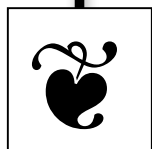


Collection Development Using the Collection Mapping Technique

A Guide for Librarians

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You are invited to discuss this book at:
<http://collectionmapping.pbworks.com>
To do so, ask for an invitation to comment
on the front page of the wiki

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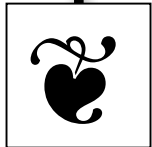
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Chapter 1

About Collections: An Introduction

For as long as anyone can remember, librarians have collected, stored, and retrieved the media of the day and tried to make it available to the patrons they served. Now, in the age of the Internet, the world of information and materials has exploded beyond what could have been imagined even several decades ago.

Naive patrons and the public in general assume that everything is on the Internet and available just for the asking. These people question the need for libraries any more because they assume that what they want is a keystroke away. It's all Benjamin Franklin's fault. Well, not really, but the notion of the Free Library Company of Philadelphia was that if everyone brought their book to a central location, we could all share that one volume widely. The same has happened in the music industry with the beginning of Napster until someone happened to think, "What about intellectual property?" Oh, authors and creators expect to be paid for what they produce? You mean that Google must create a system whereby publishers and authors are compensated for the materials they produce?



What, then, is the role of the library in collection development? If one searches the Internet for a term such as "animals," the idea of a library comes more into focus even in the digital age. Our Internet query produces millions of hits that instantly overwhelm any searcher. We begin to wonder how much is enough.

What do you as a patron expect of the libraries you query? Here is our list. Make your own:

- We want what we want, where we want it, and when we want it 24/7/365.
- We want our preferred format on our personal digital devices and computers.
- We want to check out as many items as we'd like at any time.
- We want to check out reference books if we need them.
- We expect to have access to the full-text databases of our professional field.
- Most of the time, we don't need everything on a topic; we just want the best and most current information.
- We want retrieval of digital information to be as easy as Google.

There is also another dimension that is new to the recent generation, the generation of Web 2.0.

- We are producers and creators of multimedia and are willing to share these creations with the library patrons and the public in general.
- We will also help construct information resources *a la* Wikipedia.

If those are some of our wants, multiply us by the number of patrons your library serves and you start to get a picture of the diversity of wants and needs. For many years, the theory has been for the librarian, the expert in information, to take into account patron needs and then build a collection that will serve as many needs as possible under the constraints of the available budget.

In this book, we argue that no one mind can get around the entire collection of any library that contains both printed and online information. Even if one has good advice from patrons or advisory boards, the task is too large to handle in any practical way.

Several decades ago as information began to proliferate, we developed the idea of collection mapping as a way to chunk the collection into manageable pieces and parts—each with its own function, expected impact, budget, and accountability to the audience it was designed to serve. It is the old adage: If you want to eat an elephant, cut it up in pieces. