

Strategies for Collection Development in Academic Libraries

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Abstract - This study discusses the importance of collection development in libraries. Various factors have to be taken into consideration while developing a qualitative collection for the benefit of the users. These factors include policies, principles, techniques and procedures, problems associated with collection/ development and weeding out as well. It is equally important to evaluate the collections to assess its use and moreover the usefulness of collection development in electronic environment. Authors conclude that, library professionals need to take utmost care in developing a balanced collection, which enhances the quality of the library. The study is attempted on the basis of experience. Selection policies and practices play fundamental role in developing a strong collection. Collection development involves a number of activities by which a library acquires materials of all types by implementing the selection policy and the plans for document acquisition. Collection development is a dynamic and continuous activity. It involves the users, the library staff, and the subject experts on the selection team. It is not an end in itself, but a means to develop a need-based, up-to-date, and balanced collection fit to meet the document and information needs of the users.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Collection Development Policy (CDP), Collection development, policy, techniques, academic, libraries

I. INTRODUCTION

Collection development is one of the most challenging and imaginative processes of the library profession whereby, the library staff acquires a variety of materials to meet the demand of its users. The phrase "collection development" does not seem to be new to the librarians for most of them often using it as a synonym for the terms "Selection" and "acquisition". It may, however, be pointed out that "collection development", as also mentioned by Gardner and rightly so, is more encompassing a term since it involves more than just selection and/or acquisition. In recent years, the term "Collection Development" has come to encompass a board range of activities related to the policies and procedures of selection, acquisition and evaluation of library collection. Collection development is an important activity of a librarian. The users are the best judge of the collection of a library. They are in the best position to know what is available in the library and what is or not. Again, of all types of library users in university, researchers and scholars are in an advantageous position to offer comments on the quality of the collection, because they are well familiar with the whole range of literature in a given subject area. They may therefore, usefully suggest as

to what could be acquired in order to strengthen the holdings and also fill in the gaps in the existing collection.

II. COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Collection development, as defined here, is the systematic intellectual exercise of defining what library materials will be acquired by a library with reference to a well-defined mission or strategic programs. Collection development generally manifests itself in policies and written guidelines that direct the actual selection and acquisition of materials. Consequently, selection and acquisitions are treated here as procedural parts of the total collection building process. Collection development in library is largely a special application of general collection development principles and procedures. An important first step is to identify the mission or strategic thrusts of the institution or library. Preparation of collection development policies and evaluation of collections should follow. Cooperative agreements relating to collection development and preservation are ancillary issues "Acquisition and collection development focuses on methodological and topical themes pertaining to acquisition of print and other analogue library materials (by purchase, exchange, gift, legal deposit), and the licensing and purchase of electronic information resources." - IFLA (The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) "collection development" as "the process of planning a stock acquisition programmed not simply to cater for immediate needs but to build a coherent and reliable collection over a number of years, to meet the objective of the services".- Harrods's Librarians Glossary (6th edition)

A. Concept of Collection Development

Collection development is the process of acquiring books/documents and non-print media needed to satisfy request for the information needs and to attain systems objectives Activities includes.

1. Assessing the users need
2. Evaluating the present collection
3. Determining selection policy
4. Determining selection policy
5. Coordinating selection of items
6. Re-evaluating
7. Preserving

III. OBJECTIVES OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

A library should acquire and provide all the relevant reading materials to its clientele so that the basic function of the library are fulfilled from the vast amount of literature, which are also increasing day by day. A library should acquire all other books on the related topics; a library should contain all the reading materials pertaining to the history and culture of a particular country, city, place or institution as the case may be Information needs of the users (Gopinath and Rao, 1982).

