

## Tagging Your Collection

By Gretchen Freeman / June 24, 2015

Applying RFID tags to your collection doesn't need to be an insurmountable task if you pair the right method with the right circumstances. Start by answering a few simple questions.

- Can you close the library for tagging—either for a short “blitz” or until tagging is completed?
- If you can't close the library, will you use existing staff, temporary staff or volunteers to tag? Or have tagging provided as a professional service by Tech Logic?
- Are you moving the collection into a new space or building?
- Is there space behind the scenes to handle A/V materials away from the shelves or bins?

With every method, be sure that returned materials are tagged before they are re-shelved into tagged sections of the library. You don't want to end up with untagged materials intermixed into sections you've already completed!

**If the library can close** then tagging becomes an “all hands on deck” priority to tag as many materials as possible. Two-person teams use a portable tagging station in the stacks to efficiently handle and tag each item on the shelf. One person removes items and inserts tags; the second person writes the barcode to the tag. Plan on 200-400 items tagged per hour with this method. Even if the library can't close until completed, a two or three-day blitz is a big boost towards finishing the collection after the library re-opens. Use the blitz to do areas more difficult to handle for tagging such as children's materials, A/V and non-fiction. Fiction is faster and less difficult to handle while the library is open.

**If the library remains open**, use a portable tagging station in the stacks (preferably before or after the library is open) or take sections of materials to a tagging center. A/V materials are best handled behind the scenes because of the special handling needed to apply tags to CDs, DVDs, and boxed sets.

**If temporary staff or volunteers are available**, the library may be open or closed—and tagging can be accomplished at the shelves or behind the scenes. Be sure your tagging teams understand the repetitive, physical nature of this work and can follow instructions carefully. This approach means materials are being tagged consistently, every day without impacting library staff—but it does take longer.

**If the entire collection will be boxed or unboxed for a move** then the best method will be an “assembly line” to pass materials down a line for tagging. This is the most efficient tagging method with six workers tagging 8,000 or more items per day. As a bonus, set the collection

to an “Inventory” status before you begin and pass the materials over an antenna to check them in as a last step. You’ll have a quality check of your tagging process and a complete inventory of the newly tagged collection as it is boxed!

### **A few words of advice before tagging begins.**

- Begin tagging new materials and returns as soon as the software to write tags is available. Decide if you will mark the tagged materials for visual identification—such as a straight line across the top of the book block. That mark will save removing materials from the shelves when you can see that they are already tagged.
- Establish and document tagging guidelines. Include guidelines on tag placement for hardback books, A/V, kits, boxed sets, paperbacks, board books, and other formats. Also plan for staff to set aside materials that have tagging issues such as foil-bound paperback.
- Talk through carefully how to shelve returned materials. Keep a chart in the back room showing which areas of the library have been tagged. Of course, the more areas that area tagged, the more returns have to be tagged before being re-shelved. Allow staffing for this step which can be significant for several weeks following the tagging project.
- Do a “dress rehearsal” of whichever method you select for the library and check the tags at the end of the rehearsal. Are they correctly positioned and programmed? Is security turned ON? In the assembly line process, was each item inventoried? Discover any issues with process, people or software before they are really big problems for the collection. And have a staff member perform periodic quality checks as tagging progress.

Remember that Tech Logic’s professional implementation team can guide your choice of tagging methods to insure the best results.

*—Gretchen Freeman, Principal Librarian/Strategist, Tech Logic Corporation has over thirty years of experience implementing technology solutions for libraries — resulting in improved workflow and freeing staff from repetitive, time-consuming tasks.*

## RFID Tagging Guide

### Things to know before you start:

- Make sure that the RFID tag roll is far from the antenna so you do not accidentally write to other tags.
- If an RFID tag has a black mark it indicates that the tag is defective. Do not use this tag.
- All tagged and coded items will receive a blue mark somewhere to help in shelf-reading for tagged books. The placement of the blue mark varies for each type of material.

