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“Return to Sender… in Better Condition”

“Taking care of business… one book at a time.”

October 22, 2026





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The power of Plastic Covers for Books



The Problem

The misery of ILL Books: From the Post Offices to the Library Users



The misery of ILL Books

- High wear and tear in interlibrary loan (ILL)
- Frequent handling across multiple institutions
- Damaged items delay access
- Increased replacement (borrowing libraries) and repair (lending libraries) costs

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Bottom Line

Shared collections = shared responsibility

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The Impact For Resource Sharing

Condition Impacts Access



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The Negative Impacts

Damaged items = removed from circulation

Slower turnaround times

Reduced lender confidence

Hidden costs across consortia

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Bottom Line

A book’s poor condition affects everyone

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The Solution

A simple & cost-effective solution



Plastic Covers = Respect + Reuse

- Protect high-use materials
- Extend lifespan of books
- Improve durability in transit
- Low-cost, high-impact intervention

Bottom Line

Plastic book covers enhance the durability of frequently shipped books and demonstrate respect for shared materials by protecting them from wear and tear

The Workflow

Flexible

Implementation



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Where It Fits in Workflow

- Lending or borrowing can decide whether the purchasing of the covers can be part of acquisitions
- Lending libraries can purchase the plastic books covers during the circulation review
- Borrowing libraries book covers can be added by ILL staff as needed

Bottom Line

✓No major workflow overhaul required

✓Easy to integrate into existing steps

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Cost vs Benefit

Small Investment, Big Return





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It Is Worth A Try

- Low per-item cost
- Reduces replacements
- Saves staff repair time
- Improves efficiency

Bottom Line

Preventing damage is cheaper than buying a new book

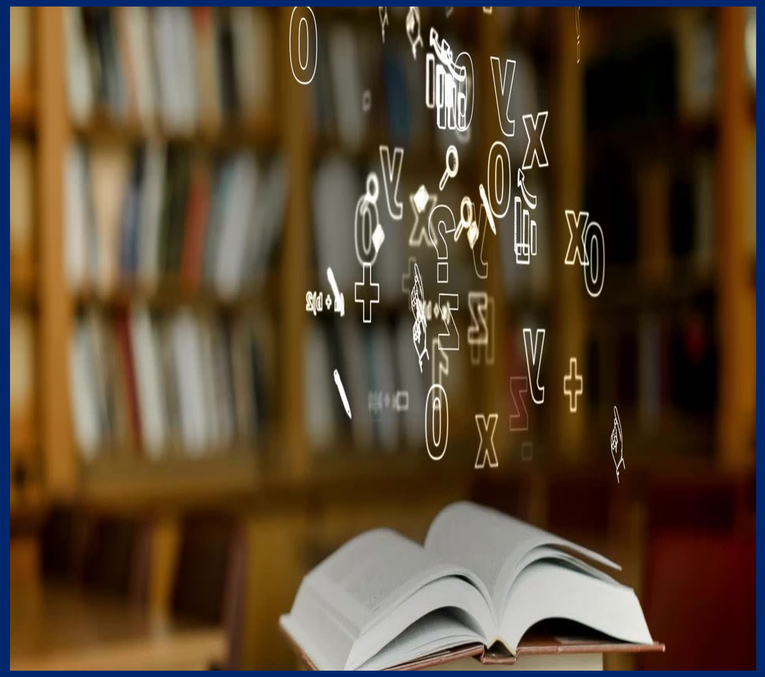
Proven Solution

The Results



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The Hofstra University Experience



- Fewer damaged returns
- Almost zero email from lending libraries regarding damaged books
- Faster ILL turnaround
- Better user experience

