



NIGERIAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

CATALOGUING, CLASSIFICATION AND INDEXING SECTION

Papers Presented
at the

28th

Annual Seminar/Workshop

Theme:

**EMPOWERING INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS FOR CHANGES
IN INFORMATION DISSEMINATING IN THE ERA OF ICT**

Venue:

Kwara State Library Board, Opposite Central Bank of Nigeria, Ilorin

Date:

27th - 31st October, 2008

"Ilorin 2008"

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ILORIN 2008

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DISASTER PLANNING: RESPONSE AND RECOVERY IN CATALOGUING

BY

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DISASTER PLANNING: RESPONSE AND RECOVERY IN CATALOGUING

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The purpose of the library - be it manual or automated - is to collect, process, store, retrieve and disseminate information as well as facilitate easy retrieval to patrons. It is when it is able to satisfy all these five areas that one can say the library has achieved the aims and objectives of the institution it serves.

Automation makes materials easier for patrons to locate. It also provides better service to patrons by facilitating a multitude of tasks such as cataloguing, acquisition, circulation and reference. Planning for an automated system should be part of an overall long-range plan for the library. Careful planning for technology will ensure that the automated project is "sustainable", i.e. enhances the organization's ability to meet its service mission without disrupting the organizational stability of the institutions. (State Library and Archives of Florida 2005).

The cataloguing process is the heart of a library irrespective of the size or type. It is therefore imperative to plan and prevent disaster from happening in that unique section of the library. The library catalogue/OPAC is a pathfinder for users, and it aims to promote access and use of information to library clients. A situation where bibliographic records are not available to locate materials housed in the library would simply mean that a library does not exist.

Disaster plans/planning is an exercise that is common in advanced countries, due largely to their geographical locations which makes human and physical resources more prone to disasters than in African countries. Most libraries in Nigeria do not have a disaster plan, and where it does exist, it is most likely to be very obsolete. We make bold to hold this assertion due to lack of knowledge about the existence of one at the University of Ibadan, Kenneth Dike Library in spite of twenty (20) years in service.

This paper would attempt to emphasize the need for colleagues to draw up disaster plan for libraries especially in an automated system. It will also suggest a general disaster plan for a library with emphasis on cataloguing process.

Why a Disaster Plan?

Disaster is defined as a sudden “serious misfortune causing great suffering and damage; a complete failure” (Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture 2003). Disaster can be natural (flood, fire, earthquake tornadoes, cyclone storm or collapsed building) or man made (sabotage, power outage, theft, vandalism and carelessness on the part of staff). A plan must be made to safeguard and protect the resources in the library.

A disaster plan is a document which describes the procedures devised to prevent and prepare for disasters, and those proposed to respond to and recover from disaster when they occur. A comprehensive disaster plan consists of several independent but interrelated smaller plans.

Basic Elements of Preparing a Plan

- Plan must be prepared by a team rather than an individual.
- Disaster plan should be in writing, and should detail the responsibility of each individual in the team, the resources to be used, and the steps to be followed.
- The plan should be reviewed at regular intervals as well as when major changes are made to the system.
- The plan should be written to take into account several levels of disaster as, each emergency is a unique event.
- Devising procedures to respond to and recover from disasters.
- Conducting a risk analysis.
- The goal in disaster planning is to recover the materials that have value and plan for replacement of lost ones and resume services to users as soon as possible.
- The disaster plan should be in multiple working copies.
- Preventive measure against loss of materials.
- Emergency telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.
- Identification of existing preventive and preparedness procedures.

Disaster Preparedness

Disaster preparedness begins with a threat assessment and evolving some common preventive measures to avoid loss. Procedures for preparedness vary among organizations and could range from security, storage procedures, cleaning practices, through binding and fumigation operations to fire safety precautions.

Threat assessment

Often, you can avoid or minimize the damaged caused by a disaster by proactively examining the possible threats or risks to your library collection. Think about common disasters that may occur in your area. Water is the most common destructive force affecting libraries.

In earthquake prone areas for example, questions such as these should be asked: Are the shelves bolted and reinforced? What about the conditions of the library building, changes in the temperature and humidity that encourage the growth of mold and mildew should a disaster occur? What immediate actions could be taken to lessen the damage?

Prevention

Prevention is better than cure says the old adage, and this cliché does apply to activities in the library. When some preventive measures are applied in the management of library services, the resources will serve the users better. Such measures require that:

- Materials should be shelved at least six inches (“6in”) above the floor.
- No valuable materials should be stored in areas prone to flooding.
- An important preventive measure is electronic back up of digital data. Bibliographic records for catalogued materials in the library electronic files should be backed up regularly and duplicated off-site.
- Back-up power generation can be installed to give uninterruptible power supplies, especially on any mission-critical servers.
- Electronic shelf list should be saved on CD-ROMs, zip drives or external hard drives and stored away from the library building.
- Manual shelf lists must be up-to-date and comprehensive (i.e. ISBN, Accession numbers, Location holdings, Classification number(s) with other bibliographic details). For every record created a manual shelf list card must be kept and preserved for a long time, until the system is perfect and working well.

