

Product Review: The CoLibri Book Covering System

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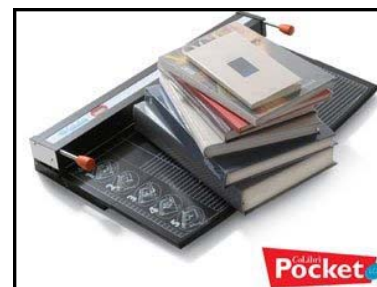
One of the highlights of attending an American Library Association (ALA) Convention is meandering through the trade show and discovering all the new and innovative products available for libraries. Our introduction to the CoLibri Book Covering System was a result of just such an adventure.

The CoLibri System is a new method of attaching plastic book covers using a machine that welds the cover edges together as it customizes the cover. This creates a cover that does not have to be attached to the book with tape. Books of all sizes can be covered using one of three standard sizes of covers, as well as magazines.

When contacted, the CoLibri representative came to the library within two weeks to demonstrate the system, with product in hand. We were impressed from the beginning and requisitioned for the initial investment of \$2,500.00 which included the book covering machine (\$995.00) and supplies valued at \$1,500.00 (1,900 covers). The machine comes with a lifetime guarantee, as long as only CoLibri covers are used, but the welding bar must be replaced every 20,000 uses at a cost of \$65.00.

When deciding to switch from stiff plastic and mylar covers we did an extensive cost and time management analysis. The results of that analysis convinced us to switch to the CoLibri System. The average cost to cover one book with a stiff plastic cover is 91 cents plus labor. The average cost to cover one book with a mylar book jacket is 95 cents plus labor. With the CoLibri system, the average cost to cover one small book is 72 cents, and the average cost to cover one large book is 75 cents (plus labor). The average time to cover a regularly sized book with a mylar cover is approximately 60 seconds, and covering a paperback book in stiff plastic can take three minutes. The average time to cover a regular book or paperback with the CoLibri System is 20 seconds.

We are now into our second year of using the CoLibri System. Over the past two years we have



realized the advantages and disadvantages of this book covering system.

One of the advantages is that no glue or adhesive is necessary to attach the covers to the books. Instead they are heat-sealed to fit snugly around the book. This allows the covers to be reused if they are in good condition when the books are withdrawn. Application is simple and does not require repetitive motion in wrists, hands or arms. When applying some types of traditional covers, stress is placed on all of these, creating the potential for Worker's Compensation claims.

Another advantage is that there is less stress placed on the binding of the book during the covering process, and during use. Paperback books are especially vulnerable when rigid plastic covers are used. By contrast, CoLibri covers result in fewer broken spines, fewer pages falling out and fewer mends. A greater area of the book is physically covered by the CoLibri cover, giving more protection to the book. The material covering the book is of archival quality and humidity releasing, reducing the yellowing of covers and pages. The books are also not damaged by adhesives or tape.

During our second year of usage, the company offered a maintenance special on the machine at a reduced cost. This included replacing the welding bar and re-laminating the work area. The machine was off site for approximately three days, including the shipping time. We feel the machine is in better working condition since the update.

The main disadvantage is that over time the covers show wear quickly on high use items. But overall, we have been very pleased with the efficiency and ease of use of the CoLibri Book Covering System. Our savings in cost and time have far out-weighed the minimal number of items that have not withstood high impact usage. We feel that we have made a wise choice in purchasing the CoLibri System.