Trial by fire, water, and soot:
Kansas State University's collection disaster plan dissected and what you can learn from our disaster

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Goals of the session

• Review components of a collection disaster plan
• Discuss best practices for the plan and how it was applied in practice
• Learn questions to ask to begin collection disaster planning conversations in your institution
Reasons for a collection disaster plan

1. Your building has a roof
2. Your building has indoor plumbing
3. Your building has electricity
4. Your building has heating and/or cooling
5. You live in the great state of <insert your state name> that has weather
Overview of session

• Brief "tour" of our disaster (10 minutes)
• Elements of a collection disaster plan (10 minutes)
• Assessment of the K-State Libraries collection disaster plan (15 minutes)
• Where we are now (4-5 months into the disaster) (5 minutes)
• Questions and answers (10 minutes)
Terminology

• Collection disaster plan
• Emergency response plan
• Digital disaster plan
Touring our disaster: Just the facts

- On May 22, 2018, Kansas State University's Hale Library experienced an accidental roof fire during a project re-roofing a section of existing roof.
- The Manhattan Fire Department and the other responding departments applied hundreds of thousands of gallons of water to the roof.
Touring our disaster: Just the facts

• Hale Library is the main library at K-State
• At the time of the fire, Hale Library contained over 1.5 million items
• Hale Library is roughly 550,000 square feet of space
• Soot on all floors of Hale
  – Varied per floor and area
  – Worst on 4th floor (including Stack G)
Touring our disaster: Just the facts

• Water from 4th floor to the basement
  – 1927 historic Farrell section the worst
  – Water ran down stairwells
  – Water traveled down walls, pipes, lighting, through holes in concrete, under doors, etc.
Touring our disaster: Just the facts

• In addition to library collections and services, Hale also housed
  – Information Technology Assistance Center (iTAC), centralized information technology support for students, faculty, and staff
  – University's Data Center (i.e. servers, telecommunications)
  – Athletic Learning Center which provided tutoring for student athletes
Touring our disaster: Just the facts

- The event displaced over 127 staff plus student employees from the Libraries, campus Information Technology, and the Athletic Learning Center
- Hale Library staff now located in at least 8 different campus buildings
SELECT PHOTOGRAPHS: INITIAL DAMAGE
Elements of a collection disaster plan

• Connecting to Collections: Writing a Disaster Response Plan -
  https://www.connectingtocollections.org/archiveresponseplan/

• California Preservation Program -

• Council of State Archivists (COSA) original site for Pocket plan-

• American Institute of Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) -
  https://www.conservation-us.org/emergencies#.W88dE0tKiUk
Usage of plan before fire

• Repeat plumbing leaks (April and May 2018)
• Larger leak involving HVAC on roof not being drained properly going into winter
• Multiple small leaks, a larger localized leak due to faulty fire suppression system, issue at a branch
  – Mold outbreak in 2010 at Weigel branch
Annual collection disaster training

• With our history of water leaks, repeat annual training was essential
  – Examples of annual training
    • Masters of Disaster
    • Visits to departments, branches

• Speed and practice saved us in the past
As Hale fire unfolded

• Called both Belfor and Polygon where K-State was pre-registered

• Kathryn contacted the National Heritage Responders, 24-hour hotline for cultural institutions disaster advise (libraries, museums, historical societies) who put us in touch with other experts via email

• Put together an administrative team with representatives of library, IT, and university cabinet
Assessment of our plan

• What worked well
• What worked okay
• What was missing
• Limitations of plan
• Surprises
What worked well

• *Having a plan and staff awareness of plan*

• Being able to move into action quicker as a result of the plan

• *Pre-registration with recovery companies*

• Existing relationships with campus partners (Facilities, iTAC, Data Center, University Chief Financial Officer, etc.)
What worked okay

• Business continuity plan (contingency services)
  – Temporary and/or new service desks
  – Circulation (returns, renewals, etc.)
  – Interlibrary Loan and Annex retrievals
  – Furniture, fixtures, and computers
  – Short-term administrative leave
What was missing

• Business continuity plan was very broad and we needed more detail on:
  – Handling new receipts, especially current periodicals
  – Supplies and equipment, etc.

