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Theft and Vandalism of Books, Manuscripts, and Related Materials in Public and Academic Libraries, Archives, and Special Collections

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Abstract

While book theft and vandalism in public and academic libraries, as well as archives and special collections, are not considered a modern problem, they have, in recent years, become a matter of increasing concern to these institutions. Easy access to materials housed in multi-story libraries difficult to effectively supervise; the online presence of archives and special collections detailing the contents of their collections to attract researchers and visitors; and a seemingly growing number of persons willing to express their personal convictions and beliefs by removing or destroying items from public and private collections, are among the primary reasons for the ongoing loss of materials.

This research paper examines the motives behind book theft and vandalism, summarizes existing security measures, and offers suggestions for theft and vandalism prevention.

Clipping, defacing, misplacing, and stealing books exist in varying degrees in every busy library. Current magazines, bound magazines, and reference books suffer the greatest loss. To have rules printed in a handbook or posted in the library is not sufficient; they must be taught.
–Maud Minster
Book Theft and Mutilation (Minster, 1942, p. 264)

I have known men to hazard their fortunes, go long journeys halfway about the world, forget friendships, even lie, cheat, and steal, all for the gain of a book.
–A. S. W. Rosenbach
The Man Who Loved Books Too Much (Bartlett, 2009, iv)

Theft and Vandalism in Libraries, Archives, and Special Collections

Theft of books and related materials – including, but not limited to, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, maps, and single-page items, as well as non-book items such as video tapes, DVDs, and CDs - in libraries, archives, and special collections is not a modern phenomenon. During the Middle Ages, monks and priests chained books to desks and shelves, and disseminated dire warnings detailing the horrible fate awaiting book thieves: Hanging, drowning, burning - or worse, an all-condemning, generation-inclusive curse (Shuman, 1999). The above example highlights both the long history and severity of book theft, and is of special interest when considered in context. Compared to today's seemingly endless supply of library materials available to everyone, few literary works were created in the 14th and 15th century. Tightly controlled and kept in supervised reading rooms, they were made accessible only to the literate population. Nonetheless, books kept disappearing from scriptoriums (Shuman, 1999).

In similar fashion, vandalism has been the long-time foe of the keepers of the written word. Arson, likely the most devastating expression of vandalism affecting the book world, is

said to have been recorded as early as 48 B.C.E., when parts of the Library of Alexandria were set aflame during Caesar's conquest (Fishburn, 2008). Whereas book theft is primarily driven by the desire to possess the item, vandalism is the overt expression of underlying psychopathologies by means of "intentional destruction, defacement, and disfiguration" of "property not one's own" (Goldstein, 1996, pp. 21-22). Theft and vandalism cause costly and, in many instances, irreplaceable damage to the holdings of archives, libraries, and special collections.

According to the relevant literature consulted for this research paper, the most effective methods to minimize occurrences of these types of crimes are described as the placement of preventative measures and security devices (Bahr, 1981-82; Center & Lancaster, 2004; Cravey, 2001; Evans & Ward, 2007; Hunter, 2003; Shuman, 1999). If the solution is so clearly evident, the question inevitably must be why and how it is nonetheless possible that year after year, library materials vanish, while others are returned or found in various stages of mutilation.

Theft of Books and Related Materials

Who Steals Books and Related Materials

"Stealing library books and other materials has always cut across social lines. From available evidence, library book thieves throughout recorded history have included high-ranking officials and church elders, as well as librarians themselves" (Shuman, 1999, p. 6). Observations of this kind, as well as classics such as Nicholas Basbanes' *A Gentle Madness* (1999) and the more recent bestseller *The Man Who Loved Books Too Much* (2009), encourage the misleading belief that many intellectuals and some of those affiliated with the book profession suffer from *bibliokleptomania*, the uncontrollable and sometimes morbid desire to possess literary works. Rather than emphasizing the damage they cause, many of the *bibliophiles* and *bibliomaniacs* in

