



Practical Issues for Managing our Collections in the Early 21st Century: Collection Development

by Wendy Davis

What is “collection development”?

Collection development is what you as librarian do to meet the needs of your clients. It covers a range of interrelated activities concerned with building and maintaining your library collection. It encompasses:

- identification of subject materials and information resources in all formats for purchase;
- identification of alternative sources for materials to owned ones – resource sharing possibilities, licenses, document delivery;
- management of the budget for each subject area responsibility;
- conducting needs assessment and evaluation studies and trends;
- creating and monitoring performance measures (outcomes);
- creating approval plan profiles and monitoring the performance of the plans;
- monitoring information policy issues that might impact customer groups and regularly communicating these to customers, for example, copyright and intellectual property, filtering, and licensing issues;
- developing gateways and access paths to information on the Internet; and
- identification of local collections that should be converted to an electronic format and made available over the network.¹

The aim of most libraries is to develop a “balanced collection” ie “one that reflects proportionately the various programmes, instructions and research conducted in an institution at a given time”² However, collection development is no longer just about buying the right books and journals to suit the needs of your patrons. It has been changed by technology and by budgets.³

Most libraries face a number of problems/challenges in collection development including:

- selection tools;
- changing nature of resources (print vs electronic);

¹ Arinola Rebecca Adekanmbi and Benzies Y. Boadi, “Problems of Developing Library Collections: a study of colleges of education libraries in Botswana,” *Information Development* 24 (2008): 275.

² Adekanmbi and Boadi, “Problems of Developing Library Collections,” 276.

³ Michael Stoller, “Building Library Collections: It’s Still about the User,” *Collection Building* 24, no. 1 (2005): 5.



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- changing patron expectations (on the shelf vs e-access);
- explosion of availability of eresources including single titles (ebooks) and aggregated collections eg *Oxford Biblical Studies Online*;
- curriculum changes;
- lack of staff;
- inadequate IT/administrative support;
- increasing costs of materials
- fluctuating \$
- lack of space (books on shelves vs people/computer space)

So, what is the solution to all these problems?

- formulation/updating of a Collection Development Policy
- systematic ongoing review/evaluation of collection
- weeding collections
- consortia formation
- adequate funding
- shifting emphasis to electronic journals⁴

What is a Collection Development Policy?

A Collection Development Policy (CDP) may include

- vision and mission statement of the library
- profile/history, clientele, access
- what is collected and retained (ie, principles for selection, other selection guidelines, subject coverage, strengths, formats)
- what criteria are used in collection
- how and what materials are discarded
- policies regarding gifts/donations, binding, replacement and repair
- special collections
- how the budget is allocated
- accountability
- notes on ordering and acquisitions processes
- cooperative relationships with other libraries
- how to deal with new topics
- process for review
- other relevant topics

A CDP needs to take account of current use but also potential use. Once written it should be approved by the highest levels of your administration, so that they know what is going on and their responsibilities. A CDP can be very useful at times, particularly when the librarian is called upon to justify decisions—to the administration, faculty, patrons or other parties.⁵ It also makes it clear that the library has a plan and is clear on how they are going to carry it out.

⁴ Adekanmbi and Boadi, “Problems of Developing Library Collections,” 279.

⁵ Michael W. Handis, “Practical Advice for Weeding in Small Academic Libraries,” *Collection Building* 26, no. 3 (2007): 85.



“Thorough knowledge of the collection is an important Collection Development tool, particularly when it comes to electronic resources. It can assist in determining resources that complement current holdings.”

Examples of CDPs:

National Library of Australia <http://www.nla.gov.au/policy/cdp/>

National Library of New Zealand <http://www.natlib.govt.nz/catalogues/library documents/collectionspolicy>

University of Queensland <http://www.library.uq.edu.au/ias/cdp/>

University of New South Wales <http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/monos/pdf/collectiondevpolicy082006.pdf>

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Islander Studies <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/collections/policies.html>

University of Auckland Theology and Religious Studies <http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/about/biblio/cdp/cdptheol.htm>

University of Otago <http://www.library.otago.ac.nz/services/CM/CDP/index.html>

Regis College, University of Toronto http://www.regiscollege.ca/library/collections_03

Lohe Memorial Library, Australian Lutheran College <http://www.alc.edu.au/library/about/collections/>

Carmelite library <http://www.carmelitelibrary.org/collectiondevpolicy.htm>

Dalton McCaughey Library <http://www.dml.vic.edu.au/MCD/PolJTTL.html>

Tools for Systematic ongoing review/evaluation of collection⁶

Thorough knowledge of the collection is an important Collection Development tool, particularly when it comes to electronic resources. It can assist in determining resources that complement current holdings. There are three main approaches:

- **User evaluation** (user surveys, focus groups, use statistics ie reports from your library system (ILS), databases, sampling, discussions with lecturers/researchers to find out exactly what sort of collections best suit their needs);
- **Physical assessment.** Useful evaluative information includes physical condition, copyright date, language, number of copies and density of titles in a classification area. This is labour intensive and obviously easier in a small library but it can provide information that simply is not available from a computer; and
- **Assessment of specific subject support.** There are a variety of methods including core curriculum guides, checklists/ authoritative bibliographies, analysis of ILL requests and consultation with faculty.

