

Collection Development of the 1980's

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Library administrators are concerned about collection development. Collection development is a problem because money appropriated in the 1980's does not purchase the same number of resources as it did in the 1960's and 1970's and the customary secondary sources of library support are becoming unavailable. Library administrators must find a way to cope with these problems in order to develop a collection that will meet the information needs of library patrons.

The Effects of Inflation

Inflation is the underlying reason for many of the financial problems faced by librarians, according to Simmons and Van Arsedale. Inflation has significantly limited what appropriated funds can purchase. It has caused the average cost of books to rise from \$8.77 in 1967 to \$23.96 in 1979 and the average cost of U.S. periodicals to rise from \$8.88 in 1967-69 to \$34.45 in 1980.¹

Inflation is the underlying element in the fact that federal dollars normally appropriated to libraries are running out. The Reagan administration has recommended budget cuts in nearly every federal program that is related to education and libraries. For example, cuts will occur in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; elimination of Section II-A of the Higher Education Act has been proposed; the Library Services and Construction Act will be cut by 25 percent; the request for salary increases for the National Commission on Library and Information Science will be cut by \$14,000 and CETA public services jobs will be eliminated.²

As a result of federal and local funding cuts some libraries are considering private foundations as supplemental budget sources, but this is not a guaranteed solution. While some private foundations are still awarding grants, others have greatly limited the number and amounts of their awards. Foundations are narrowing the scope of their activities and evaluating projects more carefully. McGeorge Bundy, former president of the Ford Foundation, indicated that Ford is dependent on the productivity of companies in which Ford invests. Ford and other large foundations are aware of their own long term programs and they must consider the performance of the mixed market economy. Thomas Lambeth, Executive Director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, concurred with this position and stated that "if all the foundation grants made in America last year (1980) were lumped together they would not cover projected cuts in the field of education."³ Therefore, it is not wise to think that private sources will replace the funds lost through federal cuts.

Parent institutions and other library funding agencies are also cutting back or not providing budget increases to cover high personnel costs, pay high

utility rates and maintain other continuing programs. Budget officers are making choices regarding what will be financed. As a result, librarians must also make some choices. Many libraries such as the Library of Congress, the Boston Public Library and North Carolina state-supported libraries have placed a freeze on buying and hiring in order to stay within budget limitations. Several other libraries such as New York, Boston and Denver Public Libraries have been forced to cut service hours; drastically cut new acquisitions and lay-off some professional and clerical staff.

Inflation is also causing changes to occur in collection development procedures. "Between 60 and 80 percent of the library materials budget is being spent for continuing periodicals and serial subscriptions."⁴ Books are being purchased with the remainder of the budget. Should a large journal collection be maintained at the expense of the book collection? Is the serial collection more important for research purposes than books? Are more recent books used more by library patrons? Are books and serials of equal value for research purposes? All of these and other questions must be considered if a balanced collection is to be continued during the 1980's.

Book collection size, number of serial subscriptions and the presence or absence of certain book and serial titles are considered when libraries are evaluated. These aspects of evaluation should also be considered in collection development. The expected comprehensiveness of the collection by the library patron must also be studied. Some library users and librarians lean toward a comprehensive book collection; while other scholars advocate a large current serials collection which would provide recent information and would support research efforts.

In the 1980's library collections will not be all things to all library users and administrators will have to find methods which will permit them to build and maintain a reasonably balanced book and serials collection. Serials subscriptions should not continue to receive 60 to 80 percent of the book budget leaving only 20 percent of a shrinking budget for book purchases. With the average book cost being \$23.96 few books would be purchased under such conditions.

In the past, librarians were able to purchase back lists of books. This avenue may not be open in the future. The number and possibly the quality of books which may be available for purchase are changing. This change is occurring because high interest rates and the high cost of printing are forcing publishers to be more selective in the choice of new titles they publish. Publishers want a guarantee that the title is salable, they do not want a warehouse full of unsalable titles.

The January 1979, U.S. Supreme Court decision against the Thor Power Tool Company [Thor Power Tool Co. vs U.S. Commissioner of Internal Revenue, 439 U.S. 522 (1979)] may adversely affect the number of back titles which will be available in future years. The ruling directed that a business could not mark down the cost of surplus items for income tax purposes and later sell the item at regular cost. There has not been a final decision in this case. A bill has

been introduced in Congress which would allow companies to mark down the value of inventory based on the company's previous sale history with warehouse items. The U.S. Internal Revenue Service has not agreed that this procedure would be acceptable.