• Note: Maximum flexibility in your plan is essential
Limitations of plan

• Scale

• Who are the decision makers?

• Use of Collection Disaster Team members
  – Team members trained in small-scale collection disaster response
  – Team members did not have financial authority
  – Disaster involved much more than collections
Limitations of plan

• How do you communicate without power, alternate phone numbers, non-work emails, and campus data hub being offline?

• We found we needed to have someone dedicated to insurance matters beyond the University's Risk Manager
Surprises

- Challenges returning to normal operations
- Jealousy
- Mental, physical, spiritual disaster toll
- Collections disaster plan ≠ Put back plan
K-State specific challenges

• Disaster was days before Memorial Day holiday
• Delays returning building back in K-State control and the fire investigation
• K-State Department of Environmental Health & Safety delayed release until air quality determined safe
• Challenges in who could initially return to building
K-State specific challenges

- No electricity (and no lighting)
- Compact shelving ran on electricity
  - Ended up pulling chains to move
  - Backup battery packs failed
- Equipment (boxes, pallets, tape, markers, etc.)
- No elevators initially, no pallet sized doors, no conditioning on building and a very hot May
K-State specific challenges

• Had K-State Libraries orange vests and Public Safety sent hard hats and galoshes but many disappeared
• Initially required to wear plastic gloves and masks
K-State specific challenges

• Needed collections mapped in the building (locations, number of shelves, type of material, etc.)
  – Ended up marking items to be expedited for cleaning

• Limited available conditioned storage (heated and cooled)
  – University owned empty Executive Court building
Take aways

• Flexibility

• Good communication is not a one-time thing (before, during, after)

• Some pieces of the larger emergency management plan and/or collection disaster plan might not apply in any given situation
Take aways

• *Plan for this instead of thinking this will never happen at my institution*

• It takes time to make a collection disaster plan, but it made all the difference for us
SELECT PHOTOGRAPHS: RECOVERY IN PROGRESS
Where we are now

• Shifted from pack out to cleaning focus
• Began determining collection cleaning priorities
• Identified more conditioned space
• Everyone now located in over 8 different spaces on and off campus
• Work changed
  – Setting up services again (reserves, ILL, reference, circulation)
Where we are now

• Some work "temporarily" ceased and/or reduced
  – Sorting
  – Digitization
  – Processing of archival materials
  – Reduced cataloging of new print
  – No lending, all borrowing in interlibrary loan
  – Preservation Lab activities
Where we are now

- Some individuals "temporarily" re-assigned
  - Major resources moved to ingesting expedited and cleaned items previously identified for Annex
  - New tasks sorting cleaned items, unboxing, etc.
  - Need for more staffing in Interlibrary Loan

- Re-alignment priorities
Moving forward

• Like-for-like planning with architects
• Surveying faculty, staff, students for library of the future and conducting focus groups
• Starting with project with OCLC GreenGlass
References

• Hale Library blog, http://blogs.k-state.edu/hale/

• KCHERN, https://kansaschern.wordpress.com/


http://hdl.handle.net/2097/39224
References

• National disaster restoration companies

• National Heritage Responders disaster assistance hotline, (202) 661-8068
  https://www.conservation-us.org/emergencies#.W88dE0tKiUk
References

• Talbot, K. (2014). Know your risks: Preventing disasters! Kansas Museum Association Conference

http://hdl.handle.net/2097/39224
Photo credits

• Thanks to K-State Foundation, Merry Bower, Mike Haddock, and Kathryn Talbot for the various photos of Hale Library and additional storage sites
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Presentation

http://hdl.handle.net/2097/39227

• Link includes Word collection disaster plan samples you can modify and make your own