

TRENDS IN PRESERVATION ACTIVITIES

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The recently issued *ARL Preservation Statistics 1995-96* provides information on the level of preservation efforts in U.S. and Canadian research libraries and on the key organizational, functional, and fiscal components that characterize preservation programs.

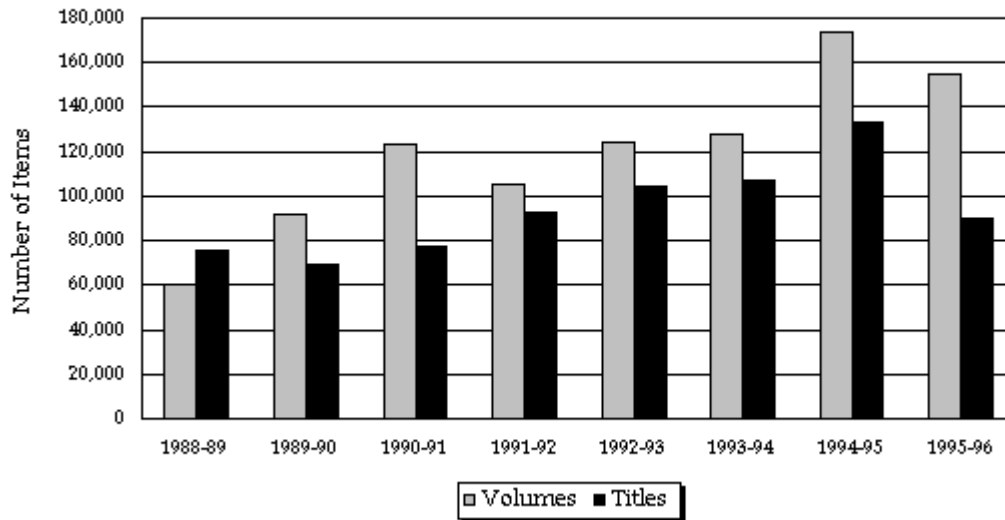
Among the significant developments that took place in research libraries in the 1980s was the emergence of preservation programs, configured as distinct administrative units, separately staffed, funded, and administered. Since 1987-88, the number of programs managed by a preservation administrator has grown irregularly from 66 to around 80 in more recent years. The data offer persuasive evidence that preservation programs have become a standard unit in research libraries although there has not been an increase in the number of new programs established. Starting in 1994-95, a preservation administrator is defined as one who "spends at least 25% of his or her time managing a partial or comprehensive preservation program."

A fluctuating growth in preservation expenditures and staffing across the ARL membership accompanied the development of preservation programs. Since 1993, preservation expenditures have begun to level off and 1995-96 data indicate for the first time a slight decline. Preservation expenditures for ARL's 116 reporting member libraries as a whole were \$77,069,334, about two million less than the previous year's expenditures. Total preservation staff, as well as conservation activities, generally declined. Only Level 2 and 3 (intermediate and major) contract conservation treatment numbers increased, whereas all indicators of microfilming activity (titles, volumes, and exposures) declined in 1995-96.

Availability of external funds continues to play a critical role in preservation activities. In 1988, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) began a multi-year, expanded cooperative preservation microfilming program. Since then, ARL libraries have participated extensively in that program. University libraries in the aggregate reported that special grants from external sources accounted for about 11% of the total preservation expenditures. Grant funds were expended predominantly on preservation microfilming projects. The accompanying chart highlights the trend of the last eight years and shows an important decline in microfilming activities in the most recent year.

The *ARL Preservation Statistics 1995-96* is available for \$35 to member libraries and \$65 to nonmembers (plus \$6 shipping and handling per publication). Please contact ARL Publications, Department #0692, Washington, DC 20073-0692; (202) 296-2296; or email pubs@arl.org.

Production of Preservation Microfilm Masters



Source: *ARL Preservation Statistics, 1995-96*

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