



IFLA International Newspaper Conference

**“Newspaper Digitization and Preservation.
New prospects.
Stakeholders, Practices, Users and Business Models”**

**11-13 April 2012
BnF, Paris**

With the support of:





Prepare to digitize - BnF experience

Philippe Vallas
Conservation Department
Bibliothèque nationale de France

Schedule

- Introduction
- Physical preparation of documents as an indispensable prerequisite
- Preparation techniques, their development
- Durations and costs
- Conclusions and reflections

introduction

- Physical preparation of collections is a fundamental prerequisite for newspaper digitization
- It is mainly true for retrospective programs
- Huge influence on digitization rate
- BnF has a long experience of preparation, begun with microfilm programs
- Preparation protocols progressively improved



Physical preparation is an indispensable prerequisite /1

- French press collections which should be digitized first are those from the Third Republic (1870-1940)
- That « Golden Age » for press is a « Dark Age » for paper
- Needs for press preservation are far greater than means
- Preservation conditions remain globally unsatisfactory
- In spite of increased means for the 30 last years, most press collections are still in bad condition and couldn't be communicated to readers.
- **... therefore it is impossible to digitize them without physical preparation**

Physical preparation is an indispensable prerequisite /2



Physical preparation is an indispensable prerequisite /3



IFLA International Newspaper Conference
Bibliothèque nationale de France
11-13 April 2012

Preparation techniques and their development

- Preparation techniques have been progressively improved in a way of better efficiency and productivity
- The only goal is to allow or make easier a good quality digitization thanks to a minimal physical intervention
- Physical preparation is not restoration
- Search for productivity but respect for physical integrity of the document



IFLA International Newspaper Conference

Bibliothèque nationale de France

11-13 April 2012

Description of techniques/1

- Flattening of the leaves under hot pressure



Description of techniques/2

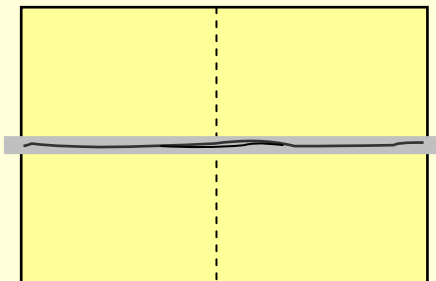
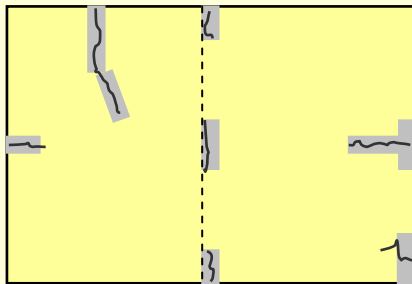
Disbinding of press volumes



Description of techniques/3

Repairs :

- by thermo- lining with Filmoplast®
- usually limited to torn places



IFLA International Newspaper Conference

Bibliothèque nationale de France

11-13 April 2012

Description of techniques /4

- Full lining on the back if tears are numerous



Durations and costs

- **Assessed by an intervention protocol** which summarizes the long BnF experience
- **Main cost : manpower** (90% of the total) despite the productivity savings
 - bound volumes : 1 hour at least per volume, 4 hours minimum if they have to be disbound
 - boxes (or bundles) : 4 to 7 hours per box (rough average assessment)
- **Cost increase of about 0,30 € per view** (or 30% in comparison to the cost of digitization plus OCR)
- That is a bearable investment for a middle-capacity workshop
- **But the investment must be very heavy to build a mass-capacity workshop**

Conclusions/reflections

- Physical preparation is a basic but underestimated parameter for press digitization
- Cost quite heavy, and increasing for mass digitization
- Necessity of a very reliable surrogate medium : COM microfilm produced from digitization for long-lasting conservation ?
- **How to preserve original newspaper collections ?**
 - The only efficient techniques are low temperature/ low oxygen storage; and deacidification (but only in préventive use)
 - If means are insufficient, by preserving only samples ? (only with a reliable and long-lasting surrogate medium)

Aknowledgements

- Thierry Aubry
- Jean-Luc Blancard
- Isabelle Bonnard
- Alain Lefebvre