these accounts are portrayed as helpless victims, unable to resist the calling of a much-desired object. However, it would be rash to summarily dismiss the existence of book theft caused by mental disorders. In fact, one of the most famous court cases involved a criminal defense so unique, that, until Stephen Carrie Blumberg's trial (which attempted to keep the master book thief out of prison) it had never been utilized in the American court system (Basbanes, 1995). When Stephen C. Blumberg was finally arrested in 1990, he had stolen "about 23,600 books from 268 libraries in forty-five states, two Canadian provinces, and the District of Columbia" (Basbanes, 1995, p. 467). Initially estimated at 20 million dollars, the "Blumberg Collection" focused on Americana, with some of the most valuable items originating from Harvard's Widener Library (Abbey Newsletter, 1991; Harvard Magazine, 1997). Upon Blumberg's apprehension by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), there was never a doubt as to whether he had in fact stolen most of the books found in his residence. Instead, the question everyone wanted answered was why he had stolen enough to fill 879 boxes that needed 17 people to pack over the course of two days, and required a "forty-foot tractor-trailer" to haul them away (Basbanes, 1995, p. 467). Court hearings revealed that Blumberg and members of his immediate family suffered from mental illness. During his youth, Stephen had undergone several evaluations and was diagnosed with schizophrenia, delusion, and severe compulsive tendencies (Basbanes, 1995). By the time he graduated from high school, Blumberg had, according to his father, "created his own Victorian world in his apartment" and decorated it with stolen doorknobs, stained-glass windows, and lampshades of considerable value. Identification with all aspects of Victorian life led Stephen to the discovery of rare books, first Victorian Americana and later anything he deemed worthwhile (Basbanes, 1995, p. 501). It was this complex history of mental illness and irrational behavior that prompted Blumberg's unique defense. Called by

Stephen's attorneys, forensic psychiatrist Dr. William S. Logan testified that Blumberg experienced severe bouts of chronic delusional paranoid disorder, which made him believe in perpetual delusions of grandeur that he was a Victorian man destined to preserve historically significant Victorian artifacts and books (Basbane, 1995). Based upon Blumberg's psychiatric evaluations, Dr. Logan asked the court to find the defendant not guilty by reason of insanity, marking this the only time the rarely successful *affirmative defense* was used "to explain the consequences of criminal bibliomania" (Basbanes, 1995, p. 480). The court denied Logan's plea and Stephen was sentenced to 71 months in prison. He was released early for good behavior only to pick up right where he had left off (Harvard Review, 1997).

In contrast to the mentally ill, persons stealing for profit exude very little respect for literary works. Instead, they are "the most serious of predators to library materials" and are quite often "meticulous, clever, and unlikely to make mistakes" (Shuman, 1999, p. 31). This is especially true where rare and valuable items are involved: Planning grand-scheme heists takes time, effort, and subject knowledge. In 1964, Robert Bradford Murphy and his wife Elizabeth were arrested by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and charged with the crime of "theft of government property and interstate transportation of stolen property" (Shuman, 1999, p. 38). The FBI confiscated six suitcases filled with documents from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), among them letters from Presidents "Monroe, Jackson, Lincoln, Cleveland, Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Eisenhower, and Kennedy" (Shuman, 1999, p. 38). Many years of theft from professional book collectors had prepared Robert Murphy for the daunting task of remaining undetected while stealing from one of the nation's foremost archival facilities. Despite the long rap sheet detailing arrests and warrants for book and document theft, and regardless of the fact that in 1961 he had become the focus of an observation conducted by

FBI agents after the archivists at an institution he frequented became suspicious of his behavior, Murphy managed to present himself as a historical researcher to the National Archives. He subsequently gained regular access to the facilities' Central Research Room, where he had ample time to casually inspect the materials other researchers were using (Shuman, 1999). Distracting staff and visitors with his seemingly boisterous behavior, Murphy walked out of the National Archives time and again, carrying along some of the nation's treasures, which he and his wife Elizabeth "purloined and sold to collectors all over the United States" (Shuman, 1999, p. 38). Found guilty of "wholesale theft from multiple institutions," both Robert and Elizabeth were sentenced to ten years in prison (Shuman, 1999, p. 39). Interestingly enough, Robert was released four years later, while Elizabeth served the entire ten-year sentence (Shuman, 1999).