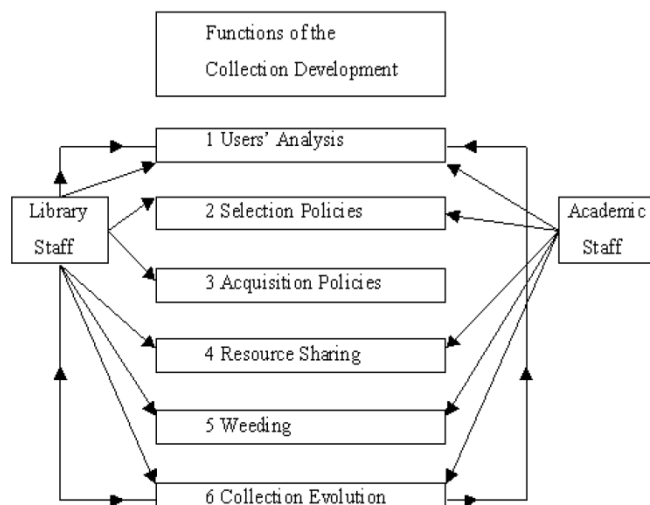


Fig.1 Collection development

Harrod's Librarian's Glossary (6th ed. 1987) defines collection development as "The process of planning a stock acquisition programme not simply to cater for immediate needs but to build a coherent and reliable Collection over a number of years, to meet the objectives of the services." Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science says "Library collection is the sum total of Library materials-books, manuscripts, serials, Government documents, pamphlets, catalogues, reports, recordings, microfilm reels, micro cards and microfiche, punched cards, computer tapes etc. – that make up the holdings of a particular library.

The meaning of the term "collection development" has undergone considerable change with the progress in the field of librarianship. "Collection Development Policy", "Selection Policy" and "Acquisition Policy" are the terms used interchangeably by the librarians but they are, by no means, synonymous. They represent a hierarchy in which collection development being a planning function is placed at the highest level. Selection is the second level of decision making and acquisition the third level. It is process by which library acquires various materials implementing selection decisions and collection development plans. Hence, selection and acquisition polices, though independently different form the content of the collection development plans. Collection development is a cluster of

functions which together shape the holdings of a library (Indian Library Association, 1985) (Figure 1).

IV. VARIOUS STEPS INVOLVED IN COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

1. Analysis of information need of the users.
2. Formulation and implementation of selection policy to suit the objectives of the library.
3. Acquisition programmers to build-up a balanced collection.
4. Resource sharing and its impact on collection development.
5. Weeding out programmes to ensure effectiveness of collection.

Collection development implies selection, acquisition and evaluation of the library collection in order to see that both print and non-print materials that are available in a library are really useful to the clientele. Its purpose is to find out the user's information needs to; find out the users information needs, select and acquire documents, that are really useful to the clientele, periodically review the collection for weeding out unwanted and outdated documents from it (Dhimal and Sinha, 2002).

V. NEED OF BOOK SELECTION

The need of book selection arises due to the following reasons-

1. The world of book is so large that a library, however large and resourceful, cannot procure all the materials published and available in the market;
2. The library collection is meant for the user of a particular library so that library collection should commensurate with the need and requirement of the users;
3. The physical limitation of storage naturally imposes the necessity for selection.

VI. FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE BOOKS

Selection of the library materials is of prime importance in a library. The librarians with the concern of library staff and with the help of various user groups should perform the job of selection of the library material. In selection process the following factors should be considered:-

1. The Library: The kind, objectives, size and goals of the library, specialization areas of the library;
2. Users: Need and demand, requirement and intellectual level of the users, the number of users;
3. Existing Holding: The number of books, its nature and characteristics which are already present in the collection; the merits of the books which are going to be selected;
4. Fund: The amount allotted for acquisition of books/journals

