

# PAC Centre Annual Report 2019-2020

## PAC Centre (hosting institution, country and contact information)

PAC Centre North America: Library of Congress, USA, [https://loc.gov/preservation /  
preserve@loc.gov](https://loc.gov/preservation/preserve@loc.gov)

## International Cooperation (highlight activities and work the PAC Centre has done in the international preservation and conservation network and where your PAC Centre has provided support on an international level)

The Cultural Heritage Coordinating Committee (CHCC) is a United States Government Interagency that addressed a variety of issues in cultural heritage preservation, including protection during armed conflict and natural disaster, looting and trafficking, and preservation and conservation. The Library of Congress participates in CHCC and was involved in developing the concept note and mission statement for a new CHCC Preservation Working Group, which was approved in May 2019, and as PAC Centre North America (PAC-NA), helps to fulfill the CHCC's charge to "consult with governmental and nongovernmental organizations...on efforts to protect and preserve international cultural property." (Public Law No: 114-151 Sec. 2 (3))

Throughout 2019-20 the CHCC PWG developed its charter and program statement, and convened interagency panels to monitor and support response to natural disasters. In 2019-20, this included response to a Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas, and severe storms that affected many coastal regions in October 2019. PAC Centre North America contacted PAC members in the Caribbean and coordinated information sharing and crisis mapping projects among CHCC and PAC partners to guide response efforts.

The Library of Congress maintains a network of Overseas Offices (OVOP) that acquire materials for the Library that are only available in-region. Newspapers and legal gazettes are a major component of this collecting, approximately 2 million pages per year. In 2019-20 PAC-NA completed a major pilot project on digitization of non-American and non-English language newspapers in multiple scripts and languages. This pilot verified that Federal Agencies Digitization Guidelines Initiative (FADGI: <http://www.digitizationguidelines.gov/>) 3-star (or higher) digitization could be achieved at scale across all scripts and languages, using JPEG2000 with accompanying METS-ALTO metadata.

PAC-NA brought a portable multispectral imaging system to the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin, Ireland to image eleven (11) historic medieval Irish manuscripts, all on parchment, spanning the 6th – 16th centuries. In an ongoing collaboration with the University College Cork, PAC-NA will be using this data to render faded and obscured text that has been unreadable for centuries, to look at how the books were originally made and written, and to combine this information with scholarly historical context to provide a deeper understanding of these significant materials.

PAC-NA is participating in an interagency study on safety practices for libraries, archives, and museums. Convened by the IMLS and OCLC, and called Reopening Archives, Libraries and Museums (REALM: <https://www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/COVID-19-research-project.html>), the project engages a broad group of stakeholders to work with scientists at the Battelle Memorial Institute. PAC-NA is participating in the Scientific Working Group that will review the literature and support laboratory testing to develop safe practices for library operations.

## Local Cooperation (highlight activities and work your PAC Centre has done in the local preservation and conservation network and where your PAC Centre has provided support on a local level)

PAC-NA maintains an active presence in domestic emergency response for natural disasters through Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) Heritage Emergency National Task Force (HENTF). In December 2019, staff traveled to San Juan, Puerto Rico and conducted assessments at La Casa del Libro, a museum dedicated to the history and artistry of the printed word. They examined and wrote condition reports on nearly 90 objects, mostly books and bound manuscripts, from the 15th through the 17th centuries as well as a number of artists books from the 20th century printed and bound by Puerto Rican artists. The materials were all held in the museum during hurricane Maria in 2017, and it was feared the materials were damaged when a window in the museum's storage area was breached by the storm. The detailed reports of some of the museum's most significant items will assist La Casa del Libro in applying for future funding for storage improvements and treatment.

The "Assessing the National Collections" project, supported by a \$540,000 gift from the Mellon foundation, continues work on a comparative condition study of identical books held in the Library and five partner libraries in different US climate regions. The project involves condition assessment and scientific analysis using the distinctive capabilities of PAC-NA's Research and Testing Division. The results of this work provide crucial foundational data to guide cooperative print archiving projects nationwide. A website has been established to share information (<https://nationalbookcollection.org/overview>)

PAC-NA staff serve on several committees and working groups related to "shared print archives" and cooperative print preservation efforts. These include the HathiTrust Shared Print Advisory Committee, the Partnership for Shared Book Collections Risk Working Group, and the OCLC MARC 583 and Shared Print Metadata Advisory Committee.

