

Preservation Newsletter

A (Long) Word from the President (of PraXess)

THE NEED FOR PRESERVATION

Perhaps it is somewhat self-serving, as I make my living providing preservation microfilming services to libraries and archives, but I think that the issue of long-term preservation of the written word is getting lost in the rush to digitize and this is making me very worried.

When I started in this industry in the 1980's there were Brittle Books programs, Rare Books programs, The US Newspaper Project, and the microfilming of whole libraries from Eastern and Western Europe. The operative word was "preservation" and the only medium possible was microfilm. The Library of Congress was doing it. Yale and Chicago and Columbia and other universities were doing it. Half a dozen service bureaus were seriously doing it and many more were pretending to.

And now? The operative word is "access" and the medium is an electronic one. Everything that *can* be scanned, *will* be scanned. The Great Library of the World's Knowledge is just around the corner and access will be granted to all.

But what is going to happen to all that content? Where are these pages, these images? And how do we insure that they will be around in the future? Is it enough to put aside funds to migrate to whatever the next generation of digital devices might be?

With sound and moving images we have no choice. There is no archival medium. We continually migrate—vinyl to CD to MP3 to.... Tape to DVD to Blue Ray to....

But we do have an archival medium for paper and it is still, for the most part, unrelated to technology. Microfilm can be read with the use of a light bulb and magnifying glass. And microfilm, stored under proper storage conditions, will be around in 500 years.

For me, as enamored with Google as the next person and whose life and work are infinitely enriched, enhanced and made easier by the electronic media, it is still somewhat scary to think about all of the written material NOT being microfilmed. Since my first Mac I have been hearing the mantra, "Back Up, Back Up, Back Up." Where is the back-up to the electronic version of our written heritage? Where is the back-up to every manuscript, diary, newsletter, birthday card, scrapbook and clippings file that is presently being digitized? Where are our books?

Call me old-fashioned, but I'd still like something I can hold in my hands. And while microfilm might not be the most user-friendly medium we have ever come up with, it does have what we need in a preservation medium. We by-pass it on our way to digitization at our peril.

Sincerely, *Marc Zeitschik*

**PUBLISHERS WE
REPRESENT**

ACRPP

AlphaCom

Archive Editions

Ateneo De Manila

Athens Microfilming Service

British Library

Harald Fischer Verlag

IDC Publishers

Infoprint

Jewish National and
University Library

K.G. Saur

Library of Congress

MicroData

Microform Academic
Publishers

Mikrofilm Archiv

Mikropress

Mindata

MMF

Moran Micropublications

National Archives

National Archives and
Records Administration

National Library of South
Africa

New York Public Library

State Library of Australia

World Microfilms

Preservation Newsletter

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

PraXess is proud to provide a variety of services to the library and archives communities, including: grant proposals, estimates, archival-quality microfilming, archival supplies and equipment.

Praxess has recently also expanded its services to the library community. We own two Zeutschel 35mm microfilm cameras as well as two Kodak MRD-2 cameras and state-of-the art processing and duplicating equipment. The cameras, which use the most sophisticated book cradles, are giving us extraordinarily sharp images and a uniformity of density that is just awe-inspiring (to us microfilm nuts!).

If you are considering microfilming, as either an end product or interim step in your digitizing program, we invite you to contact us for an estimate. Our prices are very competitive, our turn-around time is relatively short, and you will always be dealing with a live person who understands the nature and value of your collection and your time.



**ASK US ABOUT
PRESERVATION
MICROFILMING**

**PraXess is an authorized distributor for
University Products and we sell all items in
the University Products catalogue at
10% off the list price.**

**FOR ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, A CATALOGUE OR
PRICES, PLEASE CONTACT US.**



**A consultant can also meet with you to evaluate your
collection and help you determine the best ways of preserving
your documents and accessing the information.**

PraXess

7 Holland Ave

White Plains, NY 10603

Email: inquiries@e-praxess.net

Tel: 914-428-2228

University Products
The University Products
Preserving Our Heritage Since 1958