VII. PRINCIPLES OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

1. Access Materials are collected so that they may be used by any researcher regardless of background, research interest, educational attainment, or research goal. Special Collections supports the free exchange of ideas and information by promoting the widest possible access to our materials.
2. Documentation Cultivating compelling evidence requires expertise on content and context. Stewards appraise potential acquisitions to determine which materials provide meaningful evidence of ideas, communities, values, and experiences. Stewards select materials so that communities may see themselves in the past by engaging with evidence found in archives and rare books. \ Special collections promote accountability; material evidence documents, reflects, and challenges assumptions about past knowledge and experience.
3. Inclusion Collecting requires engaging in multi-voiced, inclusive perspective, broadening known networks, and being deliberate in the expansion of voices represented in Special Collections' holdings.
4. Contextually Researchers benefit from access to collections of rare books and archives that constitute dense networks of connected ideas, activities, historical actors, and work. Special Collections believe that these contexts enhance the research value of these materials, which is an important consideration in acquisitions decisions.
5. Reliability The evidentiary value of archives and rare books requires transparent and shared understanding of how and why they were created, selected, and maintained. Sources of materials (including donors and booksellers) must be responsible for documenting and disclosing materials provenance and any events that may complicate their authenticity.
6. Responsibility Responsible stewardship requires full consideration of the ecosystem of materials already in our care to ensure that Special Collections maintains the resource capacity to collect and steward materials indefinitely.
7. Preservation Access to materials over generations is only possible through the thoughtful stewardship of physical and digital content. Special Collections will make reasonable efforts to ensure the preservation of materials held by Special Collections into the future.
8. To allow Special Collections to make an informed decision, donors and sellers provide information about the scope and depth of their materials. This may take many forms, including an inventory of proposed materials or an on-site survey, as determined by the steward.
9. As part of this review of materials before transfer, please inform Special Collections of any materials that may need to be temporarily restricted from research use, either to protect your own privacy or legal rights or those of third parties. In special cases, Special Collections has mechanisms to limit researcher access for period of time. This decision is agreed to and documented within the deed of gift or sale.
10. Before transfer, donors and sellers will stabilize materials. This may include putting loose papers in folders and labelling files, reviewing and labelling sound and video recordings, and checking for environmental contaminants.
11. Special Collections will help to manage safe and professional transit of physical materials and transfer of electronic records.
12. Smith College will provide a letter acknowledging the receipt of gifts that may be used for tax purposes.
13. Special Collections selects materials that best represent evidence of life and work. As part of normal activities, archivists may remove some records that provide less research value. Donors may choose to have these materials returned.
14. Materials acquired will be described shortly after transfer and this description will be available online, for world-wide discovery. Special Collections promotes the presence of all collections, even collections that may not be immediately accessible for research.
15. These materials will be used in the course of research, to the extent allowed by legal agreement, either onsite or through duplication requests.
16. Special Collections may put materials or representations of materials online to facilitate wider research use.
17. Context. Providing context to the content of historical materials helps researchers understand. How and why materials were created or collected, and what they meant to the person or organization who held them. Often, this is as easy as making sure that file folders and digital directories have labels that explain what the documents are and to what they relate. If, after looking through materials, you realize that they do not speak for themselves, it may be useful to write a memorandum that speaks to the events, activities, and people that these files represent to include with the donation.
18. Authenticity Researchers may learn as much about a person's life by the way records are organized as the content of the records themselves. Try to keep materials in a way that is authentic to the way that you produced and used them. Special Collections is less concerned about how tidily the materials are organized and much more concerned that we all have the context needed to understand what they mean to you.
19. Uniqueness or rarity of content Special Collections seeks to collect works that come from your hands and your mind, or that you may have collected and greatly influenced you but were never widely available. Special Collections is less likely to acquire books, clippings, widely-published articles, or other materials that might be found in a library, newspaper, or journal database.

VIII. COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Collection development is considered as one of the primary tasks for any library and information center. It is a dynamic and continuous activity. In order to develop a balanced, user-oriented and active collection, a well-planned and thought out system has to be evolved by the library and information managers in close association with the representatives of various user constituencies. Such a system will not only help develop need based collection but also save money, time and space that would, otherwise, be wasted on developing irrelevant, outdated, and passive collections.

IX. COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Collection development policies (also known as collection development policy statements) have proven valuable tools for many collection development and management librarians in academic libraries.

Fourier defines a collection development policy (CDP) as “the written statement that provides planning and implementation guidelines for most collection building tasks.”

According to Fourie, a CDP contains three kinds of statements:

1. Objectives which has a direct bearing on the institution’s mission and philosophy.
2. Principles which must be flexible enough to cover different situations that might arise.
3. Implementation including staff procedures to ensure stability in decision making.

The American Library Association (ALA) defines CDPs as “documents which define the scope of a library’s existing collections, plan for the continuing development of resources, identify collection strengths, and outline the relationship between selection philosophy and the institution’s goals, general selection criteria, and intellectual freedom.” Vogel sees them as sets of “directions for the orderly selection, acquisition, and management of the materials [librarians] make available to their patrons.” CDPs are also defined as “guidelines for decisions on the selection and retention of materials in specific subjects, to specific levels of collection depth and breadth.”

Collection development policy is the course of action adopted for developing the collection or stock in a library. A policy can be unwritten convention or a written document. Preparation and review of a written policy should also encourage the library and institution to define or refine their goals and help the library collection to conform to the aims and objectives of the institution and of the library, by translating those aims and objective into clear and specific guideline, for each stage of materials handling – Selection, acquisition, processing, housing, weeding and discard.