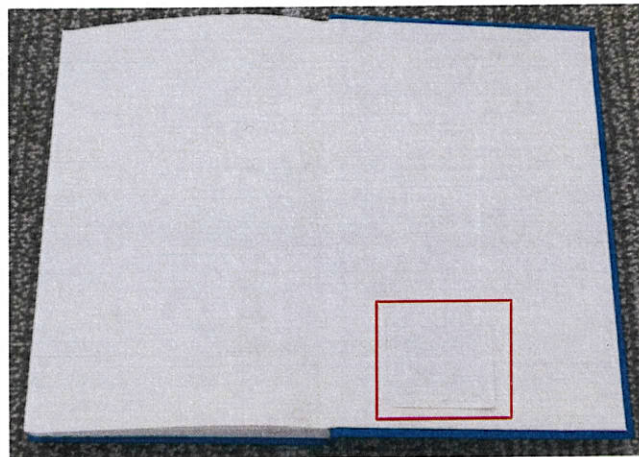
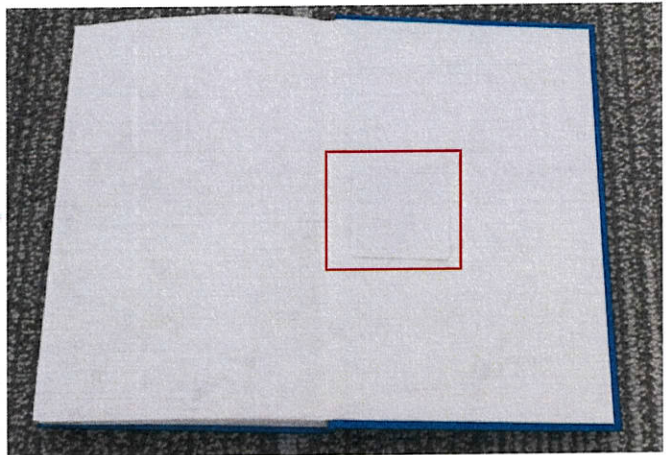
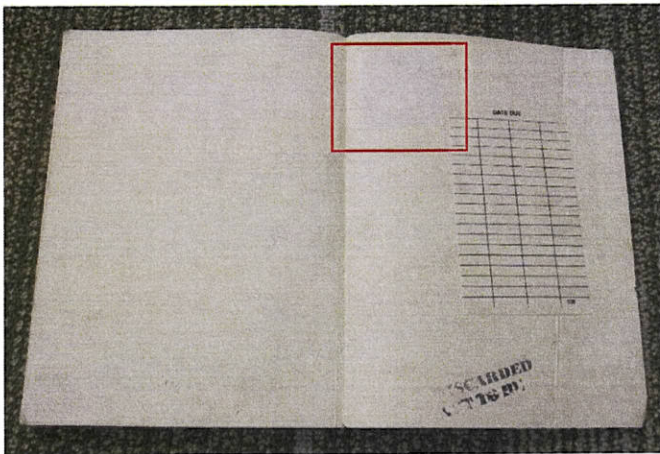
### General Troubleshooting:

- To double check a stack of tagged and coded material for “security on”. If any items read as ‘off’, click the “security on” button once to change the whole stack to ‘on’.
- For these common errors:
  - o “fail to write” Click ok or yes, but note that this error can reset the entire workflow. If you are tagging multi-part items, you may have to reset the two ‘parts’ fields.

## Tagging Books

- Place the RFID tag on the inside back cover. Cover anything except the book's copyright information (see **Troubleshooting** for more information).
- Stagger the placement of the RFID tag from book to book. This will prevent tags from overlapping when two or more books are placed in a stack on an RFID antenna.
- Always keep the RFID tag closer to the spine of the book rather than the edge.

### Examples of staggering placement



- After successful scanning, place blue mark on top of book pages, close to the spine.



### Common Troubleshooting Book FAQs:

- Remember to place the RFID tags where they won't be creased, bent or damaged. Metal and electronics can affect how well the RFID tag is read by an antenna. If in doubt, tape the tag to the item and test it on an antenna.
- *Metallic book jackets*: If the antenna is having a difficult time reading the tag, test if placing the tag on the outside of the book will work before permanent placement. Place tag on outside of book following same placement guidelines as inside the book.
- *Board books*: if regular tag placement will cover text on the last "page," the tag can be placed on the back outside cover near the spine. If possible, do not cover the UPC code.
- *Books with CDs or DVDs*: treat like AV material. Add Stingray tag to disc. Code the square tag as part 1 of 2 and the stingray as part 2 of 2.
- *Paperbacks with taped down flaps*: place tag on any flat part of inside back cover (even if it covers author biographies).
- *Graphic novels/Manga/Backwards printed books*: tag the book in the 'back' (AKA the left cover; the opposite of a normal left to right book's back right cover)

## Tagging disks with X-Range or 'Sting-ray' tags

- Place the tag directly on to the label side of the disk.