- Standardize your bibliographic records (i.e. in Machine – Readable Cataloguing format).
- Get your bibliographic records from utilities such as Library of Congress, The Library Corporation, Bibliofile or Online Computer Library Center if it can be accessed.
- Security is essential to prevent accidental or intentional damage to both data and equipment.
- Circulation records must be up-to-date (i.e. loans, withdrawn books record).
- Operational fire extinguisher should be placed in strategic positions.
- Staff should know what to do when disaster strikes.
- Editing of records regularly by head of Cataloguing is essential.

Factors that can bring about loss of record

- Lack of proper planning at the onset of automation.
- Politicizing of automation by the management.
- Lack of funds.
- Processing materials haphazardly.
- Shortage of skilled staff and absence of training to keep up-to-date.
- Lack of committed staff.
- Failure to back-up records regularly as and when due and not having duplicates off-site.
- Lack of proper supervision of work done by cataloguing staff.

Disaster Response

This section attempts to provide basic information regarding response to a disaster. A response must occur swiftly to minimize damage and to maximize recovery efforts. Disaster plan literature focuses mostly on effect of water on the resources and equipment, because water disaster is the commonest of all disasters. What follows will focus on required response to record loss.

The library's database is essential to its operations. If the computer is destroyed, it can be replaced in a matter of days, but if the data is destroyed, it can take years to

rebuild. Data loss can occur in a moment if anything awkward is done. This may come from different sources, namely power failure, virus attack, operating system error and mistakes from the operations of the system, or migration from an old software system to a new one.

A brief guide for immediate disaster response should provide answers to the following questions:

- Who is in charge?
- What is the extent of the disaster?
- What records are affected?
- How many records are affected?
- Which high priority materials are affected?
- How serious is the damage to the records/materials?
- Is the cause of the disaster being addressed?
- Have all relevant library staff been notified?
- What supplies, equipment and services will be needed?
- Will additional staff be drafted into the established team and will they require training? Who is doing this?
- What recovery methods are appropriate?
- How will service be restored and when? Who is in charge of this?
- Do you stop processing of new materials?

Disaster Recovery

The disaster recovery section contains necessary information about the techniques and methods that can be employed for recovering a variety of damaged resources. Planning back-ups and restoration of files is the most important step to protect data from accidental loss in the event of data deletion or hard disk failure. The back up copies can be used to restore lost or damaged data.

Libraries should back up their systems at least weekly, with the day's changes being backed up each day (incremental backup). As a minimum, three back ups should be maintained at all times – the current ones, the previous weeks and the week before that. In addition, these backups of data and programmes should be placed in long-term storage.

Back-ups must be tested to confirm that proper steps have been taken, to avoid redoing of records since the last backup if the system fails. Immediate steps must be taken to protect materials/records which have not been affected by the disaster. This will prevent additional damage. Where a system fails and back-ups are not properly prepared records will have to be reprocessed all over again.

Stock taking of Collections Using the Shelf list Records

Stock-taking is a thorough inventory process which identifies items for which no shelf list cards exist and also confirms the availability of such materials on the shelves. Shelf list is a complete record of all titles in a collection, arranged by call number as the library materials are found on the shelves. It also has the location of the materials, number of copies.

- (a) A material whose record is found in the shelf list catalogue is noted.
 - (b) For materials not found, a record is created.
 - (c) Those whose records are found in the shelf list catalogue tray, but are not physically present on the shelves are noted as "Missing".
- These shelf list records are checked against bibliographic utilities such as Library of Congress etc. to download data in MARC format for onward import to the system.
 - Where such facilities are not available, the found records are re-keyed into the system.
 - The missing records must be established by checking their details against the loan records in Circulation, books in bindery and the weeded or stolen ones. When confirmed, treat as above.
 - When the system is re-installed, backups should commence immediately and should be properly handled.

Types of Backups

In planning for a back-up strategy, it is important to choose an appropriate type or combination of different types of backups.

Normal Backups

When an administrator chooses to use a normal backup all selected files and folders are backed up. A normal backup is used as the first step of any backup plan. It is used with the combination of other backup types for planning backup strategy of an organization. Restoration from a normal backup is more efficient than other types of backups.

Incremental Backups

Incremental backups are back up files that are created or changed since the last normal or incremental backup. An incremental backup is the fastest backup process. Restoring data from an incremental back up requires the last normal back up and all subsequent incremental backups. They must be restored in the same order as they were created.

Differential Backups

Differential backups back up files that are created or changed since the last normal backup. The restoration of files from a differential backup is more efficient than that of an incremental backup.

Copy Backups

A copy backup copies all selected files and folders. It is generally not part of a planned scheduled backup.

Daily Backup

A daily back up backs up all selected files and folders that have changed during the day.

System Recovery

In the event of a system failure, the recovery of the system is difficult and tedious for administration. Recovery involves reinstallation of the operating system, mounting and cataloguing the backup tape, and then performing the full restoration.

Recommendation/Suggestions for Disaster Planning

- Have a proper planning in place for your automation project.
- A special automation project fund should be established.
- Have your backups tested regularly.
- Backups should not be stored in the computer room. At least one should be kept-off-site.
- Shelf lists must be comprehensive and current.
- Cataloguers should be knowledgeable about the application of computers to the process of cataloguing.
- Training and retraining of staff in the library is essential.

Conclusion

Disaster planning is becoming an essential component of the overall management plan for a library or archive. The importance of an effective disaster plan is regularly demonstrated in institutions which are strongly committed to their plans. A well thought out and presented plan is useless if it exists only as a document on a shelf.

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