As a result of inflation and changes in the publishing industry, past practices of collection development will have to be reconsidered. Libraries can no longer afford to automatically review all serial subscriptions. Nor will they be able to afford to order multiple copies of titles. In order to nurture a collection in financially stringent times, plans and policies will have to be defined.

Written Collection Development Policies

Written collection development policies provide directions regarding the quantity and form of resources to be included in the collection. The policies state the institutional objectives, depth of the collection in the various subject fields, guidelines for media forms and the indexes included in the collection.

The institutional objectives define what type of instructional and research programs are available. These objectives help direct the librarian in the selection of resources to support instructional programs, faculty and student research, business activities of the community, recreational reading or to provide enrichment resources which meet the reading interests of the young and older patron.

Formally defined policies provide detailed statements regarding the collection depth for all subjects. The policy indicates whether (1) minimal, (2) basic, (3) support, (4) research or (5) exhaustive levels should be obtained for each subject. Collection policies indicate the guidelines for adding books, journals, newspapers and publications written in a foreign language. These limitations are developed in accordance with instructional objectives and patron needs.

Another section of the formal policy defines the extent and form of other media to be included in the collection. Written policies consider whether and the extent that 16mm films, video cassettes, filmstrips, prints, records and instructional aids should be purchased. The policies also indicate that certain forms of audio visuals such as filmstrips, records, cassette tapes, etc. would be purchased in standard forms or sizes and others would be excluded from the collection. (Definite statements of this nature would exclude unusual or odd forms from the collection.)

Policy statements define the scope of the journal, newspaper and microform collections. This statement would indicate whether back issues of journals and newspapers should be purchased in microform. The extensiveness of the collection is outlined according to subject, institutional objectives and patron needs.

Good collection development policies are regularly updated to cover the changes in the collection, financial situation, institutional objectives, user needs and the use made of library resources. This outline can be used to indicate how

book funds can be used to maintain a balanced book and serials collection.

Collection Evaluation and User Studies

Knowledge about what is actually used by library patrons is important, for librarians cannot afford to maintain a serials and/or book collection that is not used. Collection evaluation and user studies are an important part of collection development. The results from these studies can identify the resources which are used and those that are not. Studies can be designed in several different forms such as, user studies, availability studies, and assessment of collection quality studies.

User studies can pinpoint what is utilized most in collections by subject field, book title, age (imprint date) and language—English, French, German, etc. Studies of periodicals can specify what titles are used and the publication dates of the journals used.

Availability studies can identify subject areas where books are used frequently. This type of study seeks to identify specific titles desired by the library patron, specific titles which are missing and titles that may need duplication.

Collection evaluation studies that assess the quality of the collection usually require comparing the library holdings with acknowledged bibliographies or standard selection aids such as, *Public Library Catalog*, *Books for College Libraries* or *High School Catalog*. This type of checking may indicate the strong and the neglected subject areas.

When an appropriate type of evaluation is selected, considering the desired results, the information generated can help the librarian identify the types of resources used by the library patron. Serial titles that are not used can be identified and considered for cancellation. Book titles which are or are not on the shelves but are frequently requested by patrons can be considered for duplication and/or replacement. Subject areas where books are not heavily used can be identified. This information can indicate where book funds can be transferred or shared with another subject field that has a greater demand for resources. This type of information can be utilized to indicate where scarce book funds can best be used to meet the demands of the library patrons.

The value of use studies has not been agreed upon by all librarians. For example Baughman stated that depending solely upon use studies for collection development is unwise. He advocated that dependence on use study results places "the librarian behind the eight ball, since demands are observable only after the fact. One can run to catch up but it might be better to be running to keep ahead."⁵ On the other hand, Broadus indicates that use studies provide evidence which can help "build and manage collections that meet the needs of users."⁶ In order to develop a useful collection librarians need the type of facts provided by use studies.

Book use studies have been conducted in university, college, junior college and public libraries. One of the common findings is that library patrons

use more recent books than older books. Fussler and Simon studied use at a large research university library and determined that a greater number of recent titles were used than older ones. Metz studied general collection use at the Library of Congress and ascertained that "nearly 65 percent of the materials used were published in the last seventeen years."⁷ Ettelt studied book use at a small community college and established that "the older the book the less likely the book is to be used. The drop in the use once the books are two years old is marked and once the books get five years old, the decrease in use stops."⁸ Jain sampled circulation at a large university library and found that publication date does influence use, older books are used less frequently than more recent publications.⁹

Serial Use

If approximately 80 percent of the book budget is used to continue serial subscriptions, a smaller quantity of books will be purchased. If this practice is continued for several years, the book collection would soon lose its recentness and possibly its appeal to the library patron.

