

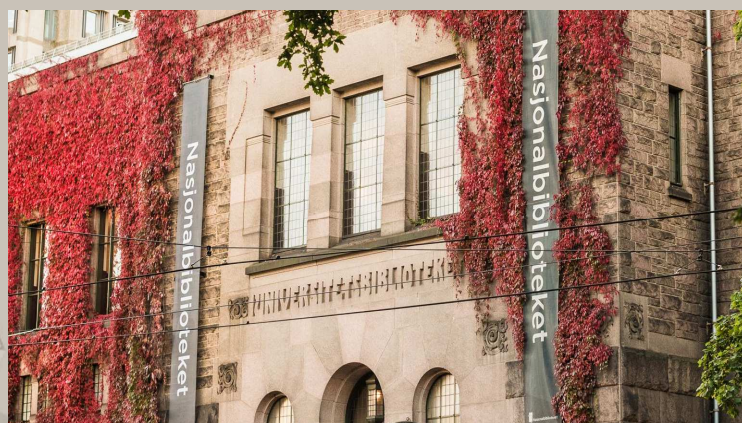
In-House Collection Security

**Nina Korbu, National Library of
Norway**

CERL Security Network Summer School
Rome September 5. - 7. 2018



The National Library of Norway



Book Thefts from Libraries and Archives have existed for Centuries



 National Library of Norway

Even the best run and seemingly most secure Reading Rooms and institutions have been subjected to thefts and vandalism of their materials.
Regrettably, all the security in the world is not going to stop all the thieves all the time.

Guide to Security Considerations & Practices for Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collection Libraries

 National Library of Norway

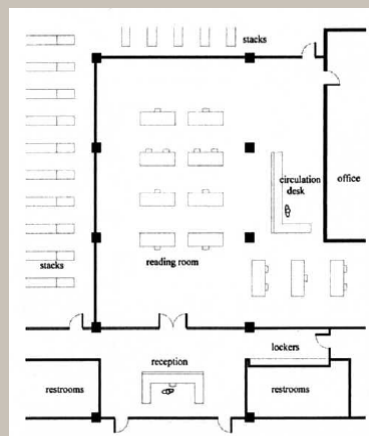
An item's many possible ways through an institution:

- Item is received in institution
- Acquisition of item is registered
- Item is catalogued and classified
- Item is marked/stamped/boxed
- Item is brought to its proper place in stacks or strong room
- Item is wanted by reader in reading room
- Item is brought to reading room
- Item is studied in reading room
- Item is wanted by curator/research librarian in his/her office
- Item is brought to curator's/research librarian's office
- Item is being conserved or digitized
- Item is on display at in-house exhibition
- Item is lent to external institution for an exhibition
- Item is returned to its proper place in stacks or strong room



National Library of Norway

How a Reading Room can be designed:



National Library of Norway

The Special Collections Reading Room of the National Library of Norway



 National Library of Norway

Who steals from our collections in-house?

Thefts by externals

- Thefts by professional criminals
- Thefts by petty criminals
- Thefts by Readers – planned or on the spur thefts

Thefts by our own colleagues

- Thefts by librarians, archivists and curators
- Thefts by other members of staff

 National Library of Norway

Why do Thieves steal?

Some common motives for theft:

- To make money
- Out of ignorance of the inconvenience and costs of replacement
- Because of compulsive, antisocial impulses such as bibliomania
- To feed a private collection
- Because they have knowledge about the location of valuable items
- Because they can!



National Library of Norway

W. Graham Arader III one of the most well-known map sellers in the United States:

"Most librarians are incompetent, boring, and dull," says Arader. "And they have this easy life. Many of them view their collections as their personal fiefdoms. But really, they don't look after their material. You know, it's not hard to tell the difference between a thief and somebody who's legitimate. If you're not intelligent enough to see these guys coming, then you shouldn't be a curator."



National Library of Norway

Questions we should ask ourselves – and be able to answer - are:

- Where in my building are the materials most vulnerable to disappearance, theft and vandalism?
- Where in my building are the materials most in danger of being damaged by water, fire, heat, too much or too little humidity, insects or rodents?
- When are the collections and materials most vulnerable?



National Library of Norway

Where in my building are the materials most vulnerable to disappearance, theft and vandalism?

- In the areas where accession and cataloguing takes place?
- In the areas where digitization takes place?
- In the conservation workshop?
- In the stacks, strong rooms?
- On the way from the stacks to the reading room?
- In the reading room?
- In the temporary storage facility near the reading room?



National Library of Norway

When in my building are the collections most vulnerable to disappearance, theft and vandalism?

- At night?
- During fire alarms?
- During cleaning of the stacks and strong rooms?
- During change of staff in the reading room?
- When all reading room staff is busy advising and helping the readers?
- When the reading room staff is too concentrated on their own tasks during reading room duty?
- While being reserved for use on consecutive days in the reading room?
- During a presentation of materials in the reading room or a classroom?
- While being displayed in show cases at exhibitions?



National Library of Norway

From Kristen Janus: «Securing Our History»:

«Accessing rare, valuable, or fragile materials and working without constant supervision are privileges essential to the functioning of the archival workplace and, as such, are roles that depend on trust. Loss through insider theft is damaging to collections but may devastate the morale of an organization.»



National Library of Norway

From a Repository Security Checklist found in Timothy Walch publication: *Archives and Manuscripts: Security* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1977):

- Is there a repository security officer?
- Is there a procedure to check all applicants' backgrounds before hiring new staff?
- Is access to stacks and storage areas on a need-to-go basis?
- How many employees have master keys and combinations to vaults and other restricted areas?
- Is an employee assigned to the reading room at all times?
- Do employees recognize the seriousness of the theft problem and the need for vigilance in the reading room?



National Library of Norway

Checklist continued:

- Have employees been instructed in the techniques of observation?
- Have employees been told what to do if they witness a theft?
- What type of personal identification is required of readers?
- Are readers interviewed and oriented to collections prior to use of collections?
- What are readers allowed to bring into the reading room?
- Do call slips include the signature of readers? What other information is included? How long are call slips retained?
- How much material are readers allowed to have at any one time?
- Are archival materials stacked on trolleys near the reader's seat or kept near the reference desk?
- Have the reading room been arranged so that all readers can be seen from the reference desk?



National Library of Norway

Checklist continued:

- Do readers have access to stack areas?
- Are readers allowed to use unprocessed collections?
- Are readers' belongings searched when they leave the reading room?
- Do accession records provide sufficient detail to identify missing materials?
- What is the procedure for the return of archival materials to the shelves? Are folders and boxes checked before they are replaced?
- Are document exhibit cases/show cases wired to the alarm system?
- Are there grills or screens on the ground floor windows?
- Are doors and windows wired to a security alarm? If located in a library or building with easy access, does the repository have special locks and alarms to prevent illegal entry?



National Library of Norway

Useful literature:

- Guide to Security Considerations & Practices for Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collection Libraries, compiled & edited by Everett C. Wilkie. Chicago, Association of College & Research Libraries, 2011.
- ACRL/RBMS Guidelines Regarding Security and Theft in Special Collections. Association of College & Research Libraries.
http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/security_theft



National Library of Norway