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# Collection Development and Management in the Academic Libraries in the Modern Era: An Overview

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**Abstract:** *Every library collection ought to be created with a specific objective in mind. The collection may have been produced primarily for research and instructional purposes in an academic library setting. Information that is available electronically via the use of computer technology has increasingly complemented traditional media for information, such as books and microfilm, in recent years. This implies that the selection criteria and collection parameters for these new media forms must be included in the current collection development policy for an academic library. In order to match its collection development efforts with the evolving landscape of digital librarianship in the twenty-first century, an academic library must take into account a number of concepts and issues, some of which are examined in this paper.*

**Keywords:** *Academic Libraries, Collection Development, Collection Management, Digital Collection, Electronic Resources, Print Collection.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding the intricate interplay between the competing yet complementary resources that make up our academic libraries is necessary for effective planning for the future of these institutions' libraries. At least one print and one electronic information system will be used by us as we move into the twenty-first century, and it will be our responsibility to make these two systems operate together. In addition to the physical copy books on the shelves, information is increasingly computer-based and electronic. As a result, it's important to stay up to date on changes in the library and information professions and to engage in professional activities outside of the institution. Learning new computer systems, software programs, and media formats will become more and more necessary as time goes on. All libraries struggle with the problem of how to combine print and electronic resources while staying within a limited budget and maintaining service levels. Again, new demands are placed on librarians by electronic journals and networked



provision to other libraries. This implies that many librarians need to be both information specialists and computer technologists.

Collection development is a library activity that is specifically created to give the library a source of information that satisfies the needs of its target audience. Each section of the collection must be created with an application of resources compatible with its relative importance to the mission of the library and the needs of its users in order to achieve this goal. The most challenging and crucial task that academic libraries undertake is collection development, which includes planning, goal-setting, decision-making, budgeting, and the acquisition and evaluation of materials. Collection development policies, budgets, the type of materials to be collected, selection and acquisition, and collection assessment are the five components that best represent the specific actions involved in the process of collection development.

### **Collection Development Policy:**

Collection development policies are in place in many institutions to offer direction and advice during the selection process. Because collection development firstly decides whether or not the collection has the necessary types of materials, it has a direct impact on access to library and information resources.

The function of librarians in the academic setting is crucial in the gathering, organizing, and supply of information services to the academic community, starting with the current phase of the information age and continuing into the twenty-first century. The amount of information makes it extremely difficult for one person to independently identify the relevant subgroups. Again, due to financial limitations, libraries' roles in the distribution of information are changing, with a focus shifting from information ownership to access to information. It is becoming more and more important for librarians to act as intermediaries between users and information as they participate in the scholarly communication process.

As previously said, collection development librarians play a crucial role in many facets of the information industry. They are in charge of creating and maintaining the library's collection, and they should follow a stated collection development policy when carrying out their duties. The policy's guiding principles are system viewpoint, adaptability, and communication. The belief that both those who create and those who use the library's materials must see them as a whole resource is an underlying presumption.

Very frequently, a current collection development policy for an academic library includes selection criteria for the academic and research interests to be supported, the scope and intensity at which these subjects would be acquired, as well as details on the language, publication date, and formats appropriate for acquisition. A special emphasis can be placed in the policy statement on how print and electronic media should be incorporated into the overall collection development policy of an academic library setting, despite the fact that the difficulties in providing access to electronic resources call for a separate collection policy.



To integrate electronic resources as another format for collecting, collection development policy must be created or changed. When assessing a specific resource for inclusion in the library collection, three main characteristics must be taken into consideration. They are the material's accuracy, usefulness, and timeliness. These characteristics must be covered in the collection development policy, and they give the selector direction when deciding whether the source in question adequately satisfies the set of requirements outlined in the policy.