While the Murphy's grand-theft schemes required them to be out in the open, most for-profit thieves lead a shady lifestyle resembling that of transients. To be able to make a living selling stolen goods, these criminals often live out of their cars or stay in short-term rentals (Shuman, 1999). Many of them are actually not as smart and cunning as Bruce Shuman (1999) attributes them to be; hired to steal certain volumes by specific authors, they struggle to find what they are looking for, sometimes with tragic-comedic results. Paul Constant, an independent bookseller, illustrates:

> A scruffy, large man approached me, holding a folded-up piece of paper. 'Do you have any Buck?' He paused and looked at the piece of paper. 'Any books by Buckorsick?' I suspected that he meant Bukowski, but I played dumb, and asked to see the piece of paper he was holding. It was written in crisp handwriting that clearly didn't belong to him, and it read: 1. Charles Bukowski, 2. Jim Thompson,

3. Philip K. Dick, 4. William S. Burroughs, 5. Any Graphic Novel (Constant, 2008).

The majority of book thieves, however, are neither sufferers of *bibliokleptomania* nor ruthless for-profit sellers – in fact, the primary challenge libraries face day after day is the lack of a discernible demographic to determine who represents the ideal book-theft candidate (Shuman, 1999). While somewhat over-generalized, anyone, at any time, may become a thief of library materials. The person neglecting to return a book due to forgetfulness, those not reporting lost books, those with long-overdue materials stalling the trip to the local library for fear of having to pay high past-due fees, and those bagging a three-month old copy of a well-read magazine found laying around, are, in the strictest sense, as much thieves as are those who enter the library with the intention of leaving it with materials not checked out but hidden instead in garments or bags brought along. And yet, not every "thief" is arrested, convicted, fined, or locked away.

The key to understanding the high-level tolerance for the types of theft that occur daily in libraries is largely rooted in the majority of the population's perception as to what constitutes a crime. According to Bruce Shuman (1999), "Library crime is often not taken seriously by the general public, perhaps because it is seen as unimportant or perhaps because it tends to be a victimless crime" (p. 8). Often played down as petty theft or even excused as the desperate act of someone trying to overcome economic hardship by illegally appropriating educational materials, the fact that stealing a book from a library is no different than shoplifting the very same volume from a bookstore conveniently recedes into the background (Shuman, 1999). In addition, common sense thinking leaves no doubt that it is impossible to lay the letter of the law on every thief caught snatching materials from a library: The offenders and their representatives would cause an incredible backlog to the court system, and soon have taxpayers complaining about

their money being wasted on petty theft instead of being utilized to solve serious crimes. As a result, and despite the efforts of many public libraries to add new and improved security features as they become available, "incidents of theft and mutilation continue to increase" (Cravey, 2001, p. 27).

Why Books And Related Materials Are Stolen

Whereas, thirty years ago, some of the main reasons of why the "average" person stole library materials ranged from "lack of money for photocopying to failure to remember the library card" (Cravey, 2001, p. 27), the motives for theft are now much more varied and include, according to Pamela Cravey (2001), "an attitude of entitlement, the expectation of immediate gratification, ease of access, and the 'Kenny Factor'" (p. 27). One of the most interesting aspects of Cravey's assessment is the shift away from monetary concerns and incidents of oversight to one that demonstrates increasing numbers of premeditated acts. Apparently, more and more patrons feel a sense of entitlement, a trend particularly evident among the younger generation of public library visitors, as well as among college students (Cravey, 2001). To illustrate, Cravey recounts an incident during which a young student was caught ripping pages from magazines at Ohio State University's library, fully aware of what she was doing, finding nothing wrong with her acts of vandalism and theft. In fact, when approached by librarians, she became overly aggressive and a short time later used her position as a student editor to write a scathing editorial detailing how, in her opinion, she was treated unfairly by those who discovered her wrongdoing. According to researcher Robert Chadbourne, cited in Cravey, "young people today present an apathetic tolerance of criminal behavior" (Cravey, 2001, p. 27). His observation goes hand in hand with what Cravey dubs the "Kenny Factor:" Kenny, one of the main characters of the animated television series *South Park*, dies at the end of every episode in a new, most horrendous

