Practical Book Repair for Circulating Collections

Connecting to Collections Care Webinar

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Book Repair *not* Conservation

- Not all steps are reversible
- No documentation
- No research
- No matching of materials such as leather, cloth or paper
- The goal is to extend the life of the book and access to its intellectual content, not to treat it like an artifact
Both are adhesive bound books
Assessing the damage

• Torn or detached pages?
• Tape?
• Boards secure but spine flapping?
• Torn head cap?
• Boards detached?
• Dirt? Mold?
Assess the book & it’s potential for repair

- Is the book case bound?
- Is the book sewn?
- Is the adhesive bound? If so, is there enough gutter to re-bind?
- Is it a heavy reference book?
- Is it in print or widely held?
Check in with the librarians
What can you do in house?

• How many staff hours do you have to devote to in-house repair?

• Do you have a budget for purchasing equipment and supplies?

• Do you have a dedicated workspace? And a place to store supplies?
Practical Categories of Repair

• Dry Cleaning

• Tip in: either with original pages, photocopies or ILL replacement pages (up to 10 pages per section)

• Page mending with heat set

• Tape removal

• Spine lap

• Head cap repair
Dry Cleaning

This video shows the basic technique for dry cleaning, the demo shows paper, but this technique works for cloth or leather as well.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zinsJ6F0Kuk

Supplies needed: soft brush, smoke off sponge, or soft white cosmetic sponges - the triangular ones are very good at getting into the gutter of books.

This is great for loose dirt and limited amounts of mold. Don’t spend too much time trying to clean a moldy book!
TIP IN

This is a nice video on how to repair typical damage to an adhesive bound book. This technique would also work on a loose page from a sewn book or pamphlet. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvTK8tUCcmA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvTK8tUCcmA)

Supplies needed: glue brush, glue (poly vinyl acetate preferred), Olfa or X-acto knife, cutting mat, ruler, weight, waste paper

You can build on this skill when it comes time to learn to re-case or make new cases for a book.
HEAT SET MEND

This is a short video that shows the application on a variety of tears in an old map. There is no audio.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3sK0K7jSAI

Supplies needed: heat set tissue (Filmoplast R), tacking iron (you can go pricey- Sealector or Hangar 9 model, or bargain- mini quilting iron from JoAnn Fabric) temperature needs to go to 170 degrees, scissors, silicone release paper, waste paper, bone folder, something to insulate the surface of your bench

This may seem like a simple skill, but there is a wide variety of tears, and you will develop finesse over time, especially if you work on maps and paper that has to fold. Once you’re a whiz at mending over folds, you can apply this skill to guarding damaged signatures in books.
Tape Removal

There are two different vintages of pressure sensitive tape on this title page.

Supplies needed: tacking iron, micro spatula, scissors, crepe eraser, blotter or paper towels, brush, methyl cellulose.
The boards on this book are securely attached but the thin cloth on the covers has split along the spine. The structure of the book is basically sound, and the needed fix is mostly cosmetic. Often, people will make a re-back mend, where they remove the original spine cloth, add new cloth over the spine of the text block and wrap flaps onto the inside of the boards. However, there is a much lower impact way to go- the SPINE LAP.

Supplies needed: micro spatula, medium weight Japanese tissue, PVA, brush, bone folder, waste paper, Mylar or polyethylene strips (you can make your own by cutting up Ziploc bags which are made of polyethylene), an ACE bandage or non-stick fabric such as non-fusible interfacing (from a fabric store)
Not So Practical Categories

• Re-sewing (it is really hard to get right, and then you have to line and make a new case or fit the original case back on)

• New case construction, many steps that take a lot of training and practice to get right.

• DFA- re-gluing doesn’t work unless you have a guillotine

Time to consider a box, or are you ready for a bigger in house workflow? Both?
Too much of a good intention...