Map Collection Resource Guide

This toolbox was created for a MLIS Collections Development course and was intended as a tool for fellow students in the course. The tool outlines how to obtain information about map collections as follows:

- How to Find Out About Maps
- How to Order Maps
- Acquisition and Handling Problems
- Other Resources

How to Find Out About Maps

Maps and related cartographic materials are generally grouped into paper maps, geospatial data and digital data.   Information about these topics can be obtained from the following sources:

- **Map Library** or **Data Resource Centre** at an academic institution. Libraries take different approaches to the organization of materials. For example, Guelph University Library houses the paper maps in self-serve cabinets in the basement and Geographic Information System (GIS) is available online via Scholars Portal and various regional, provincial and federal data sources; the Data Resource Centre located on the main floor. The University of Waterloo just moved the Map Library to its new location, on May 1, 2012. The physical collection has been reduced from approximately 100,000 to 20,000 items. When weeding the collection they looked at what was available online and what was available at other academic libraries in Canada. Still other academic map libraries are embracing the new model which is to integrate map collections with government publications.
- **Websites** of map libraries. Also search the catalogues to get an idea of the range of materials and services available; check related subject guides
- **Monographs** on Map Librarianship and GIS:
    - *Guide for a Small Map Collection*, 2nd/2e ed. by Barbara Farrell and Aileen Desbarats. 1984 – written for librarians dealing with small map collection, this book contains information on planning, acquiring, and classifying maps and reference works for maps
    - *World Mapping Today* by Robert B. Parry – content on map acquisition and map publishing
    - *Integrating Geographic Information Systems into library services: A guide for academic libraries* by John Abresch – covers map librarianship and digital librarianship as well as collection development, reference and research services, and cataloging/metadata
- **Journals**
    - Journal of Map & Geography Libraries
    - Cartographic Journal
    - Information Technology and Libraries
- **Other**
    - Maps
    - Handbooks and Manuals that outline how to use maps, GIS, aerial photographs

- **Library of Congress Classification**
  - [Class G – Geography. Anthropology. Recreation](#)   link to **LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CLASSIFICATION OUTLINE**
  - [The Library of Congress G Schedule for Atlases](#) is available on the Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives website.
- **Subject Headings**
  - Atlas
  - Acquisition of maps
  - Cartography
  - Digital Mapping
  - Fire Insurance Maps and Fire Insurance Atlases
  - Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
  - Geography
  - Libraries -- Special Collections -- Maps
  - Map Collections
  - Maps
  - Maps – Publishing -- Directories
  - Topographic Maps

How to Select Maps

Map selection will depend on the type of library and the needs of the patrons and generally includes local content. In an academic library, the undergraduate calendar, course syllabi and collaboration with professors as well as various curriculum mapping projects are used to determine the needs of the students. For more general maps, a scale of 1-500,000 is usually selected but for more frequently used maps a scale of 1-25,000 is more commonly selected. Map libraries will have collections that included some combination of the following map and related cartographic materials:

- Topographic maps including: World, Canadian, Ontario and local
- Road maps of the world
- Subject based maps such as Agriculture, Forestry, Physical Science, etc.
- Local interest historic maps and atlases, fire insurance maps
- Aerial photos – local history
- Archival maps of historical significance
- Historic Maps and Atlases – local history
- Local Maps – provided by the region, city planning department etc.
- Fire Insurance Maps and Fire Insurance Atlases – historic maps showing what was previously located on the site
- GIS – data available via Scholars Portal and various government organizations
- Hiking trails such as the Bruce Trail

How to Order Maps

Maps and related cartographic materials are obtained from the following sources:

- **Canadian map products** are obtained from [Natural Resources Canada](#) which offers earth science-based mapping products including geological and topographic maps.
  - [The National Topographic System of Canada](#) (NTS) ``provides general-purpose topographic map coverage of the entire Canadian landmass. These maps depict, in detail, ground relief, drainage, forest cover, administrative areas, populated areas,

transportation routes and facilities, and cultural features. They are available in two standard scales, 1/50 000 and 1/250 000``**.**

- o [Atlas of Canada](#) – has maps and related information about Canada
- o [GeoConnections Discovery Portal](#) –Canadian free and for-fee geospatial and geoscience data products and Web services
- o [GeoGratis](#) – free geospatial data grouped in collections and compatible with popular geographic information systems (GIS).
- o [Scholars GeoPortal](#) - geospatial data discovery tool which allows Ontario university students and researchers access to OCUL's growing collection of geospatial data.
- **Aerial photos (NRC)** are obtained through the [National Air Photo Library](#). Aerial photographs are used for activities such as map compilation, urban and rural planning, environmental impact assessment, civil law cases, real-estate evaluation and outdoor recreation.
- **Ontario** maps and data content is obtained from [Ontario Geological Survey](#)
- **American maps** are purchased from [U.S. Geological Survey](#) (USGS).
- **Map donations** – various sources but especially retiring professors. Negotiate how the content can be used, if it can be sold or disposed of and any annual support for collection upkeep.
- **Vendors** approach the library with product offerings. However, since much of the content is available online, this is more often an annual negotiation with various vendors for software licensing and seat licensing agreements. The list of vendors has not been included here however there are quite exhaustive lists available on my blogs such as Western Association of Map Libraries - [Map Librarians' Toolbox](#) which has a section on [Map Ordering Sources](#).

Special Acquisition and Handling Problems

- Paper maps are stored flat in large metal map cabinets in drawers where the maps are separated into folders. Since maps will be become worn from repeated usage they must be prepared before being put into circulation. Maps should either be laminated or edged with an edging machine and this is generally done in house. Weights can be obtained to keep maps flat when in use. Other supplies such as map tubes and weights to flatten maps stored in tubes should be obtained from preservation suppliers.
- Folded street maps are stored in metal hanging cabinets in hanging folders arranged by call numbers.
- Aerial photographs are stored in metal handing cabinets in archival quality sleeves
- Historic or archival materials may require environmentally controlled cabinets and security to prevent theft.
- GIS data requires annual software and seat licences fee negotiations with the various software vendors.

Other Resources

- Websites
  - o [Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives (ACMLA)](#)
  - o Natural Resources Canada – [The Atlas of Canada](#)
  - o Library and Archive Canada – [Maps, Chart and Architectural Plans](#) - table of the material in the LAC collection which can be searched
  - o [Map Librarians' Toolbox](#) – helpful information compiled by a map librarian
  - o Twitter account for University of Toronto Map Library [@datalib](#) – interesting posts about historic maps, links to data, etc.

- o [The Canadian County Atlas Digital Project](#) at McGill University – Maps of 1880 counties of Ontario which can be searched by county or name to locate property owners as they appeared on the maps in 1880

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Prepared by: Sandy Gallipeau
Prepared for: LIS 9315
Created May 20, 2012
Contact information schamb6@uwo.ca