fashion. No explanation is ever given as to why this is so, and inevitably, at the beginning of the next episode, Kenny is back, unscathed (Cravey, 2001). In similar fashion, stolen library books are replaced with new copies, reinforcing the "who cares, it's only a book, just get another one" (Cravey, 2001, p. 29) attitude of book thieves, teaching them that, just like Kenny, whatever goes away today will be back soon thereafter.

Premeditated book theft, so Pamela Cravey (2001) argues, is further encouraged by an overall growing expectation of immediate gratification. In a world filled with hectic schedules, many individuals juggle work, family, school, and social life, and are constantly at the mercy of the clock. As a result, the time needed to establish new borrowing privileges or renew those that have expired, as well as the minutes spent at the self-checkout or waiting in the circulation checkout line, are seen as not worthwhile for something as seemingly unimportant as a book. Instead, acting on the desire for instant gratification, experienced in combination with feelings of entitlement, as well as thoughts correlating to the "Kenny Factor," the patron makes the decision to steal the materials (Cravey, 2001).

In addition to those discussed by Pamela Cravey, common reasons for theft, especially in public libraries, include a patron's worry of having to go on record for borrowing materials on controversial topics, the desire to prevent others from being able to access materials based on personal convictions (Epstein, 2001), and the wish to get even with library personnel, the community, or the system as a whole (Shuman, 1999).

Most-Stolen Books and Related Materials

According to an article written in 2001 by Edward Epstein for *SFGate*, the online edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle* newspaper, the theft of materials from public libraries is a national concern costing taxpayers millions of dollars annually. While no one can present

reliable statistics detailing the true extent of the problem, the American Library Association (ALA) took steps in 2001 to gain deeper insight into why library materials are stolen (Epstein, 2001). A survey sent to libraries across the country revealed that the question of why items are stolen goes hand-in-hand with *what* is stolen. The results showed, so Epstein writes, that "almost everywhere, librarians reported that the No. 1 stolen item is books dealing with the occult, satanism, witchcraft or astrology. Books on gay and lesbian issues also vanish" (Epstein, 2001). Other items continuously found to be missing are the Christian Bible, as well as books and textbooks dealing with sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, and abortion (Epstein, 2001). The primary reason for the theft of these types of books, according to the conclusions drawn by many of the librarians surveyed, is censorship by those people who want to prevent others from being able to gain access to controversial materials (Epstein, 2001). Bruce Shuman, in the *Library Security and Safety Handbook* (1999), assigns these offenders the moniker "freelance censors" (p. 30) and explains that their motivations to remove books from the library stacks are often grounded in the misguided belief that, like "altruistic watchdogs" or "benevolent protectors" (p. 31), they must do their part to protect innocent persons from harm caused by "strange ideas on sex, politics, religion, or lifestyles" (p. 30). In addition to materials that are most likely stolen because of their controversial nature, items such as car repair manuals, and "exam-prep books, mostly for the high school diploma equivalency test" vanish because "they all require extensive practice at home, and it takes longer than the four-week checkout period to get good at it" (Epstein, 2001). This may explain why the public library system in Fremont, California, in response to the American Library Association's 2001 survey, listed as its most-stolen item "exam-preparation books to become a police officer. 'Gives one pause,' a librarian in that East Bay city said" (Epstein, 2001).

