Preservation Microfilming: A Guide for Librarians and Archivists by Lisa Fox, a review

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records apart from other records. The book is dense, but the author attempts to break up the question into logical chapter divisions. The internecine nature of his thesis renders these divisions largely arbitrary, however, serving mostly as stops along the way to his final goal. Exhaustive notes provide citations and further discussion. The selected bibliography is useful, especially for those interested in further examining the theoretic forerunners to whom he frequently refers in his discussion. The index would probably be of limited use, since for the most part general terms such as "theory" and "archival studies" are indexed. This is not a major drawback, though, since Livelton's work should be read through in order for one to appreciate his thesis. This is not a text that should be consulted as a reference.

A short appendix focusing on legal acts for access to public records in the United States and Canada serves as a "real-world" example of how definitions can affect the reality of the archival world. Both the U.S. Freedom of Information Act and the Canadian Access to Information Act ensure access to public information as a right, rather than as a privilege. The Canadian law grants this right to a "public" which refers only to citizens and permanent residents, while the American act grants it to "virtually anyone and everyone." This difference serves to underscore Livelton's point, articulated throughout the work, that definitions of terms are vitally important and in fact underlie decisions that affect everyone, both in terms of archival records and in the larger context of public life.—Beth M. Russell, Texas A & M University

Fox, Lisa L. Preservation Microfilming: A Guide for Librarians and Archivists, 2nd ed. Chicago: American Library Association, 1996. 424 pp. $70. ISBN 0-8389-0653-2. This second edition of Preservation Microfilming appears nine years after the first, edited by Nancy Gwinn. As Pamela D arling notes in her introduction, the fields of preservation and microfilming have changed dramatically in those years. Standards, practices, bibliographic control, and techniques have advanced, and the amount of microfilming activity has greatly increased. Most important, however, is the preservation community's change in philosophy.

Developments that D arling emphasizes are the emergence of a nationwide strategy for brittle books; heightened awareness of preservation problems; the impact of automation; increased levels of international programs and coordination; technical advances; improved institutional practices and a greater reliance on contractual filming; and cooperative programs. D arling also touches briefly on digitization, which requires many of the same considerations as microfilming.

Preservation Microfilming is divided into six chapters with six well developed appendices. In "Overview of Administrative Decisions," the late Carolyn H arris surveys the processes involved with creating a microfilming program and discusses ANSI (American National Standards Institute) and AIIM
For Harris, the primary reason for filming is paper deterioration (embrittlement), and she compares the cost as well as the pros and cons of physical treatment, photocopying, digitization, and microfilming. She describes the components of a well-rounded preservation program (including education about conservation, binding, rehousing, and reformatting), and the relationships between these that lead to treatment decisions. Brittle materials are usually best filmed, but Harris warns about adopting only one approach. Key to the success of any effective preservation program are “needs assessment” (which collections, how many items to treat, etc.) and “planning” (which includes issues of responsibility, in-house versus contract, specifications, bibliographic control, etc.), both of which Harris covers in detail.

In “Selection of Materials,” Wesley Boomgaarden examines what may be the critical component in the success or failure of a program. Selection is a complex issue involving the value of items in a collection, their usage and users, and other variables. It must be guided by broad criteria in order for one to determine which among the many kinds of texts and images on embrittled paper should be considered for filming. Boomgaarden points to materials that are not suitable, including items with high bibliographic/intrinsic value (especially if damage is likely to occur during filming), off-prints from already-filmed serial runs, severely discolored materials, and anything else that has already been filmed.

After selection, “Production Planning and Preparation of Materials” can begin. Ann Swartzell’s chapter leads the reader through four critical steps that will help ensure a smooth process and high-quality result: familiarity with standards (ANSI & AIIM, RLG), an understanding of the process, good communications with the vendor, and analysis of the intended uses of the film.

Since the first edition of Preservation Microfilming, the number of in-house filming operations has declined and the number of commercial vendors has increased. Swartzell provides a checklist for screening vendors, reviews the contracting process, and mentions points to watch for, such as standards and the storage of master negatives. For those on a limited budget, Swartzell suggests the option of working with a commercial micropublisher such as UMI. For the remainder of her chapter, Swartzell reviews in detail how an in-house microfilming project should be administered. This section is essential reading. In-house errors will prove costly in lost time or money, especially if items need to be re-filmed.

“Microfilming Standards and Practices” by Peter Scott is an excellent overview of the filming process from a technical standpoint. Scott describes how standards were developed, by whom, and what their function is. He explains in detail the physical makeup of the different available types and formats of film along with their benefits and drawbacks. In his discussion of the “film production process,” Scott describes reduction ratio, image orientation, skew, image legibility (resolution, density, and
quality index), and processing, he provides an “inspection station checklist,” and he reviews the conditions under which masters must be stored.

Jeffrey Heynen’s “Preservation Microfilming and Bibliographic Control” begins with the statement that after reading the previous chapters the reader needs only to learn about costs. This might be true if the only goal of microfilming was to ensure that the materials remained available into the future. However, if the goal of microfilming is to ensure “widespread and enduring” access, then this requires bibliographic control of what, ultimately, will be the copy of record for that title. Others must be able to identify your film as the exact replacement for their hard copy. Unnecessary duplication of titles is costly. Heynen shows how an increasingly comprehensive union catalog has been built and delves into the specifics of using MARC to catalog film records.

The final chapter, by Patricia McClung, deals with calculating and controlling costs. The purposes of this chapter are to “provide a framework for estimating and analyzing the costs of preservation microfilming and to suggest ways to reduce and control costs.” Given the number of variables that impact the filming of a title, it is often difficult to arrive at a reliable cost estimate. McClung organizes the variables into four categories: labor, supplies and equipment, contract services, and management and overhead.

To help the reader understand what is involved, McClung breaks down the tasks related to filming to a sobering extreme, illustrating with numerous real-world examples from actual projects. This detail will be essential for those involved with grant-funded programs where these figures must be provided in advance.

Six appendices—Preservation Microfilming: Standards, Specifications, and Guidelines; Service Providers; Preservation Options; Target Sequences; ARL Guidelines for Bibliographic Records; Worksheet for Estimating Project Costs—and a glossary conclude the book.

Preservation Microfilming is an excellent introduction to this subject and complements the RLG Archives Microfilming Manual and Preservation Microfilming Handbook, which are much more “hands-on.” The text also applies directly to organizing and carrying through a scanning project. While the technology is different, many of the theories and much of the work are similar, as comparison with Anne Kenney and Steven Chapman’s Digital Imaging for Libraries and Archives will show.

While there are currently no large-scale, ongoing, production scanning projects, anyone contemplating one would be well served by reading Preservation Microfilming. For a carefully thought-out, balanced introduction to issues that must be resolved, this text is invaluable.—Peter Verheyen, Syracuse University.