### **Budget:**

Today's librarians don't just buy the books that the faculty and other users recommend. They really assess the body of available sources, contrasting them with the research and teaching interests of their main clients, and choose the material from the on-site collection that will, to the greatest extent feasible, satisfy the current need. These librarians should weigh the costs and expected usage of traditional and electronic forms of a resource when deciding whether to buy or make an electronic version of it available. Although initially lauded for the creativity they enable, new technologies are now posing difficulties for library management in general and for library budgets in particular. It will probably be that for a long time to come, it will take longer to find the same information using information products available through a library than it does in a library that really owns the information sources. In order to have access to alternative sources of knowledge, both print and electronic, an academic library must set aside a sizeable amount of its acquisitions budget. Additionally, in an effort to maintain a well-rounded and balanced collection, the librarian must stay current on the format changes and cost issues affecting databases and recently released products on the market. He or she needs to retrain themselves on how to use literature selection tools and the commercial trade bibliographies that are sold on the market, including those from electronic database vendors.

Which medium is more expensive, for instance, when it comes to price? Is it possible to disregard the initial investment in favour of potential long-term advantages? Which resource will be more economical over time? It's important to carefully consider ongoing expenses like maintenance and subscriptions. The following queries regarding usage might also be brought up: Which is simpler to use? Which will be made available to the bulk of customers? What potential exists? Is there a market for this kind of resource?

It is necessary to take into account the price of supplying information in print form, which includes the price of collection, procurement, cataloguing, shelf upkeep, and circulation. There is, however, the argument that giving consumers access to print resources is expensive. Next, there is the following inquiry that must be made: Is the electronic medium more affordable? However, the answer to this query is also ambiguous. Currently, the networked information infrastructure as a whole is far from stable. As a result, a large portion of the production costs, including editorial work, are supported. Will the subsidy remain at its current level? I doubt it. In any case, it seems that a balance between using electronic documents sparingly and selectively on paper would be necessary.



### **Selection:**

One of the most important and creative aspects of a librarian's job is choosing the resources for a collection. Unquestionably, one of the factors used to evaluate a librarian the most frequently is the calibre of the collection that results. Are online libraries offering the information resources that their patrons most need? Are libraries giving their patrons a sufficient amount of access to the network's resources? These are important questions that require an answer in order to determine the efficiency with which libraries and librarians deliver their services.

Libraries can now get complete bibliographic descriptions of the book on tape or directly transmitted in a machine-readable format. However, the question of how to combine, or at the very least, choose, your media remains crucial. Some forms of communication are exclusive to a particular medium; for example, certain information is currently only available online or in the form of a book, journal article, or other print source. It becomes the responsibility of the collection development librarians to understand the content's source and use that source to satisfy the demands of the academic community, making the medium—while not irrelevant—of secondary importance. According to the situation, it's possible that a mix of print and electronic media will become necessary and leave the library with few options. Media options are available in an increasing variety of situations.

### **Selection Aids:**

A logical condition of selection is knowing whether a certain resource is present. Through evaluating sources, publisher advertisements, approval plan forms, and other methods, traditional library materials are located. The fast changes on the Internet and its ongoing lack of effective bibliographical control make it more difficult to identify Internet materials. Nevertheless, print periodicals and the Internet itself can both be used to find Internet resources. Additionally, there are numerous Internet tools accessible for finding resources on the Internet. One of them is the Internet Compendium, which is accessible via the ARL's gopher and serves as a clearinghouse for topic-specific Internet resource guides as well as a directory of electronic journals, newsletters, and academic discussion lists. The additional resources for finding information on the Internet include Yahoo, Lycos, and The WWW Virtual Library.

It should be simpler to convey information from a library or other source in computer-readable form in the future than it is to create a photocopy of it now. It is widely believed that over the next ten years, academic research will be most significantly impacted by electronic formats of information. It is strongly advised that libraries adopt a broader definition of access that include all document delivery methods that make use of appropriate technology to quickly send material to users from the location in which it is housed.

### **Resources for Collection:**

Information can be gathered from a variety of sources, including books, magazines, technical reports, standards, patents, microfiche/film, audio/video, and the full range of



computerized information sources and services. The majority of the electronic resources are found on CD-ROM, in online databases, e-journals, and on the Internet.

