

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

KLA/MPLA Annual Conference  
October 26, 2018, Wichita, KS  
Michelle Turvey-Welch and Kathryn Talbot







# 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

















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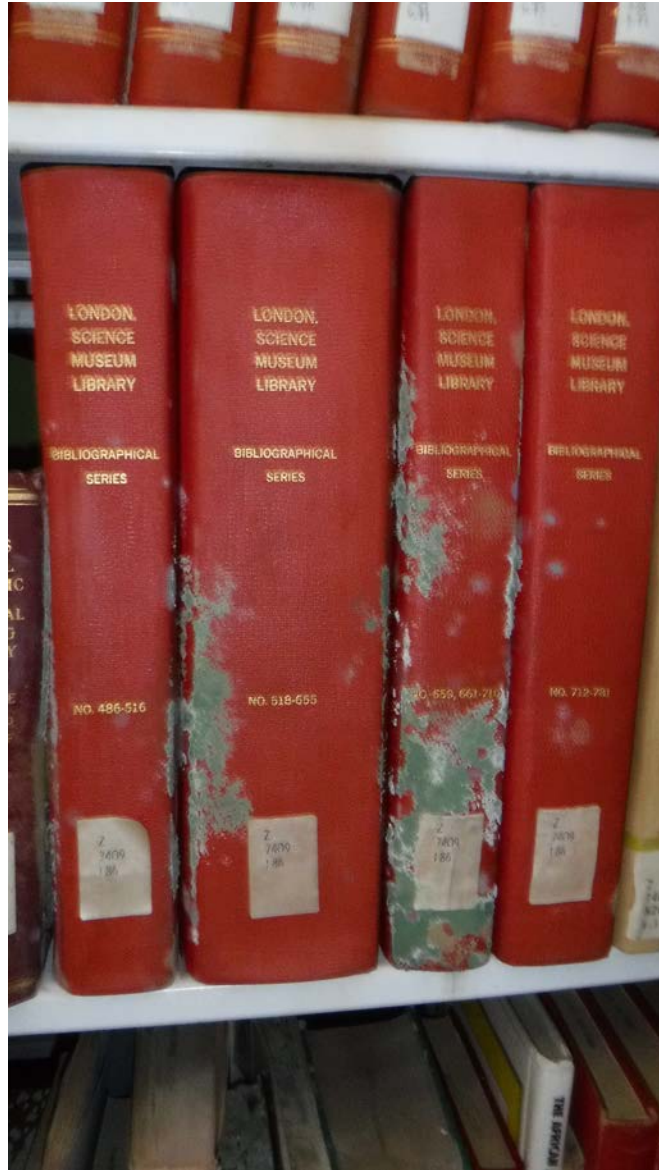
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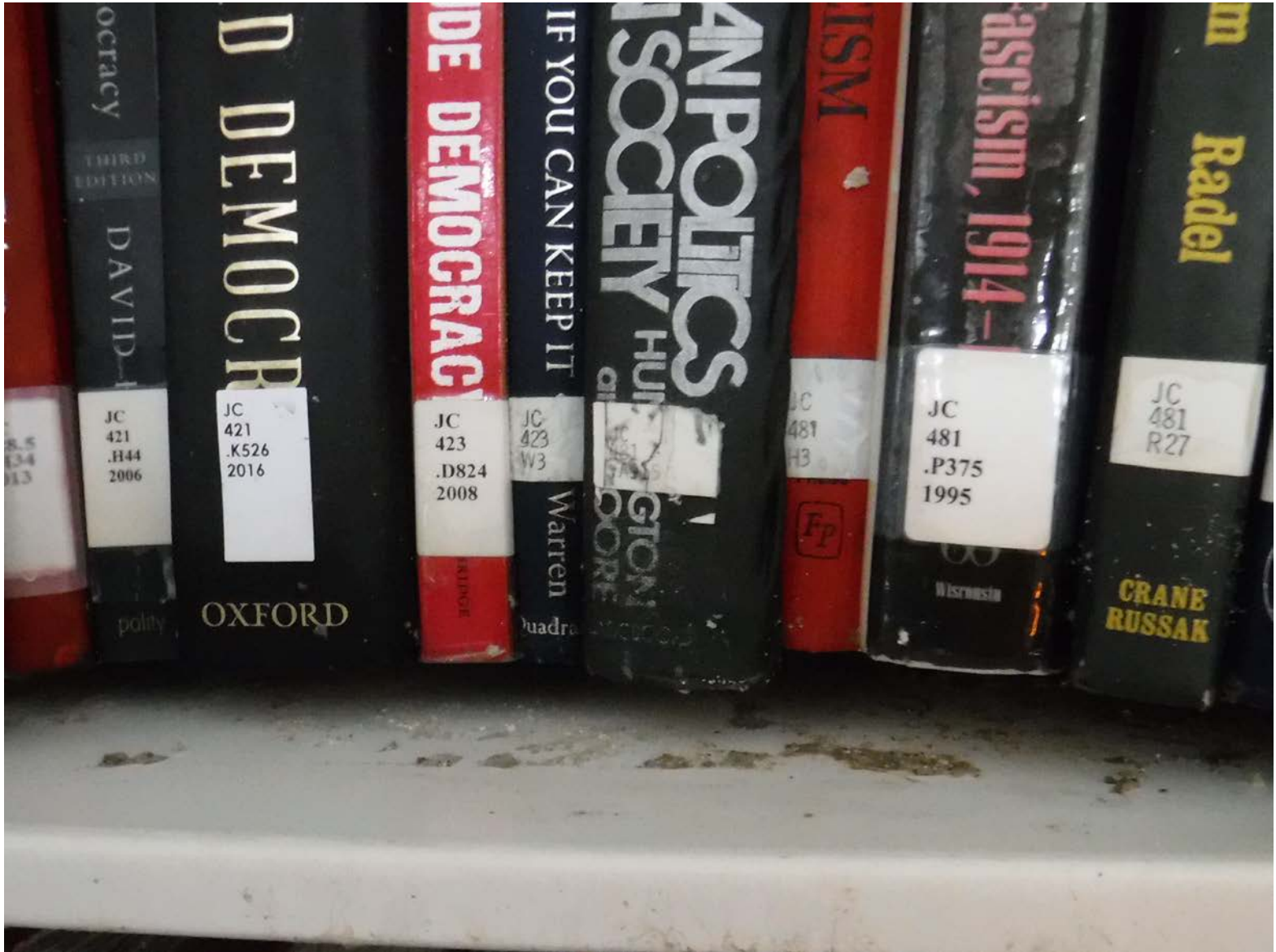
Poets of the Regency

