitable training program.**

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**C. How can fast internet access assist the Whoop Whoop?**



# About Preservation Case Studies for Archive Management

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The authors have worked as lecturers and instructors teaching Archive Management for over two decades internationally. Frustrated with the material available, they have developed the Case Study method by which the knowledge can be applied in real world situations. Preservation Case Studies for Archive Management are specifically written to supply students with context to apply the technical knowledge. They are not designed to be a substitute for technical knowledge, rather it is designed as a companion to it and a framework for it. Most importantly they provide a method by which the knowledge can be applied in real world situations. All case studies are intentionally open ended, they can be used in multiple ways for different subjects and issues. The questions provided at the end of each case are intended as a place to start discussion.

[www.prestocentre.org/](http://www.prestocentre.org/)