### **Print**

The choice and acquisition of electronic information sources, as well as their accessibility, are some of the topics covered in this paper. However, there are benefits connected with print when it comes to specific types of content given the current level of technology and human propensity. The librarian will be required to get a thorough awareness of the fundamental nature of the content. Both the personnel and the consumers must be trained on how to utilize the material, and particular equipment that is compatible with the product is required. It is vital to go through a process of ongoing education because software changes from product to product and occasionally. Copyright issues may also emerge when employing electronically published resources for document supply.

### **Electronic Resources**

Collecting digital data has more difficulties than collecting printed texts. There are many obstacles in the way of local electronic data collection. At many institutions, hardware and software limitations are extremely real. The additional cost of managing an electronic collection alongside a paper collection is sometimes insufficiently funded. For every electronic project to succeed, a necessary quantity of knowledgeable employees is required. The abundance and incompatibility of integrated library systems is still another significant barrier. But there is still optimism that these obstacles will all eventually be removed.

### **Dual Collections (Print & Electronic)**

Making the right decision for the information object's primary characteristic will be one of the key issues that must be solved in the new information environment. Will it be printed or electronic? Will both apply? This is a major problem. It is more complicated than simply choosing whether to buy a book in one format or another, whether to bind it or not, whether to toss it out after a certain amount of time, and so on. In contrast to print resources, the choice to acquire an electronic resource depends on the availability of, or the willingness to purchase, the appropriate technology to use the resource.

It is impossible to separate the technology used to support a resource from the resource itself. The quantity of user training that will be necessary and the potential demands put on the library's other services and resources may also be taken into account when choosing an electronic resource.

Dual collection systems will be the trend toward which collection development is moving, at least for the near future. Libraries have a large selection of printed resources, to start. The material currently available in print media will probably not be adequately supported financially for transition to electronic media. Such a relocation would be quite expensive. Given the likelihood that these print resources will continue to exist as collections, it is necessary to both preserve and improve access to them. This naturally



presupposes that the institutional communities will continue to find the materials' substance useful.

### **User and Services:**

Faculty play a crucial role in collection growth in academic libraries since their research initiatives and activities shape the collection's breadth and depth as well as the library's services. The faculty are more likely to focus their efforts on research at larger academic institutions because it is this activity that attracts the research funding needed to pay for the personnel and equipment required to investigate topics of interest in the laboratory. It should be remembered that the majority of faculty members are not yet directly impacted by electronic media, and among those who are, the majority needs to be persuaded that easier and quicker access to knowledge is a benefit of the electronic world of information. Ironically, collection development managers in research libraries face a different kind of challenge when trying to inform the patrons of academic libraries, who are primarily faculty and students, about the accuracy, dependability, and cost of information obtained online.

The convenience element will continue to dominate how people use library services, regardless of where those resources are physically situated, according to librarians. The stuff they want or need is clearly identifiable and located, so instructors and students will continue to use it where they find it. Because some library use is resource-focused, this is the case. The collections of items kept on-site and owned by libraries are being supplemented with information resources that are remote yet easily accessed utilizing innovative delivery mechanisms.

Use-centred metrics look beyond the collection itself, whereas collection-centred measures concentrate on whether or whether the library has acquired the materials it meant to. It examines whether library users can recognize and locate the resources they require, whether particular products are actually available, what unfulfilled needs there may be, and who the users are. The analysis of the findings from these investigations may offer guidance for other upcoming collection development tasks like planning, budgeting, or weeding. The common techniques applied in the use-centred collection strategy include circulation studies and user opinion surveys. To put it another way, use and user studies are crucial tools for methodically learning about user expectations, a user's approach to the collection, and what library users actually choose among the available materials.

### **Access:**

Utilizing electronic resources has evolved from using a "dumb terminal" to access online databases to using a high-speed, multimedia personal computer that is more powerful than early mainframe computers to "surf" the World Wide Web. Electronic mail and virtual libraries are just two examples of how complicated electronic resources have become. Academic libraries will focus on creating core collections of widely used materials that are physically on-site, as well as a body of resources that are not locally held but are still vital to the user community. Based on the following set of approaches,



academic libraries will develop into "logical gateways" between internal and external sources in the realm of electronic access:

- That university libraries will put their attention on creating core collections of heavily utilized items that are physically on-site as well as a body of resources that are not locally held but are nevertheless crucial to the user community;
- That in a networked system, resource sharing and cooperative collection creation become more viable possibilities;
- That the library will serve as a portal for a variety of accelerated document delivery services, both for profit and non-profit organizations.