Poets of the Regency

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Poets of the Regency





# Elements of a collection disaster plan

- Connecting to Collections: Writing a Disaster Response Plan - <https://www.connectingtocollections.org/archiveresponseplan/>
- California Preservation Program - [https://calpreservation.org/information\\_resources/emergency-prep-and-response/](https://calpreservation.org/information_resources/emergency-prep-and-response/)
- Council of State Archivists(COSA) original site for Pocket plan- <https://www.statearchivists.org/programs/emergency-preparedness/emergency-preparedness-resources/pocket-response-plantm-prep-tm-english-template/>
- 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
  - Water leaks in 2006, 2007, 2011, 2014, 2015
  - 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  $\neq$  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







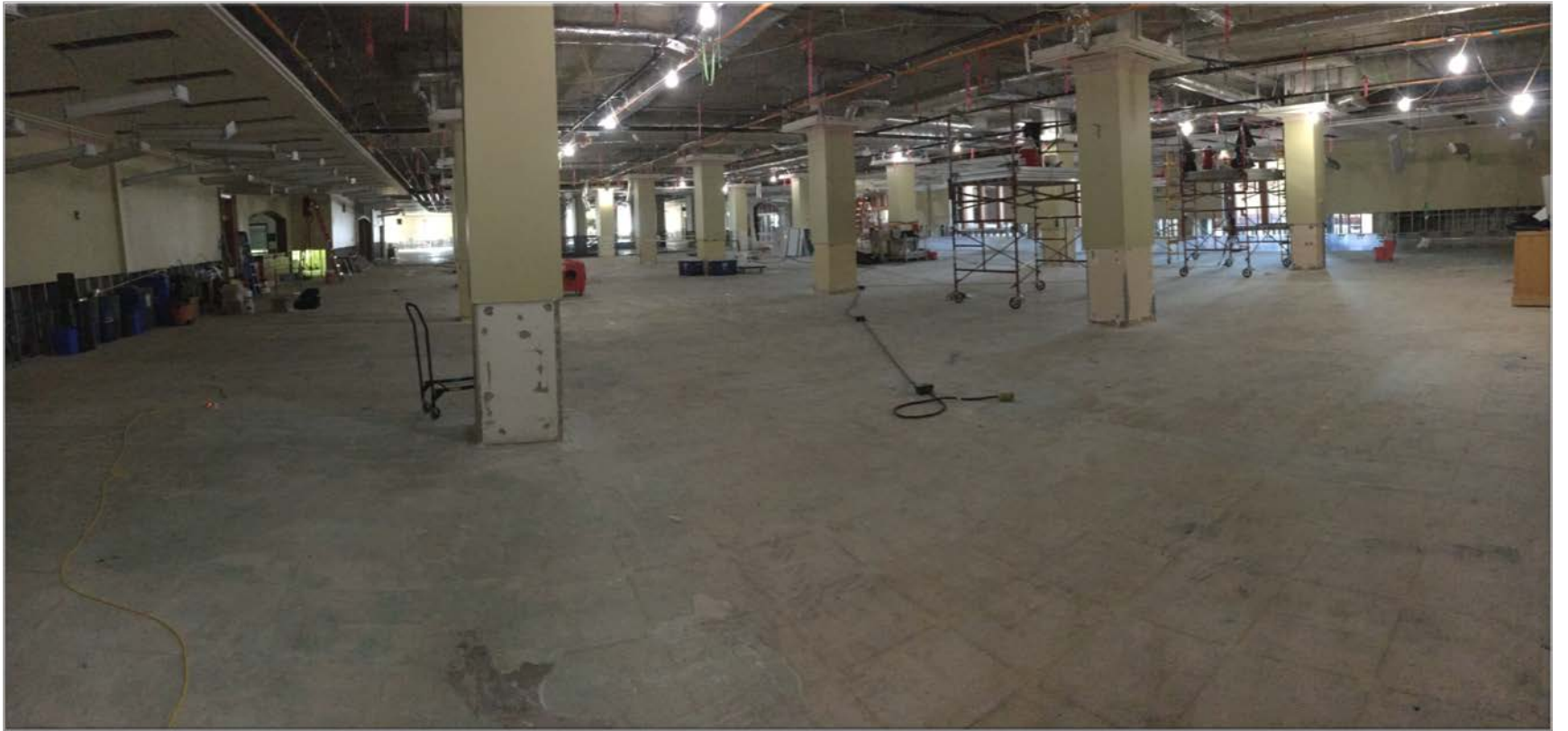














# Where we are now

- 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/>
- McCune, M.O.H., and Talbot, K. (2015).  
Disaster planning: Knowing your risks is just the first step. Kansas Museum Association Conference.

<http://hdl.handle.net/2097/39224>

# References

- National disaster restoration companies
  - Belfor, <http://www.belfor.com/en/us>
  - Polygon, <https://www.polygongroup.com/en-US/>
- 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