



DOING NOTHING NOT AN OPTION FOR COLLECTION STORAGE

Recent media reports implying Australian university librarians are destroying scholarly collections lack an appreciation of the scale and dynamic nature of today's academic collections. CAVAL Chief Executive Janette Wright says university libraries simply don't have the option to 'do nothing'.

The pressure for libraries to acquire more published materials together with the increasing demand for more student learning and collaborative spaces means they must react by re-housing and rationalising low-use print collections. There are several examples of off-site storage facilities which have been established to meet the need for libraries to re-house legacy print collections.

The largest of these is the CARM Centre, opened in Melbourne in 1996. The CARM Centre provides approximately 46,000 linear metres of environmentally-controlled, secure space capable of storing up to 7 million volumes in high density storage.

The CARM Centre was Australia's first purpose-built collaborative off-site library store, built by CAVAL, a university-owned consortium, for the shared collection of its member libraries. By sharing the costs of development and management, the CAVAL members benefit from economies of scale and the consolidation of services which support access and delivery to the collections.

For example, CAVAL has established a digitising bureau on-site to facilitate electronic access to items held in the storage facility. Such capabilities extend the value of shared collections beyond any one university library member's collections to the whole scholarly community.

In South Australia the three universities share a joint store, University Research Repository South Australia, which provides secure, high density accommodation for lesser used volumes transferred from the three university libraries. Currently each university retains ownership of materials deposited and there is no de-duplication.

In other parts of Australia there have been discussions regarding shared off-site storage facilities but apart from a facility in Canberra shared by the University of Sydney and ANU, there are as yet no coordinated outcomes or plans.

In addition there are several commercial storage providers in Australia. However these are generally not environmentally controlled and unable to provide the specialised discovery and access provisions commonly provided by libraries.

Research undertaken in the US and confirmed by modelling by CAVAL (presented at the 2011

CCA-EDUCAUSE conference in Sydney last month and online at www.caval.edu.au/research.html) shows a clear benefit of shared arrangements for off-site storage and management of legacy print collections). Paul Courant, in his article On the Cost of Keeping a Book in *The Idea of Order: Transforming Research Collections for 21st Century Scholarship* (www.clir.org/pubs/abstract/pub147abst.html) demonstrates a cost differential over the long term of five to one for shared off-site collections over housing library materials in on-campus libraries.

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Note:

In addition to off-site storage, CAVAL provides digitisation, copyright permissions, metadata, cataloguing and specialist processing services, RFID equipment, training and consultancy, and help desk support for library-specific software applications.

CAVAL - a unique network of specialised solutions to support your library.



CAVAL provides services designed to support and assist libraries' teaching, learning and research.

- Storage (CARM)
- Cataloguing & Metadata Creation
- Digitising
- Copyright Permissions Service
- Information Systems Support
- Training & Consultancy
- Sorting & Return (RFID) Systems

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