It is safe to say that in the coming millennium, electronic resources will have a significant influence on information creators, providers, and consumers.

### **Networks and Resource Sharing:**

Network accessibility is necessary for end users to have direct access to libraries and/or other information services. The telecommunications infrastructure would seem to be quite significant here, along with cost and acceptance concerns. The need for libraries to continue making collection growth decisions appears obvious, even in a networked information environment like the Internet. All potentially useful electronic databases cannot be mounted for use on a local machine, nor is it always desired. It might be sufficient to assume that electronic resources with a relatively modest local user base are more likely candidates for network access.

Determining whether or not to network their CD-ROM goods has been one of the more significant issues that many librarians have encountered recently about the offering of CD-ROM services. Networking CD-ROMs is a given in some library circles, and for good reason. In actuality, not all CD-ROM products require networking, and in certain libraries, particularly those with smaller budgets, the expense of networking may outweigh any potential benefits, hence it is not advisable to do so. Before CD-ROM items are made accessible to a library's patrons, many administrative issues must be resolved, even in a non-networked CD-ROM setting. These concern issues with equipment, services, finances, and accessibility. Furthermore, offering access to bibliographic databases that are available on CD-ROMs as opposed to traditional media differs significantly. CD-ROMs are sometimes leased rather than purchased; therefore libraries do not actually own the discs in question. Only those rights are acquired that are specified in the license agreement that was signed by the seller of the library and database. A CD-ROM license often only lasts for a certain amount of time. Older copies must typically be returned or destroyed according to the terms of the license; if a library cancels a title, regardless of the money spent, it typically loses all access to the data in that database. The issue of licensing agreements is further complicated by multiple or concurrent user restrictions.

No library, regardless of type or size, can afford to become self-sufficient, and this is a well-known reality. To enable the cooperative sharing of library resources, networks or



consortiums must be established. The tendency is toward a system where the library serves as a hub for services, connecting users to databases, remote collections, and national bibliographic files. The creation of such consortia and the creation of a national cooperative policy ensure that researchers will always have affordable access to the world's literature.

The rapid expansion of machine-readable bibliographic records, made possible by centralized bibliographic networks, is a crucial aspect of the present technological landscape. These enable quick bibliographic access to extensive yet dispersed research holdings in addition to supporting shared cataloguing. Millions of machine-readable records have made collections more visible and encouraged more efficient resource sharing. No longer is direct access restricted to a user physically retrieving books and articles from library shelves. Information can now be carried all the way to a user's workstation.

Again, electronic library resources are more conducive to distant access and collaborative usage, thus building local collections becomes less crucial. It becomes more crucial to coordinate collection development and cooperative shared access. However, there is a core of materials and information sources that all large research libraries desire to hold or have access to, which is the fundamental issue with cooperative collection development programs in university libraries. There is no substitute for giving academics direct access to the resources they need, if one can help it.

### **Collection Assessment or Evaluation:**

Every library collection ought to be created with a specific objective in mind. The collection may have been created for research, entertainment, growth of the local community, instruction, support of a business endeavour, or a mix of these or other goals.

As a result, regular assessments are required to gauge their sufficiency and quality, assess whether they are meeting users' needs, find flaws and fix them, evaluate how funds have been allocated, and ascertain whether the library's and the institution's objectives are being met. Installation of computer systems is assisting a number of coordinated gathering and assessment initiatives on a national and regional level.

Two excellent examples of standardized collection methodologies for mapping collection strengths in research libraries are the RLG Conspectus and the North American Collections Inventory (NACI).

From the standpoint of preservation, librarians have long served as information stewards, and this function will not change. Due to the apparent fragility of the permanence of electronic information, librarians must play a proactive role in developing methods and policies for the long-term archiving of electronic files. Massive storage will still be necessary even in the new information age, which leads to rules about whether data should be kept locally or centrally.



