Using a Survey Tool to Establish Preservation Priorities: Results from the Historical Folio Collection Survey at the Cushing/Whitney Medical Library, Yale University

Robin Featherstone
University of Western Ontario, rfeathe@uwo.ca

Sarah Burge
Yale University, sarah.burge@yale.edu

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Using a Survey Tool to Establish Preservation Priorities: Results from the Historical Folio Collection Survey at the Cushing/Whitney Medical Library, Yale University

Elinor Feathersome, National Library of Medicine Associate Fellow, 2008
Sarah Burge, Preservation Certification Librarian Cushing/Whitney Medical Library

Introduction to Preservation Surveys
A literature search revealed the considerable importance of assessment for preservation management (Brown, 2006; Gregory, 2007; Matthews, 1995; Starmer, McGough & Leverette, 2005; Voeks, 1999). It is clear that a critical component of the preservation process is the assessment of the condition of collections. In order to prioritize items for conservation treatment, a condition assessment is needed.

A preservation vocabulary was written collaboratively by preservation librarians working at Yale between January and March 2008. The vocabulary list contains terms for the recording of condition data and was developed to facilitate the collection of consistent information.

Fig. 4: The reverse sides were scanned and digitized for the Medical Historical Images Collection database (see Fig. 3).

Fig. 5: Survey data entry pages from the survey tool

Results
Survey data revealed vital information for determining preservation priorities and taking collection decisions.

- Estimated damage levels (Chart A):
  - Damage level (low): 38%
  - Damage level (moderate): 19%
  - Damage level (high): 2%

- Approximated value of damaged items relative to the entire collection (Chart B):
  - Very important: 38%
  - Significant: 19%
  - Low: 2%

- Source:
  - University Library
  - Government Library
  - Historical Society
  - Museum

- Significance:
  - Research: 38%
  - Teaching: 19%
  - Value: 2%

- Preservation implications:
  - Conservation: 38%
  - Preservation: 19%
  - Archival: 2%

- Condition:
  - Poor: 38%
  - Fair: 19%
  - Good: 2%

- Condition:
  - Poor: 38%
  - Fair: 19%
  - Good: 2%

- Condition:
  - Poor: 38%
  - Fair: 19%
  - Good: 2%

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