ALA Map and Geography Round Table

MAP COLLECTION SECURITY GUIDELINES

MAGERT Task Force on Library Security for Cartographic Resources

June 2010

Electronic Publication Series no.8

MAP COLLECTION SECURITY GUIDELINES

MAGERT Task Force on Library Security for Cartographic Resources
June 2010

I. Introduction

We live in a world where crime is reported daily on the front pages of newspapers and Web sites and seen each evening on the nightly news. It has been stated that after international drug trafficking the second largest category of crime is within the fine arts market. Such crime is not limited to the works of Picasso or Rubens but also includes those of Blaeu, Mercator, and Jefferson as well as nineteenth-century U.S. government documents. Now that we are in the 21st century we must realize that early 20th century materials are over 100 years old, out-of-print, and essentially irreplaceable without considerable investment. Maps in atlases and books are often very valuable and especially vulnerable as the removal of a map or two is not immediately apparent when the volume is returned; it is often difficult to know if a volume contains all of its constituent parts since few collections, if any, have the time or staff to inventory all of their maps and illustrations.

As librarians we have a responsibility to preserve the collections under our care and provide access to them in our institutional environments. Access to our collections has supported scholarship throughout the sciences, humanities, and social sciences and remains the key to intellectual freedom. We must create an environment where primary source materials are respected, handled carefully, and returned intact to the collection so that they might be studied again in the future. Institutions and librarians must reassess their collections and administrators must provide collections with an infrastructure and staffing that will allow appropriate access, preservation, and security. It is important that rare book collections, archives, and government document collections and their curators realize that thousands of valuable maps are contained in many volumes in their collections. Similarly, map collections and their curators must be more cognizant of the marketplace and the increasing prices of early maps and even early twentieth century road maps.

The following guidelines will allow librarians and curators to better assess their map collections, prepare security proposals for their administrations, and provide a more secure environment for their map collections.

II. Collections

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

- *Collection Processing*

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

- *Marking*

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

- *Cataloging and Finding Aids*

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

- *Collection Inventory*

Collections should be inventoried on a regular and ongoing basis. Inventories should be dated and retained to be used as a baseline for future inventory or for comparison should a loss or theft be suspected. Significant local materials should be inventoried more regularly; however, "spot check" inventories are often beneficial if only to identify misfiling.

- *Determining Value*

Value can be defined in a number of different ways: monetary, personal/emotional, research, or contextual. Cartographic materials may be determined to have high value because of their market value, age, physical characteristics, condition, and/or research value; an item that has a high value in one location may have a relatively low value elsewhere. Some items have comparatively high values, in particular monetary, regardless of location. These items can be tracked through dealer catalogs, reports of auction results, and tools such as *Antique Map Price Record* and *American Book Prices Current*. Be aware that new publications can be as rare or expensive as old publications. Also, remember that values are not static; items which may appear to be commonplace, including early 20th century U.S. federal government publications and highway maps, are aging, becoming less common, and increasing in value.

Although it may be useful to compile an estimation of collection value and the value of especially noteworthy items based upon inventory work, especially for insurance and fundraising purposes, at no time should a "shopping list" of holdings and associated values be compiled and distributed. Monetary values placed on collection items should not be discussed with readers or visitors.

High-value materials should be transferred out of vulnerable situations (open stacks) and into closed stacks or restricted access areas such as remote storage. Transfers should be made following clearly documented procedures, and all individuals and offices involved with a transfer should know where the impacted materials are at all times.

- *Copying and Scanning*

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

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

III. Facilities and Security

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

- *Physical Configuration*

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

- *Monitoring Access*

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

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

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

- *Keys, Keycards, and Passwords*

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

- *Locked Spaces*

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

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

IV. Staff Members

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

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

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

- *Staffing Levels and Numbers*

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

V. Readers

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

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

In many instances, historical cartographic collections and collections of early books with significant cartographic holdings will have closed stacks; readers will not be able to retrieve materials on their own. Access to cartographic collections should be completely moderated by a member of the staff who discusses with the reader the region needed and types of data desired.

When a map collection has open access, readers should not be allowed to carry any materials into the stacks area besides slips of paper for jotting down notes.

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

VI. Policies and Procedures

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

- *Open and Closed Stacks Collections*

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

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

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

- *Documenting Distribution of Keys and Passwords*

Paralleling degrees of physical access to the collection, keys and passwords should be distributed on an as-needed basis; not all employees need access to the entire collection. Records of key and password distribution should be kept and retained indefinitely. These records should include name and rank/status/position of employee, date of distribution, date of return, and circumstances or reasons for return or termination of access.

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

- *Changing Locks and Passwords*

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

- *Reader Access Policies*

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

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

- *Materials Usage*

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

- *Interlibrary Loan*

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

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

VII. Administering the Security Plan
The value of our collections, both monetarily and historically, continue to increase and our commitment to open access makes them especially vulnerable. Recognizing this vulnerability should allow us to plan a course of action that falls into place the moment an incident is verified. It is critical that an institution create a communications plan whereby all parties (administration, librarians, and staff) know how to react when a theft occurs. Most institutions have created a disaster plan and review it regularly; a similar process should include planning for an incident of theft.

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

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

VIII. Notifying the Community
The following Web sites and listservs are important communication devices that should be used to alert the map trade and library community of theft:

Missing and Stolen Maps Database - http://www.missingmaps.info/index.htm
Map History/History of Cartography - http://www.maphistory.info

- Thefts of Early Maps and Books - http://www.maphistory.info/thefts.html
- News About Map Thefts - http://www.maphistory.info/theftnews.html

MapHist - maphist@geo.uu.nl
Map Trade - maptrade@raremaps.com
Maps-L - maps-l@listserv.uga.edu
ExLibris-L - exlibris-l@listserv.indiana.edu

IX. Sources

Center, Clark, Jr. and Donnelly Lancaster. 2004. *Security in Special Collections*. SPEC Kit 284. Washington, DC: ACRL.

Goodbody, Margaret and Jennifer R. Evans. 2005. Protecting Access and Materials in Public Library Special Collections. Technical Services Quarterly 22(3): 19-28.

Guidelines for the Security of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Other Special Collections 2006. http://www.rbms.nd.edu/standards/security_guidelines.shtml

Guidelines on the Selection and Transfer of Materials from General Collections to Special Collections. American Library Association. 2006. http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/selectransfer.htm

Guidelines Regarding Thefts in Libraries 2003. http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/guidelinesregardingthefts.htm

Harvey, Miles. 2000. *Island of Lost Maps: A True Story of Cartographic Crime*. New York: Random House.

Joint Statement on Access to Original Research Materials 1994. http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/jointstatement.htm

Library Security Guidelines Document, June 7, 2001. http://www.ala.org/ala/lama/lamapublications/librarysecurity.htm

Research Libraries Collection Management Group: ALA MAGERT Midwinter San Antonio, January 2006. *base line* 27(2): 19.

Thefts of Early Maps and Books. Map History/History of Cartography. http://www.maphistory.info/thefts.html

Thomas, Mark, Amée Piscitelli, and Julia Rholes. 1994. Security and Preservation of the U.S. Congressional Serial Set. *Journal of Government Information* 21(4): 351-366.

Weessies, Kathleen. 2003. The Secret Inside Your Library's Atlases. *American Libraries* 34(9): 49-51.

X. Acknowledgements

In memory of friend and colleague Jan Dixon (1952 – 2009), Map Librarian, University of Arkansas, long-time MAGERT member and chair of the Task Force on Library Security for Cartographic Resources.