



Riley Dunn & Wilson Ltd.

Specialist Bookbinders & Conservators

Short Run & On Demand Printers

Library Binding A guide to why and when to bind

Those responsible for binding policy along with most librarians must continually ask themselves the question, "Why and when to bind".

The decision regarding binding lies more often than not with the professional librarian and whether or not there is a binding policy in place within the organisation.

What material to consider for binding

There are two main types of material for binding. The first covers both fiction & non-fiction material and reference type books. These would in almost all cases be categorised as books for rebinding. The second group is first time bindings where unbound sets or journal periodical parts are brought together and bound as a book.

Fiction, non-fiction and reference material

If we look at the first type of binding and ask the question "Why?" there are a number of reasons:

- It can save you money as, in almost all cases, it is cheaper to rebind than to purchase a new copy, should it still be in print.
- By changing the appearance you can encourage issues.
- To extract maximum life from the book by adding strength in the new binding.
- To maintain worthwhile titles in active use.

Not every book will require or indeed warrant rebinding and consideration must be given to the durability, importance and relevance of content, the degree of demand, ease of replacement, cost of options and whether it can, in fact, be rebound.

When jackets are showing some sign of distress or where the original binding structure is starting to break down, covers become detached, sewing becomes loose or broken, adhesives separate and pages come out. These are all indicators which are worthy of consideration on whether the time is right to rebind. Failure to heed these warnings will almost inevitably lead to books falling apart, pages being lost or damaged along with a distinct lack of interest from the borrowers.

Journals and periodicals

Many libraries are subscribing to electronic mediums in this category but there are still many libraries that, for any number of good, sound reasons, still purchase journals in paper format. The cost of these subscriptions can, depending on the subject matter, be very expensive for the library to buy whether the journal is produced monthly or quarterly or whatever. Binding up the parts into strong cloth covered bindings including index and contents information makes good sense, it can:

- add shelf life to the book
- reduce the risk of parts being stolen

- reduce the shelf space required as unwanted advert-type material can be removed at the binding stage
- add value to the collection
- offer protection from the environment

Whenever possible unbound parts should be bound as soon as all relevant sections have been received from the publishers.

About our Services

RDW can offer you advice and assistance with all your binding and storage needs, we are always willing to provide solutions to problems, whilst earnestly seeking ways in which we can make you, the librarian, more relaxed and confident when dealing with us and accessing our services.

We have designed and implemented RDW online, an Internet based service to assist librarians in preparing books for binding. We are a one stop shop for all types of binding, offering simple paperback reinforcing, reference and periodical binding, all forms of storage mediums and a full conservation and restoration service for those special historic volumes found in most library shelves. We have also helped out libraries where disaster has befallen them, handling fire, smoke, water or dust damaged collections using treatments and skills to restore the material back onto your shelves.