- Make sure the RFID tag is centered so that it doesn't hang off the edge of the disk.
- If a CD or DVD has a hub tag on the disk, try to position the RFID tag to not overlap the sticker. If it does overlap, the thickness *may* cause issues when playing the disk.
- For DVDs/Blu-Rays, if there are multiple disks in a case, sting-ray tag the last movie/show disk. Do NOT tag bonus features discs.
- Most AV items will get both a square and a sting-ray RFID tag. Code the square tag as part 1 of 2 and the stingray as part 2 of 2. For placement of square tags, see drawings on next pages.
- Books on CD will only receive a square tag on the case. For placement of square tags, see drawings on next pages.
- Make sure to use RESET button after tagging multi-part items, before tagging single items.
- For blue marks placement on AV materials, see drawings AV Tagging Appendix

### Common Troubleshooting AV FAQs:

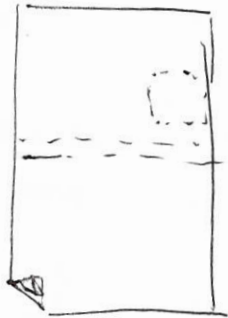
- *Discs with two playing sides:* use a square RFID tag to tag the case.

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# DVDs / blurays

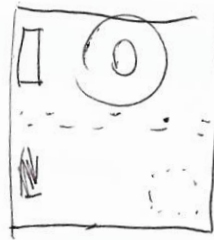


→ remove jacket if possible  
flip over or if in two parts,  
back part



Same 'plan' in books, can  
stagger up, but not to right

→ if cannot remove jacket  
inside case in front.



→ if foil jacket - set aside

# Video Games

Same as DVD/blurays

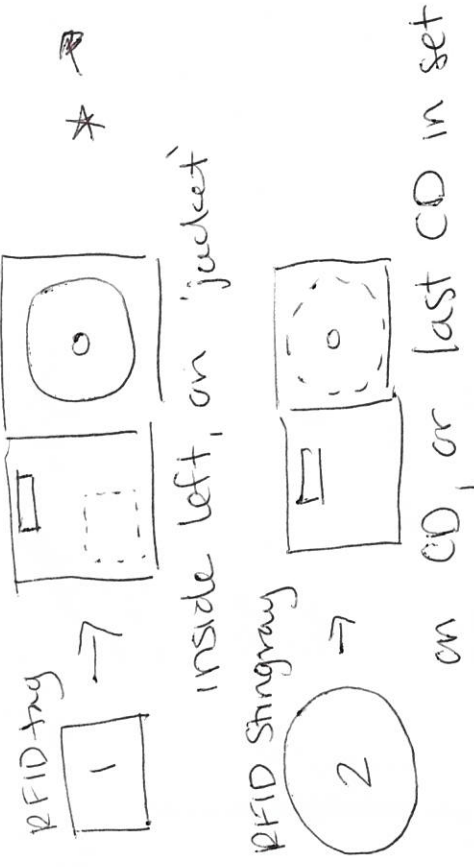


on last disc in  
set

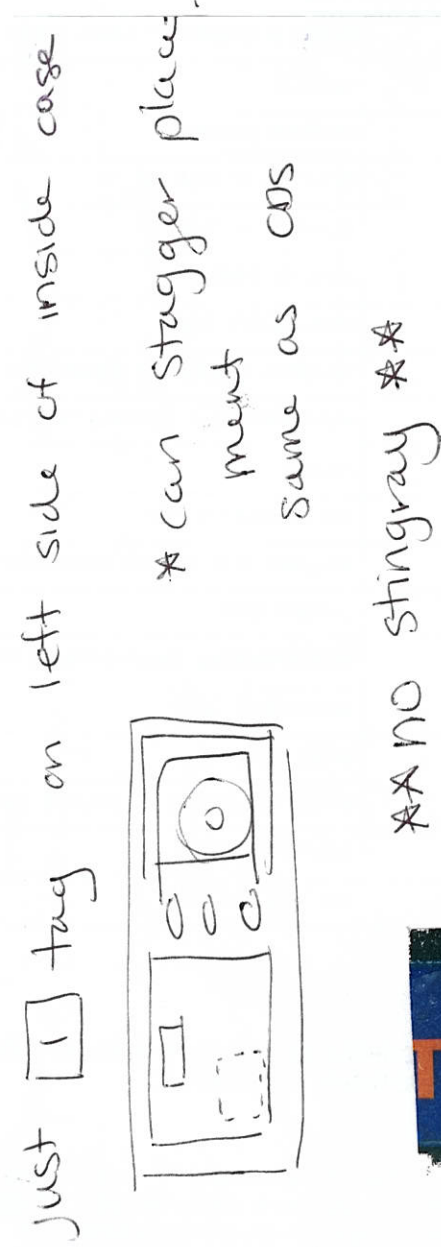


dot on  
sticker

CDS



BK-CDS



AV Tagging Appendix