While the theft of materials housed in archives, libraries, and special collections are saddening and upsetting occurrences to most everyone treasuring knowledge and the means by which it is delivered, many librarians, staff, and patrons find themselves especially disturbed by acts of vandalism.

Vandalism of Books and Related Materials

Vandalism – A Brief Introduction

The behavior-descriptive term of vandalism is derived from the *Vandals*, a Germanic tribe, the members of which, in the 5th century C.E., plundered Rome, areas of Gaul and North Africa, as well as other conquered territories (Goldstein, 1996). The tribe's raids caused extreme destruction, especially to buildings and artworks, and were executed with a level of brutality rarely seen since (Goldstein, 1996).

Today, the psychological and psychiatric professions use the term to diagnose a broad range of deviant behaviors, while the definition commonly used for legal purposes describes vandalism as the "willful damaging of the property of another" (Gifis, 2003, p. 122; Goldstein, 1996). Best suited for the purpose of shedding light on the vandalism of library materials is the following extended definition, cited in Arnold Goldstein's seminal work *The Psychology of Vandalism* (1994):

> The willful or malicious destruction, injury, disfigurement, or defacement of property without the consent of the owner or person having custody or control by cutting, tearing, breaking, marking, painting, drawing, covering with filth, or any such means as may be specified by local law (FBI *Uniform Crime Report*, 1975) (pp. 19-20).

Who Vandalizes Library Materials and Why

“Vandalism is motivated by behavior. Who engages in such behavior in any given instance is in substantial part a function of motivation” (Goldstein, 1996, p. 23). For the literary environment, arson presents the most severe form of vandalism. While incidents of individuals setting fire to books out of anger, frustration, or disagreement with their contents are not uncommon, history has shown that:

> When books and libraries are destroyed, it is inevitably in the context of a
>
> struggle over beliefs and resources. Local incidents, framed as political or
>
> religious protests, may, with onset of war, escalate into ethnic cleansing […].
>
> In war, destroying an enemy’s cultural infrastructure is key to domination and
>
> surrender (Knuth, 2006, xi).

The destruction of the Library of Alexandria in 642 B.C.E. by Caliph Omar; books lost to fires during the 16th century Inquisition; the widespread popularity of burning secular works in France between 1659 and 1789; German students and patriots gathering at Wartburg in 1817 to burn books deemed un-German; the loss of the library at the University of Louvain (France) at the beginning of the First World War; the well-documented book burning events organized by Germany’s Nazi Party in 1933; Pol Pot’s dictatorship in Cambodia; the Taliban rule in Afghanistan; and the destruction of Iraq’s cultural heritage during the first and second U.S.-Iraqi wars, are some of the most horrific examples involving book-related vandalism (Fishburn, 2008; Knuth, 2006). At the same time, they are powerful reminders of the importance of the written word.

To those wishing to exert control over others, books are a dangerous threat standing in the way of achieving set goals. After all, books are filled with knowledge, wisdom, experiences,

opinions, worldviews, descriptions of historical events, and so much more, making them powerful allies that help to defeat misguided ideologies and end dictatorships. However, neither does every act of vandalism result in a catastrophe of national or international proportions, nor do the majority of incidents involve arson. Similar to the case of book theft, there are many different levels of and reasons for vandalism.

Vandalism occurring on a regular basis in libraries is, with some exceptions, most often the result of "thoughtless, lazy, egocentric, or cheap people cutting articles from reference books, frequently removing entire pages" (Goldstein, 1996, p. 143). Other common types of mutilation encountered all too often by this paper's author in the scope of her work include broken or missing book spines, partially ripped pages, highlighted or underlined text, food stains, damage caused by liquids, as well as comments and drawings scribbled across entire pages (see Appendix A). Most of these incidents appear to fall, at first glance, into the first three of six primary categories of vandalism, first established by sociologist Stanley Cohen in the 1970s and listed by Rebecca Knuth in *Burning Books and Leveling Libraries* (2006):

