The Value of WEST

WEST leverages collaborative action for the collective good, preserving print journals and serials across the western region of the US to support the library and scholarly communities’ current and future teaching, learning, and research needs.

https://cdlib.org/west

1 preservation

WEST’s collection model allows members to retain materials according to local needs. Institutions can choose to participate by archiving low-risk/low-effort Bronze materials, archiving higher-risk/higher-effort Silver and Gold, or contributing materials to complete retained backfiles. Together, WEST members are protecting over 830,000 volumes across 36,000 titles, ensuring they’re available into the future.

2 access

The WEST collections are only useful if they are usable. WEST maintains an OCLC Profiled Group and a RapidILL pod to help connect members to the WEST archives, and provides national leadership promoting better discovery of shared print across institutions. WEST is dedicated to partnering with peers and advocating with OCLC and other service providers to build comprehensive registries and develop solutions to support cross-institutional discovery of shared collections.

3 physical space

When WEST Archivers make commitments to retain materials, other WEST members can rest assured that those materials will be available for the long-term. They can then choose to deselect their local copy and instead rely on the retained copy for access, freeing up library space for new materials or other uses.
WEST is one of the largest regional shared journal archiving programs in the U.S. in terms of the breadth of its membership and the number of titles and volumes it has archived to date. **WEST members have retained over 830,000 volumes from nearly 36,000 titles covering a broad range of subjects and disciplines.** The collections are held in nearly 50 libraries and storage facilities across the western region of the US, with new collections added every year.

The WEST collections analysis sorts journals according to risk categories based on electronic availability. High risk materials undergo physical validation work and are stored in secure, environmentally regulated facilities. This guarantees the integrity and completeness of these collections. Through member participation, WEST continually evaluates its selection and analysis criteria in order to keep pace with the dynamic landscape of shared print and archiving goals.

Participation in WEST assures stakeholders that journal deselection projects operate within a strategic decision-making framework. WEST is a founding member of the Rosemont Shared Print Alliance, a federation of shared print programs that amplifies and contextualizes WEST’s work at the national level. Expanding the network of institutions and programs collaborating together to preserve and protect the scholarly record allows WEST to strategically deploy program and member resources and broadens the collections for everyone.
When WEST Archivers agree to hold materials for the group, they also agree to make the retained materials available to members. This guarantee supports continuity of access to content for users, regardless of any decisions member institutions make about their local collections and whether the titles are available electronically.

WEST leverages currently available resource sharing tools (including an OCLC Profiled Group and a RapidILL pod) to connect members to the WEST archives. At the same time, WEST works to develop and advocate for enhanced solutions to support end user discovery of the critical materials held in the WEST archives.

WEST's advocacy and development work approaches this topic from multiple angles. WEST has dedicated in-house development time to creating a simple solution that can be deployed in members' local systems as desired. WEST also prioritizes broader advocacy for improved discovery of collective collections through vendors and service providers. WEST partners with peer organizations to surface needs, find solutions, and advocate for improvements to the national shared print infrastructure.
One of the major benefits WEST offers its members is access to trusted archives of scholarly print journals, which in turn is used as a reference point to support local projects to reduce the footprint of their on-campus print collections. These projects allow member institutions to reallocate space in their libraries to support new collections and other, non-collection library and campus priorities.

Members weigh several factors when making these decisions. Bronze titles with reliable electronic access are typically preferred for major space reclamation projects. Silver and Gold have historically seen lower rates of deselection, likely due to the lower levels of electronic availability. As libraries grapple with managing the competing demands on their spaces, shared print offers a path forward for reclaiming and repurposing space while still retaining access to the materials students and scholars need.

WEST members have reported deselected over 367,000 volumes from titles archived by WEST, but the true number is likely much higher. The library space reclaimed through these projects represent, new study spaces, new collections to support cutting-edge research, and new services to support user needs.