The value of large journal collections is still being questioned. Many use studies of journals have been reported in the literature. Some of the studies suggest that a small proportion of a serials/journal collection is actually used. Others suggest that many titles are used. The results of these studies should be compared with use patterns of each library to help indicate the best titles needed to maintain an adequate working journal collection. For example, Popovich conducted a citation analysis of business management dissertations written at State University of New York at Buffalo to determine the proportion of books and journals cited. Popovich found that periodicals constituted 49.15 percent of all cited materials and monographs accounted for 31.1 percent of the citations.

Kriz reported on a citation analysis of theses in engineering from West Virginia University. He found that an adequate book collection is more widely used than a large journal collection. Kriz found in studying other citation analyses that different subjects demand different types of collections. Kriz found that 21.5 percent of the citations in English history were from periodicals, 92.4 percent of the citations in chemistry were in periodicals and 82 percent of the general science citations were from journals.

Baughman found social science scholars cite more frequently from nonserial literature. Schertz and Shaw determined that a very small core of journals were used most frequently at the University of Denver. Schertz and Shaw found little difference between the number of journals used in science and social science.

Drott and Mancall studied magazine articles used by high school students. They found 39 percent of the students used periodicals and 62 percent of the total references were to books. A core of highly used magazines was identified; with only seventeen titles, more than half of the magazine articles

could be found. This pattern of use of magazines by high school students is the same as use made by scientists and scholars. The study results also indicate that "one-half of the use can be provided with relatively few years of holdings (five to ten years)."¹⁰

The results from book use studies, the evidence collected from citation analyses and journal use studies indicate that different subject fields demand different types of literature for reading and research. They also point out the importance of knowing what is used in each library and that no general statement can be made to indicate what journal titles should be included or excluded from a specific library collection. Study results also indicate that current book collections are important. No one part of the library collection should be slighted to compensate for the great cost of another. Library administrators should use all of the resources and information available, such as written collection development policies, collection evaluation studies, citation analyses and use studies in order to maintain a well-balanced collection.

Resource Sharing

A final source to consider in collection development is resource sharing. Libraries can no longer characterize themselves as having all things for all patrons. Inflation, along with the large number of books and journals published annually, is creating a situation where no one library can acquire and house everything. Many libraries are joining together and sharing their resources to insure that a wide range of resources will be available.

North Carolina libraries are sharing resources through the North Carolina cooperative lending system, IN-WATS and interlibrary loans. The sixteen North Carolina state-supported academic libraries have a cooperative lending system. The agreement allows graduate students, faculty members, administrative officers, and professional members of the library staff to use the libraries of the constituent institutions.

The IN-WATS information service is provided by the North Carolina State Library. IN-WATS provides reference and interlibrary loan service to county, regional, public, special libraries, four-year colleges and university libraries, technical institute learning resource centers and two-year college libraries. The service includes photocopying journal articles at cost.

Most libraries also use interlibrary loans and the presence of OCLC terminals in libraries greatly accelerates the transmission of loan requests. The three systems make a diverse array of resources available to North Carolina library users, but few formal efforts have been made to plan collection development among the libraries. Interlibrary loan, the cooperative lending system and the IN-WATS service all function with the idea, if I have it, your patron can use it. But the rising book and serial costs are going to force more libraries to develop consortia and networks in collection development, for the current methods of resource sharing are not sufficient to help libraries meet the demands of library patrons.

Resource sharing needs to expand to include planning collection development. Libraries need to share responsibilities for what is added to collections by identifying specific subject areas for which each will be responsible. This may be a practical means of insuring that a wide array of resources will be available and that even the most unusual request can be filled by one of the participating libraries. The goal of shared responsibility in collection development is for libraries that are geographically close to plan and build collections which complement each other and avoid unnecessary duplication of little used resources.

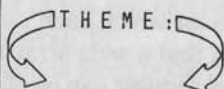
Hard times have returned to libraries. The goal of the 1980's is still to provide adequate library collections and services. In order to accomplish this, library funds will have to be used carefully. All aspects of collection development, policies, evaluation and resource sharing will have to be carefully planned and executed.

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- RONALD GROSS, Author of The Lifelong Learner, (Simon and Schuster, 1977)
- DOROTHY POLLET GRAY, author of Sign Systems for Libraries: Solving the Wayfinding Problem (with Peter C. Haskell), (R.R.Bowker, 1979) and members of the Library Logo Committee
- DEAN GLENN R. WILDE, College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, Utah State University

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