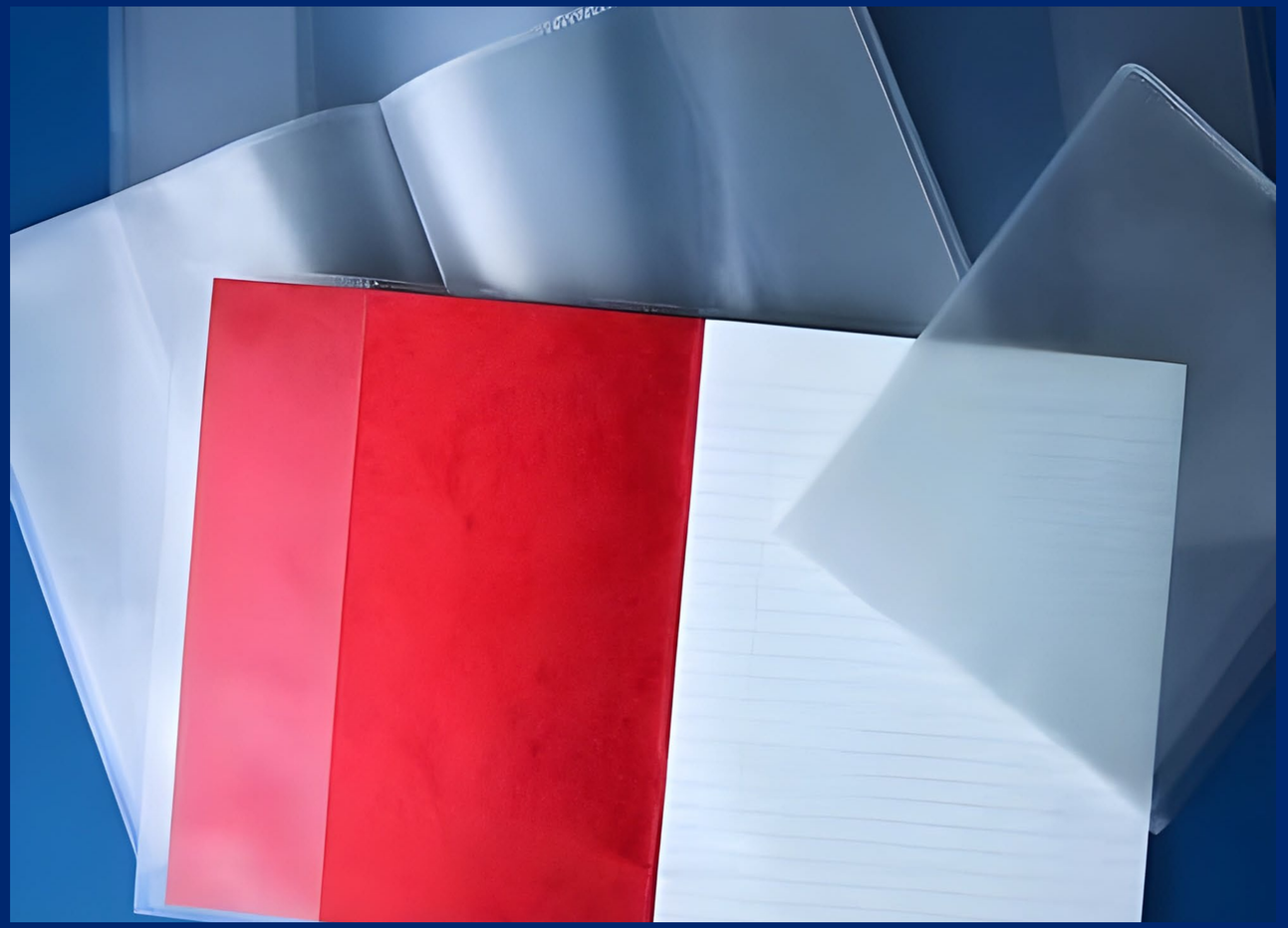
Bottom Line

We have saved money



Consortial Value

Beyond One Library



The Benefits

Four reasons to try



Builds trust between libraries



Supports shared collection longevity



Encourages standard practices (if adapted by consortium groups)



Strengthens resource sharing (if adapted by consortium groups)

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Bottom Line

Better condition = better collaboration

Sustainability Angle

Reuse Is a Strategy



The Two R's (Reuse and Respect)

- Fewer replacements = less waste
- Plastic covers may be reused multiple times as long as they remain in good condition
- Extends life of physical materials
- Can help with institutional sustainability goals

Bottom Line

Covering ILL books with plastic covers is a small action with a measurable impact

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Don’t Be Cruel… to Other People’s Collections





Live Demonstration and Questions & Answers





Thank you

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https://libguides.hofstra.edu/libraryhome

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