> *Play*: Heedless damage that results from play or self-entertainment.
>
> *Malicious*: Destruction motivated by hatred or pleasure in destroying but is relatively non-specific in target.
>
> *Vindictive*: Damage carried out as a form of revenge.
>
> *Acquisitive*: Destructive actions aimed at acquiring money or property.
>
> *Tactical*: Damage that results from a considered and planned initiative to reach a goal beyond money.
>
> *Ideological*: Damage calculated to support a specific social or political cause, similar to tactical. (p. 7)

However, A.A. Maidabino argues that where university library collections are concerned, necessity rather than vindictiveness, malicious intent, or criminal drive is the primary reason for occurrences of vandalism, listing "students' dissatisfaction or unfamiliarity with library services, the lack of knowledge of replacement costs and time" and "the lack of concern for the needs of others" as the primary reasons that cause students to mutilate or damage collections" (Maidabino, 2012, p. 242).

Regardless of cause and relatively mundane in comparison to the devastating effects of book burning, acts of "casual" or necessity-driven vandalism are nonetheless important indicators of the underlying aggressive and destructive tendencies harbored by the people committing them. In fact, small-scale vandalism acts should never be underestimated, as they may be the warning signs of escalating acts of severely ill offenders. This was found to be the case in Northern Alabama libraries, where, beginning in March 2004, hundreds of children's books were mutilated. After the initially seemingly unrelated incidents multiplied and occurred in several locations, librarians' suspicions led to police involvement, who came to the conclusion that "the culprit or culprits are pedophiles who 'razor the pages out and take the faces of children and put them on the nude pictures of men and women and fantasize'" (American Library Association, 2005).

With books disappearing or found mutilated at an alarming rate, and institutions facing budget cuts year after year, the question of what should or must be done to prevent theft and vandalism has become a central focus of archives, libraries, and special collections managements across the nation.

Prevention of Theft and Vandalism of Books and Related Materials

The Problem Defined

Oftentimes torn by "the tension that exists today between the right of free access to information and the need to preserve information," libraries struggle to achieve a balance between attracting patrons, researchers, and visitors without also allowing them to plunder stacks and decimate valuable collections (Cravey, 2001, p. 28). Undeniably, the success rate of theft in archives, libraries, and special collections is increasingly facilitated by the marked changes these institutions have undergone over time. For example, the formerly silent halls of study with closed stacks and stern librarians are now inviting library and information environments offering a wide variety of patron services. While such modernization efforts are certainly attractive and bring to the library many persons who perhaps would not have set foot in a traditional environment, they simultaneously present a source of stress for librarians and staff who find themselves increasingly caught between the desire to uphold the creed of their profession and to protect a libraries' holdings (Cravey, 2001).

Existing Preventative and Security Measures

Books, articles, online publications, conferences, and workshops detail the latest theft and vandalism prevention theories and mechanisms - or remind of those in existence. Invested in preventing their holdings from being stolen or mutilated, archives, libraries, and special collections review best practices on a regular basis and consider their adaptation to improve existing means of theft and vandalism prevention.

In a currently typical security set-up, archives and special collections, usually housed away from general collections, close their stacks to all but authorized personnel, maintain separate reading rooms, and create strict user policies. Visitors store all of their possessions in lockers, personal information is recorded, use of materials is supervised, and some of the most valuable items are replaced with facsimiles (Association of College & Research Libraries, 2009;

Center & Clark, 2004; Cravey, 2001; Hunter, 2003). Even so, materials continue to disappear from archives and special collections on a regular basis. In similar fashion, public and university libraries invest tens of thousands of dollars in the purchase and maintenance of electronic theft prevention systems and devices, employ security personnel, install closed-circuit cameras, experiment with "Radio-Frequency Identification" (RFID) tagging, provide staff awareness training, stamp and mark materials, restrict some collections to reserves-only access, provide photocopy and scanning services, offer convenient interlibrary loan options, digitize popular materials, and purchase duplicates of the most popular items (Bahr, 1981-82; Cravey, 2001; Evans & Ward, 2007; Shuman, 1999). Still, items are stolen daily from public and university libraries across the nation.