These guidelines should cover all subject fields and all types of library material. The library has to acquire materials in various formats to assist the academic staff in preparing course materials for various media and students to earn through them (Chopra, 1994). (Figure 2). Several author like Katz, MA grill and Hickey” mentioned the advantages of a written collection development policy. Their view can be summarized as follows:

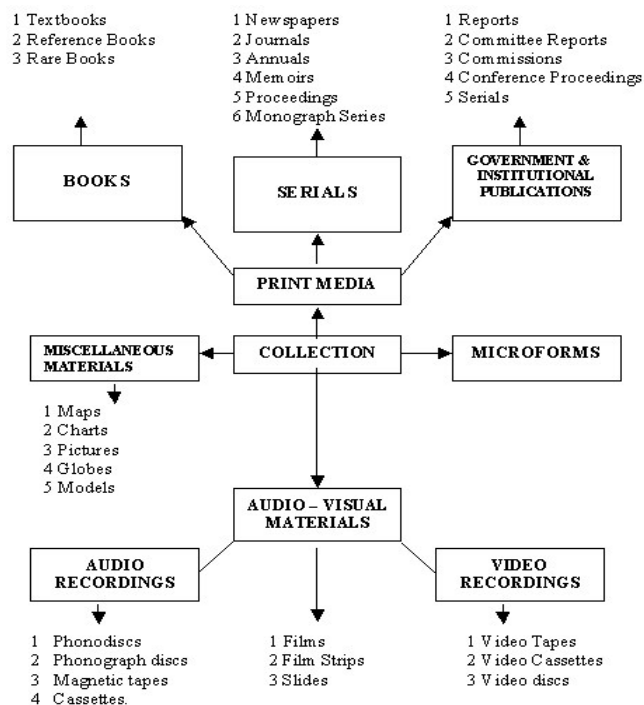


Fig.2 Course materials for various media

1. Expresses openly its relationship with the objectives of the parent organization / library.
2. Forms the basis for planning collection development.
3. Provides practical guidance in day to day selection of reading material free from personal bias.
4. Helps in determining the best method of acquisition.
5. Support and assists in justifying the selection a collection.
6. Acts as a rational guide for budget allocation and also helps in long range budget planning by stating priorities and outlining growth and development goals.
7. Helps in making best use of resources
8. Facilitates cooperative programmers like interlibrary loans, resource sharing and networks.
7. Assists in establishing methods of reviewing materials before purchase.
8. Offer suggestions on types of materials to be stored, weeded and discarded.

Collection development policy of an academic library should be guided by the aims and objectives of the organization/institution, the needs of the user’s community, and the availability of financial and other resources (Krishna, 1986).

X. WEEDING POLICY

Weeding policy is an important component of CD policy. Weeding documents means removing documents which are found not useful or not serviceable from a library. Document removed from the library may be completely discarded where they are not serviceable; and they are donated to some other library where they may be useful; or kept in a reserve place called a dormitory library.

Weeding policy means a policy statement on:

1. What materials are to be weeded?
2. When to weed?
3. Should weed?
4. How to weed?
5. What to do with weeded materials.

With the explosion of knowledge, documents are now being published in millions. New areas of knowledge are coming up and some of the earlier ideas and thoughts are becoming outdated. For a modern library it is a question of money and space to get all new documents which are relevant and useful. Particularly space from keeping the documents has become a major problem for University Libraries. Saving space is not the only reason for thinking about weeding of documents. Some of the documents may get worn out because of continuous usage. But most important of all is that some documents may become useless since the thought content therein has been modified in a subsequent edition; or because the information in the document has become absolute. In modern times, documents may be weeded out after transferring the information contained in them on to microforms and computer tapes and disks. Report of library committee of the University Grants Commission speaking on the need for weeding out says; "Many works lose their value within one generation, say in twenty-five years. By that time, their thought-content of same may even turn out to be wrong. In a service library no useful purpose is served by retaining such pedestrian books and providing self-space for them after they have become obsolete. (Indira Gandhi National Open University 1998)."

XI. CONCLUSION

The concept of CD, or materials acquisition, has been evolving recently to that of collection control or collection management. This concept encompasses the design of a process for selecting bibliographic materials to meet the needs, goal, objectives and priorities of a library. The major function of collection development plan is to identify procedures for acquiring new materials. The plan should also help in allocating the budget to meet various needs, and establish policies for reviewing and modifying the plan to meet the changing needs. Storage, weeding, and preservation policies also need to be established as part of collection management. Collection development implies building up collection with quality material through proper acquisition and weeding policies. Objectives of the parent

body and the needs of the users are very important in collection development. In order to see that useful and relevant documents are not lost in large numbers of mutilated, worn-out and obsolete document such documents are to be weeded out periodically. Weeding policy should be rational and based on periodical evaluation of the collection. Library committee and its sub-committee can play a crucial role in collection development by framing policies and formulating programs to implement them.

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