⁶ Jim Agee, “Collection Evaluation: A Foundation for Collection Development,” *Collection Building* 24, no. 3 (2005): 92.



“Significance 2.0 defines the meanings and values of a cultural heritage item or collection through research and analysis, and by assessment against a standard set of criteria.”

Sensible Weeding suggestions⁷

- **ILS reports.** Identify items that have not circulated for years and review them

Or

- **Dust.** Identify those items with a thick layer of dust on them indicating that they haven't been moved in years!

- **Mould** or silverfish/insect damage. Discard anything with mould on it immediately. It is a health hazard. Fumigate or discard anything with obvious insect damage.

- **Item by item.** Check due date slips for last borrowed date. If more than 5 years, pull for review. Also check physical state ie wear and tear—loose pages, binding, tears. Pull for repair or discard. Consider whether or not it is important to keep all editions of works.

- **Item records.** Item records give the date of the barcode's creation, sometimes who created it, and a count of the number of times an item has circulated. Most ILS systems also allow a count for browsing. Browsing is when an item is removed from the shelf, used in the library, and left somewhere in the library. A stacks cleanup by students or staff retrieves these items. By using the circulation module for “discharge” the item, the ILS records this action as a browse, since the item was not charged out. Item record information can usually be generated in a circulation ILS report. Materials browsed but not charged out are candidates for retention.

- **Serials and weeding.** To keep or not to keep? Things to remember include: does any other library have it in print? Is the online version of the title from a reputable vendor, such as JSTOR or is it likely to ‘disappear’? Interlibrary loan can get articles requested from other institutions retaining the print title, but often not from institutions with electronic access only.

- **Published primary resources.** Keep. If necessary you could withdraw them from the main collection and transfer them to stacks or compactus shelving.

- **Special subject matter.** Theology is a specialist subject and holdings in theology, by and large, are not extensive outside our specialist libraries. Check the holdings on Libraries Australia or Te Puna. This may give you guidance on the advisability of weeding particular items from the collection. *Significance 2.0—a guide to assessing the significance of collections* has just been published. “*Significance 2.0* defines the meanings and values of a cultural heritage item or collection through research and analysis, and by assessment against a standard set of criteria”.⁸

⁷ Agee, “Collection Evaluation,” 86.

⁸ Roslyn Russell and Kylie Winkworth, *Significance 2.0—a guide to assessing the significance of collections* (Rundle Mall, SA: Collections Council of Australia, 2009), accessed July 5, 2012, <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/publications/significance2-0/pubs/significance20.pdf>.



“Our role in the preservation of materials is important but not pivotal.”

Weeding is an important part of collection development, if avoided by most librarians when possible. Consult faculty and subject specialists if necessary, but remember that they are only looking at a specific area—you have the whole collection to look after. A faculty member that says that every book is important is no help at all. Mistakes may be made. Materials will be discarded that may well need to be reordered at some point, however most theological libraries are not research libraries. We do not need to keep everything. Our role in the preservation of materials is important but not pivotal.⁹

Consortia Formation

I think everyone is probably aware of the benefits of consortia agreements by now. A consortia can be formed when a number of libraries come together to negotiate a discounted price. ANZTLA is the perfect umbrella for this, and already we have a number of consortia in operation.

2009 ANZTLA Online Database Consortia with EBSCO

- TLA Religion Database,
- ATLAS (ATLA Serials)
- Religion & Philosophy Collection (RPC),
- Catholic Periodical Literature Index (CPLI),
- New Testament Abstracts (NTA),
- Old Testament Abstracts (OTA),
- Philosopher’s Index; and
- Christian Periodical Index

ANZTLA contact: Ruth Millard library@ridley.edu.au

Proquest Religion (full text database)

Contact Beth Shalini beth.shalini@anz.proquest.com

Alexander Press <http://alexanderstreet.com/products/religion.htm>

- Digital Library of Classic Protestant Texts
- Digital Library of the Catholic Reformation
- Digital Karl Barth Library.

ANZTLA contact: Ruth Millard library@ridley.edu.au

Oxford University Press <http://www.oxfordbiblicalstudies.com/>

- Oxford Biblical Studies Online

ANZTLA contact: Wendy Davis wendy.davis@flinders.edu.au

Free trials are available on most products and we are ready to welcome new members to the consortia at any time.

⁹ Handis, “Practical advice for weeding,” 87.



“News of new consortia deals are sent out on the ANZTLA forum, so stay tuned. If you think a consortia deal might be possible, let everyone know.”

ANZTLA also have a consortia agreement with SAGE publications for their Religion journals.

- *Aramaic Studies*
- *Biblical Theology Bulletin*
- *Communio* (Print only)
- *Currents in Biblical Research*
- *The Expository Times*
- *Feminist Theology*
- *Irish Theological Quarterly*
- *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
- *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
- *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
- *Studies in Christian Ethics*
- *Theology and Sexuality*

If your subscription is with an agent you will need to notify them to cancel when the renewal list comes out. ANZTLA members would need to renew directly with SAGE (rather than with a subscription agent) and quote ‘ANZTLA’ when ordering.

