

The Endpaper

A Newsletter from HBI and the Library Binding Institute

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Technical Director's Report



by Werner Rebsamen

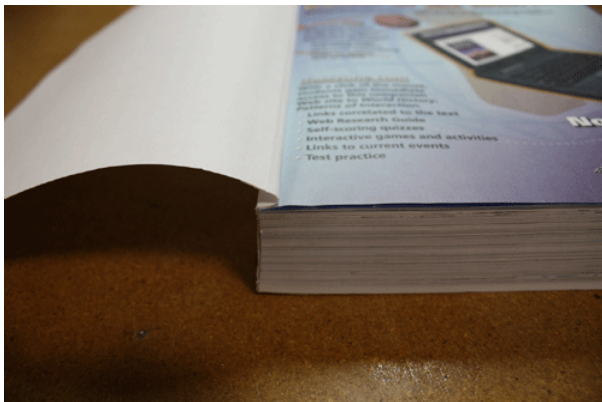
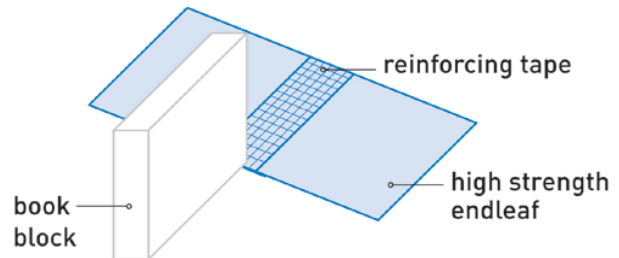
The LBS Universal Endsheets - a Bookbinder's Positive Experiences

When LBS introduced the Universal Endsheets, I had some reservations about it. After all, there was no fold to flex cover on it. This unconventional endpaper construction consists of only two single sheets connected with a strip of reinforcing cloth. After decades of experience with testing hardcover bound bindings and educated as a master bookbinder, it was a "natural" for me to be somewhat skeptical about such a new, patentable idea.

All this changed when this writer had an opportunity to see the Universal Endsheets in actual use at Houchen Bindery in Utica, Nebraska. The dedicated managers at Houchen Bindery just invested in the very popular BQ-470 PUR adhesive binder. Binding 3,000 individual books or titles a day is no easy task, especially with so many variable thicknesses and dimensions of the book blocks. Unlike the Combined Endsheets, where the distance between the fold and the thickness of the book block is very critical, the Universal Endsheets structure is very forgiving. A 1/2 inch more or less between the mounted sheets does not matter. It will just show a little more or less of the attractive reinforcing cloth. All an adhesive binder operator needs to concentrate on, is to center the book block on it. Feeding the endsheet on the binder is simple, it transfers into the binder just like a paperback cover.

Universal Endsheets

- Designed by and exclusively available from LBS



Side-Gluing is Critical

When using Universal Endsheets, a precise side-gluing is an absolute must. Without additional support on the sides, you should forget using this particular binding technique. First, it is an aesthetical item. Nobody wants to see an exposed spine preparation such as notches or glue. Second, it is a critical item of strength. The forces exerted onto the spine may partially peel off the cloth from the spine. In regards to the critical tasks of side-gluing, the Horizon binder observed at the Houchen Bindery did a remarkable job. It accomplished this with a controlled application of a small strip that was approximately one-eighth of an inch.

Binderies with small perfect binders, which feature no side-gluing device, should look into a variety of adhesive application tools, capable of applying a controlled strip of adhesive onto the book blocks or onto the endsheet itself.

Advantages of Using a Universal Endsheets

As the structure of a Universal Endsheets features only paste-down sheets, your hardcover bindings will look different. When you open a conventional hardcover bound book binding, you always will see a fly-leaf. This does not change if you tip-on a conventional, folded or a Combined Endsheets. When opening a bound hardcover book with a Universal Endsheets, the first impression will be similar to that of a softcover binding. This also offers some unique advantages, actually more than any other endsheets structure. For example, if you wish, you can add the same color sheet, a different color, a printed sheet, or a personalized sheet, for example. When die-cutting out a window on photo books, there is no need to cut through the fly-leaf, in other words, you can forget about problems with alignments.

In the old days of upscale, quality hardcover bindings, we used to construct endsheets with an exposed cloth hinge. Publishers paid a premium for such quality, exposed cloth- reinforced bindings. The Universal Endsheets does show an exposed cloth hinge at no extra cost! It even gets better. Just imagine what a sophisticated perfect binding line costs, one that is capable of feeding folded endsheets and line the spine with a reinforcing material. Most digital printers/binders cannot afford such expensive equipment, nor would those be, in most situations, the right machinery for small, one of a kind on-demand and photo book production. With the Universal and/or the Combined Endsheets, this problem is solved. The endsheets are fed like a softcover and line-up the spine with a cloth reinforcement. Virtually, any small adhesive binder can now do those hardcover binding tasks, provided as stated above, good side-gluing is managed.

Cover Structure - Joints

A regular, folded endsheet, aligned flush at the spine, needs only a small 1/4 to 5/16 inch joint. For those not so familiar with technical jargon - the joint or hinge is the area and specifications are how far the cover boards are off-set from the spine. This relatively small measurement is sufficient to flex the boards without exerting too much stress onto the binding (splits between pages 2 and 3). With a Universal Endsheets, you must bear in mind that the cloth is glued-down onto the sides, front and back. In other words, the flexing does not take place at the binding edge. If the side-gluing applied is 1/8 inch wide, you must add that measurement to your cover calculation. That 5/16 hinge used for adhesive bound books should now be 7/16 wide. This requires a wider building iron, similar to that of a side-sewn binding structure. Then one must ask, what dimensions between the mounted sheets be specified and ordered from LBS?

Let us take a book block with a 1 inch bulk (thickness). Assume the side-gluing is 1/8 inch wide. In order to flex the cover boards, a hinge of at least of a 1/4 to 5/16 inch will still be needed. The cloth shown on the boards should be at least 1/8 to 1/4 inch. This total amounts to 3/4 inch on each side. Add to this calculation the thickness of the book block of 1 inch and the boards used. Therefore, the distance between the mounted sheets should be 2 1/2 inches. What you need to avoid on the finished hardcover binding is paper in the hinge areas or worse, at the edges of the boards. Then you would take a chance that the mounted paper may partially pop loose.

Using the Universal Endsheets has many other advantages. If you open a hardcover binding with a regular folded endpaper and conventional spine lining, you then must flex a sheet of paper plus the spine lining material. This adds stiffness to the joints. You can forget about flexing if you use a tabbed endsheet. The big advantage of the Universal Endsheets is the cloth only hinge structure. **Your hardcover binding will open without exerting any stress onto the fragile first and last adhesive bound sheets.**

During my apprenticeship, we constructed bindings so that when the instructor evaluated them and lifted the cover-boards, the first or last pages were not allowed to move at all. If you managed no movement at all, you got an "A." If the first or last sheets pulled-up, you got an "F." Sample books bound with the Universal Endsheets and evaluated at LBS all got an "A".

Cost is also a consideration. As stated, if a Combined or a Universal Endsheets structure is used, no additional spine reinforcements will be needed. If you compare this with a conventional folded endsheet and a gauze, your reinforcement is a far superior choice as it is strengthening the critical hinge from head to tail. LBS offers endsheets in a variety of colors and weights. Information is available on their web-site, www.lbsbind.com.



Congratulations on a great idea for coping with the many tasks of short and long-run hardcover binding endeavors!