**Workshops/trainings/events** (what workshops/trainings/events has the PAC Centre organised? Which workshops/trainings/events did the PAC Centre participate in? both on international and national level)

Although PAC-NA could not host the tours and public events that are usually scheduled for Preservation Week this year, the Library held an online series of webinars in its Topics in Preservation series aimed at a professional audience — librarians, archivists and museum staff. Each webinar drew more than 500 attendees from across every U.S. time zone in the U.S. as well as international participants. The webinars are posted online (<https://www.loc.gov/preservation/outreach/tops/index.html>) and include:

- Keeping it Cool: Designing the Library's New Gutenberg Bible Display Case
- Acquiring and Developing an Offsite High Density Collections Storage Facility
- Assessing the Condition of the United States National Collection
- Environment, Housing & Building Materials Testing to Protect our Collections
- Would You Like to Save Your Game?

Staff from PAC-NA were involved in a major conference and series of workshops for the APOYOnline 30th Anniversary Conference and Workshop in Heritage Preservation. APOYO is the regional professional association for preservation and conservation in South America, and an important venue for connecting experts and sharing knowledge in this hemisphere. Topics included networking and communication, preventive conservation and risk management, professional development and education, and digitization and digital preservation. The Library provided expertise on both general and special collections conservation, preservation support for digital projects, and the FADGI guidelines.

PAC-NA continues to offer educational opportunities to a diverse group of students and professionals at various career stages. Partnerships with the Hispanic American Colleges and Universities (HACU) and the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Library Alliance (HBCU-LA) as well as the Library's own Junior Fellows program placed college students in PAC-NA offices for internships. Pre- and post-program conservation students affiliated with the Association of North American Graduate Programs in Conservation (ANAGPIC) completed required residency periods under the supervision of senior conservators. American Chemical Society (ACS) SEED program and the BASIS project provided high-school students with opportunities to work on projects alongside PAC-NA's scientific staff and graduate and post-doctoral fellows working on heritage science topics.

#### **Involvement of the PAC Centre with the IFLA Initiatives (i.e. the Risk Register/FAQ )**

PAC-NA created FAQ documents for iron gall ink, collection reproduction for preservation, and oversized materials. PAC-NA also reviewed and provided editorial suggestions on the full set of compiled FAQs.

The PAC-NA Director started participation in the Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee and the PAC-NA Education and Outreach Specialist joined the Adapting Standards working group.

#### **New standards/guidelines/best practices which should be shared with the community**

PAC-NA produce the Digital Imaging Workflow for Treatment Documentation (iDoc: <https://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/ImageDoc/index.html>) describing the workflow used to create digital documentation for conservation. The system described in this document is specific to the setup and equipment in the Library's Conservation Division but the procedures in the manual may be adapted for use in other conservation imaging studios. The manual is a step-by-step guide used by approximately 40 conservators, preservation specialists, and technicians with a wide range of digital image documentation skill levels and experiences. Created by an internal committee within the Conservation Division, with assistance from outside experts, the manual follows the principles in The AIC Guide to Digital Photography and Conservation Documentation (<https://www.culturalheritage.org/publications/books-periodicals/the-aic-guide>) and abides by the AIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice (<https://www.culturalheritage.org/about-conservation/code-of-ethics>)

The Book and Paper Group Wiki is a popular and well-supported publication of the American Institute for Conservation, serving an audience of practicing conservators and preservation professionals. A PAC-NA staff member serves as one of the coordinators of this resource and has helped a total of 37 book and paper conservators from across the United States and the world to include BPG Wiki as part of their work-from-home plans. They updated dozens of pages across the wiki, adding treatment tips, videos, descriptions of binding styles, images of common and uncommon tools, and lists of essential readings. Among the contributors are six PAC-NA members who added information regarding imaging and digitization workflows, translation of conservation terms into Spanish, paper bookbinding, reformatting bibliographies, book decoration, and circulating collections treatment. This new section of the wiki will have resources from Harvard University, Northwestern University, and the Library's own Collections Conservation Manual. As part of the same project, two conservation interns and the Harper-Inglis Fellow at PAC-NA have taken this opportunity to share their research and experience with different bookbinding types. Topics covered include parchment book bindings with descriptions of different binding styles and decoration techniques and a new bibliography; the conservation of scrapbooks with an updated bibliography and added text that guides conservators and curators through their options when they

are faced with preserving and digitizing these complex objects; and book decoration with added references, an updated list of terms, and added images and links to online databases.

PAC-NA maintains and regularly updates a variety of specifications and guidance documents. Of particular note are the Preservation Supply Specifications (<https://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/specifications/index.html>) and the Recommended Formats Statements (<https://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs/index.html>) for guidance on collection formats preferred for long term preservation.

**Any other comments**