Contact Rosalia Garcia rosalia.garcia@sagepub.co.uk

Journal of Pentecostal Theology, Ecclesiology, Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus and Journal of Moral Philosophy are now being published by Brill rather than SAGE. Brill has agreed to honour the SAGE deal on existing subscriptions so if you get an invoice for the full subscription price, make sure you query it with Brill.

As you are also probably aware, there have been some unsuccessful attempts at negotiation with Wiley Blackwell, particularly on WCC titles (*Ecumenical Review, International Review of Mission and Ecumenical News International Bulletin*). They have agreed to offer discounts to third world and very small libraries. If you think you have a case, contact them.

News of new consortia deals are sent out on the ANZTLA forum, so stay tuned. If you think a consortia deal might be possible, let everyone know. You don’t have to wait for the current contact people to get the ball rolling.

Budgeting

The budget needs to reflect your library’s mission.

It needs to be practical and easily implemented, be accountable and show sound fiscal management, and reflect current and anticipated [College] curricula, programs and objectives. It also needs to have flexibility for contingencies related to economics, purchase opportunities, and changing curriculum and program needs, as well as taking into account any collection evaluations and assessments, publishing patterns and costs in a discipline, reliance on monographs versus serials in a discipline, user populations and intensity of library use.¹⁰

¹⁰ Debbie A. Smith, “Percentage based allocation of an academic library materials budget,” *Collection Building* 27, no. 1 (2008): 30.



*Make the budget stretch:
 Make the most of open access journals
 Cancel print subscriptions to journals accessible through full text databases or collections
 Use document delivery rather than purchase expensive items*

...

Most libraries have used one of two methods—historical precedent with annual increments, or use of a formula. Historical precedent is not necessarily a good way to go, because it can lead to an unbalanced collection if it is not tied to the CDP, particularly if you depend on faculty to make recommendations.

ATL uses a Percentage based allocation system. This system is one that is widely used¹¹

- 10% retained for electronic reference (ATL cross discipline & college)
- 40% allocated for periodicals
- 50% allocated for monographs according to the following formula
- ATL 8%
- History 6%
- Systematics 22.5%
- Biblical (OT) 11.25%
- Biblical (NT) 11.25%
- Pastoral 17%
- CTC (Catholic) 8%
- PWC (Uniting) 8%
- SBC (Anglican) 8%

This formula is slightly different from the original formula set up on the establishment of the ATL in 1997. Variations reflected the lower average price of monographs in Pastoral. History was given its own allocation rather than being within Systematics and the ATL budget was increased to provide a contingency and discretionary fund as well as catering for interdisciplinary and general acquisitions. Colleges provide 33.33% of the budget however they are able to add funds to their departmental fund at any time. Acquisitions is 28.5% of the total library budget (excluding infrastructure costs which are paid by ATCC)

Suggestions for making the budget stretch

- Make the most of open access journals¹²
 Open Jgate <http://www.openjgate.com/Search/QuickSearch.aspx>
 ATLA <https://www.atla.com/products/Pages/default.aspx>
 Google custom search: <http://www.google.com/cse/>
- Cancel print subscriptions to journals accessible through full text databases or collections eg Religion and Philosophy, JSTOR, Proquest Religion¹³ (note caveats mentioned earlier under weeding)
- Use document delivery rather than purchase expensive items

¹¹ Smith, "Percentage based allocation," 31-32.

¹² Apryl C. Price, "How to Make a Dollar out of Fifteen Cents: Tips for Electronic Collection Development," *Collection Building* 28, no. 1 (2009): 31.

¹³ Marianne Stowell Bracke and Jim Martin, "Developing Criteria for the Withdrawal of Print Content Available Online," *Collection Building* 24, no. 2 (2005): 61.



likely to be in low demand

- Reciprocal borrowing agreements eg. between ATL and Lohe Memorial Library
- Cooperation between libraries on purchases of expensive books, reference works and subscriptions
- Consortia agreements. (see above)
- Rapid delivery library consortia.¹⁴ Where patrons can browse multiple library OPACs (eg MCA), patrons can request material be delivered to their home library and a courier system operating between libraries would deliver material daily. This already happens in Tasmania between public libraries in Tasmania <http://www.talis.tas.gov.au/> and the ACT <http://www.library.act.gov.au/>

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Reciprocal borrowing agreements

Cooperation between libraries

Consortia agreements

Rapid delivery consortia agreements

Shifting Emphasis to Electronic Journals

We have already covered this. I think caution is still required, but if you have serious budgeting or space issues, I would give this serious consideration.

I'd now like to throw this session open to discussion on any of the issues I have mentioned or on this list

- Reference works
- Text books/multiple copies
- Recommended texts—all in the local collection?
- E books—does anyone have any in their collection? Do patrons use them? Are they value for money? Access problems?
- Suppliers—who to use, approval plans, Collection Manager, techniques for 'covering the field'
- Damaged books—repair or replace

¹⁴ Stoller, "Building Library Collections," 5.



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