



After the Flood: Disaster as a Collections Management Opportunity

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What Happened:

- ▶ Early February 2019: Pipes supplying steam for heating burst in the Himmelfarb Library basement level book stacks
- ▶ Books beneath the pipes sustained water damage
- ▶ Staff followed disaster management techniques outlined in Himmelfarb's 911! LibGuide



Himmelfarb Library Stacks, Feb. 2019

Disaster Response:

- ▶ ~10 library employees moved damaged books onto carts
- ▶ Books were placed on tables for drying and damage assessment
- ▶ Salvageable books were systematically dried and returned to the shelves
- ▶ ~260 books worth ~\$30K were deemed unsalvageable and withdrawn
- ▶ A detailed list of withdrawn items was created for insurance purposes



Unexpected Outcomes:

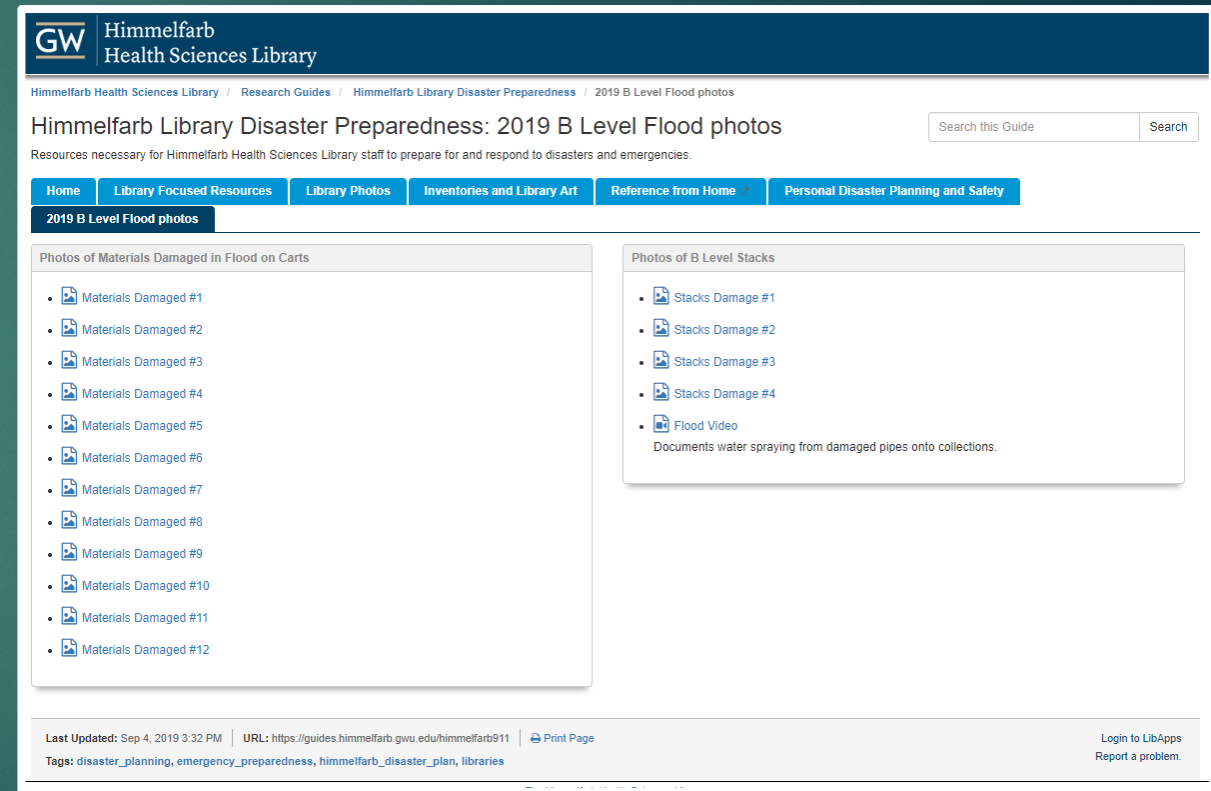
- ▶ Undertook weeding projects in damaged subject areas
- ▶ Identified 3 subject areas (Surgery, Ophthalmology, Obstetrics) where material losses were comprehensive
- ▶ Initiated communications with faculty about material replacement
- ▶ Worked with faculty to ensure that collections were updated with the most recent publications



Himmelfarb Library Stacks, Feb. 2019

Updating Library Policies:

- ▶ Himmelfarb 911! LibGuide revised to reflect what worked and what didn't
- ▶ Photographic evidence of the flood and new shelf order created
- ▶ Collection development plan updated with guidelines to prioritize material replacement



The screenshot displays the Himmelfarb Health Sciences Library website. The header includes the GW logo and the library name. The main content area is titled "Himmelfarb Library Disaster Preparedness: 2019 B Level Flood photos" and includes a search bar. Below the title is a navigation menu with options like "Home", "Library Focused Resources", "Library Photos", "Inventories and Library Art", "Reference from Home", and "Personal Disaster Planning and Safety". The main content is divided into two columns: "Photos of Materials Damaged in Flood on Carts" and "Photos of B Level Stacks". The "Photos of Materials Damaged in Flood on Carts" column lists 12 items, each with a thumbnail icon and the text "Materials Damaged #1" through "#12". The "Photos of B Level Stacks" column lists 5 items, each with a thumbnail icon and the text "Stacks Damage #1" through "#4", followed by "Flood Video" with a description: "Documents water spraying from damaged pipes onto collections." At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with "Last Updated: Sep 4, 2019 3:32 PM", a URL, a "Print Page" link, and "Login to LibApps" and "Report a problem." links.

Himmelfarb 911! LibGuide

The Silver Lining:

- ▶ Flood provided an opportunity to revitalize communications with faculty about new materials in their field
- ▶ Initiated overdue weeding projects
- ▶ Updated disaster preparedness documents
- ▶ Updated collections management policies
- ▶ Envisioned ways to build smarter and stronger collections



Himmelfarb Library Stacks, Feb. 2019



Thank You!!!