Assessing Commercial Binding for the Smithsonian Institution Libraries
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- Mid-sized academic research library (ARL)
- 20 branch libraries of diverse subject matter located in DC, NY, MD, and Panama
- Over 5,500 serial subscriptions
- Is commercial binding necessary at the Smithsonian? If so, for how long, how much money should be spent, and how can the money be better allocated?

**LITERATURE REVIEW**
- $330 million spent on serial subscriptions by 108 ARLs (2004-5)
- A predicted 50% of serials will only be electronic by 2016 (Shenton)
- Now: little print attrition; concerns over preservation and access remain

**PADG SURVEY**
- 9 respondents
- Electronic usage greater than print usage
- Binding: 30% drop in last 5-10 years
- Sub-par alternative preservation methods, e.g., Princeton files, boxes

**INTERNAL SURVEY**
- 16 of 18 branch libraries responded
- Unique research needs
- Continued need for binding due to small conservation staff, materials with high visual content
- 75% of respondents requested larger binding quotas

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
(made 8/07; approved 2/08)
- $32,000 per year
- Reallocation of quotas; increase to fine arts libraries, Natural History, and Anthropology
- Steady quotas for five years or until next review
- Regular shipments throughout the year
- Continued training in record maintenance