

Enhancing the Lifespan of Paper-Based Collections

ABSTRACT

The memory of civilization is inherently linked to the written word, which, recorded on durable materials, withstands the test of time. For more than five centuries, paper has been the predominant carrier of information, and numerous medieval manuscripts bear witness to its durability. Corrosive inks and changes in the quality of paper production introduced in the nineteenth century, however, have dramatically reduced its lifetime. Due to the extreme dimensions of the problem, the European Commission has funded two research projects which aim to develop and/or evaluate active conservation treatments that significantly increase longevity of endangered paper material. During the InkCor project, researchers focused on the problem of iron-gall ink-induced decay. The PaperTreat project focuses on the development of the most cost-effective preservation programs for endangered written cultural heritage, recorded on acidic paper. Results of both projects were presented.

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