### **Challenges and Opportunities for Academic Libraries:**

With regard to resource collecting and service delivery, technological advancements are posing a number of issues and obstacles. Although there won't be a quick shift from the world of paper to the world of electronics, managing the transition years will be the most pressing task for colleges. Academic librarians will understand how critical it is to develop the abilities required to compete and succeed in the information era of the twenty-first century.

Depending on the kind of information sources made available to support the faculty's research, the institution's demands and requirements will determine the amount of expertise and knowledge expected of librarians. In order to meet the information demands of a variety of patron levels, librarians today frequently need to be familiar with both print and electronic versions of resources.

Clearly, many traditional library practices that were formerly considered to be the foundation of library services and collections will change. There are now more chances for both patrons and librarians because to electronic resources. Finding a balance between gathering and facilitating access to print and electronic resources will be a challenge for librarians. Additionally, as they create collections and become ready for access, librarians must consider both the demands of the users and the library's resources. If a librarian doesn't keep up with new technologies, they won't be able to meet the patrons' basic information needs. Keeping up with evolving technology becomes more of a need than a choice, especially as we enter the twenty-first century.

In addition to more conventional print resources like bibliographies, indexing, and abstracting services, today's librarians are also expected to help and instruct library customers on how to use the institution's connected databases and the online public access catalogue. Numerous commercial online databases of all kinds, standalone and networked CD-ROM databases, and databases with full-text or bibliographic material, statistics, census data, and graphics are among them. One has an almost unfathomable number of information alternatives and delivery systems to choose from when the volume and variety of information accessible on the Internet is added to this list.

The goal of an academic library has always been to collect, preserve, and lend out scholarly materials. This goal meant that in order to find and use items, the user would have to visit the library. Providing bibliographic access to its own materials was a regular focus of the library's services, with less attention paid to the content itself. Academic libraries are currently going through a transformation from being owned to being able to access information. Bibliographic access is increasingly seen as a tool, with the information itself taking centre stage. Libraries must adapt to the technology that makes information available in light of this circumstance. In other words, libraries should focus on instant information delivery as their major objective rather than the bibliographic access procedure, which is still an important phase in the research process.



## **2. CONCLUSION**

In the twenty-first century, collections are expected to grow significantly more dispersed. According to the trend, we must strike a balance between meeting the proper collecting demands of undergraduate students and researchers' and faculty's more dispersed needs. The in-depth collections in certain research fields, the ability to provide network access to those resources, and the agility of the library in providing broad access to remote resources may be what set apart the research libraries of the future.

The capacity to approach resources from a cross-disciplinary perspective will become a reality with the growth of Internet tools, WWW access, and online multimedia capabilities. The entire discipline approach holds that, regardless of the format of the resources or their location, scholars must have access to the collection.

Libraries have been able to reevaluate and restructure various collection creation procedures as a result of the availability of publications in electronic format. Libraries may eventually think about collecting items on an as-needed basis rather than proactively trying to anticipate user needs as a result of the continued rise of various full-text article databases. Then, purchases would be made based on the most pressing necessity.

In the twenty-first century, academic and research libraries will still collect, organize, and preserve information. Additionally, a comprehensive range of technology-based services will be offered, including local and remote online catalogues, bibliographic databases, full-text reference tools, online reference librarians, online document ordering, and online interlibrary lending. Thus, the fundamental questions that have historically guided collection growth are being re-examined in light of the evolving nature of information management and provision. From physical collections and digital archives, information must be chosen, arranged, conserved, and provided. Connie McCarthy has more eloquently predicted the situation of academic and research libraries in the future as follows:

Future research libraries won't all be the same in terms of scope, organization, and service emphasis, even though the nature of the library's operations and services will alter in the electronic age. Some will be established with the intention of continuing to focus on the acquisition of comprehensive collections in line with their original goal of conserving national or traditional resources. On the other extreme, others will focus the majority of their time, energy, and resources on offering electronic access to information resources (McCarthy, 1996).

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