Additional Preventative and Security Measures

It thus appears that the situation of theft and vandalism in libraries today is hopeless. Regardless of the amount and level of electronic security and the vigilance exerted by staff, librarians, and security patrols, library materials are continuously removed from libraries without being checked (Evans & Ward, 2007). Such, however, is a somewhat one-sided assessment, ignoring the fact that the majority of books and related materials are borrowed and returned according to the rules of the institutions that house them.

Whereas, in the archival and special collections environment, supervision of visitors and researchers by trained personnel is still the primary means of theft and vandalism prevention, public and university libraries increasingly rely on electronic security measures. Larger facilities, extensive collections, extended open hours, staffing and funding issues, as well as increased foot traffic due to additional patron services offered, make it all but impossible to effectively supervise the comings and goings of each library patron. "While electronic security systems are

neither the only or necessarily the best means of insuring the safety of all collections, the steady increase in their installation reflects a growing awareness of the extent of library losses" (Bahr, 1981-82). This is especially true with security systems such as sensing screens, which are strategically placed at entrances and exits: They provide both visual and audible reminders to visitors that theft in libraries is being taken seriously.

With technology increasingly becoming part of every aspect of daily life, libraries are now being equipped with new and updated electronic security and surveillance systems. At the turn of the millennium, forward thinkers such as Bruce Shuman (1999) and Pamela Cravey (2001) envisioned the use of biometrics and robotics for the detection and deterring of library theft and vandalism. Futuristic ideas at the time, biometric scanners, for example, are now finding their first application in airport security. However, until such costly and as of yet mostly experimental systems become more widely available and affordable, archives, special collections, and especially public and university libraries could attempt to lessen incidents of theft and mutilation by providing "more photocopiers, cheaper photocopying services, and by publicizing the effects of collection mutilations" in the form of, for example, a "campus-wide campaign through display and exhibition of mutilated books and other library materials" (Maidabino, 2012, p. 242).

While Maidabino's suggestions are sound, relatively affordable, and definitely worth considering, it appears that a simple, time-tested and effective measure has by now largely slipped through the cracks: Signage reminding patrons that theft and vandalism are crimes. Written in clear language with graphics or pictograms, signs and posters could easily be tailored and updated to suit different needs. For example, signs in reference areas could provide facts, signage installed near foreign language sections would, not surprisingly, be multilingual, and

posters in the library's children's corner could replace words with pictures. In addition to relatively low-cost signage, libraries that currently disseminate information for patrons via TV screens could consider adding multimedia reminders about theft and vandalism to the on-screen rotation. Here too, the messages could vary from simple, single-screen messages to attention-grabbing "commercials," to animated mini-stories.

Lastly, in keeping with Maud Minster's (1942) conviction that theft and vandalism prevention must be taught to heighten the effectiveness of any type of theft prevention measure, children's story time events could include appropriate readings and puppet plays about the topic. Similarly, "teaching of library culture and ethics through training of education" could be incorporated into information literacy sessions for students or used as examples in any number of workshops held as part of public library programming (Maidabino, 2012, p. 242).

Conclusion

Theft and vandalism pose ongoing threats to library collections that are difficult to counter. While some acts of theft and vandalism are committed by the mentally ill, most incidents occur because people are negligent, unaware of the seriousness of their transgressions, or feel they are entitled to take what is offered for free. Whereas by nature, archival and special collections environments facilitate security efforts to some extent, public and university face great challenges in this area. Until technology advances sufficiently to meet the specific needs of collection security in today's libraries, best results may be achieved with a combination of electronic security systems, vigilant observation by staff, librarians, volunteers, and security patrols, and back-to-basics measures such as the installation of posters and signs, multimedia playbacks, and educational events.

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Appendix A

Examples of book vandalism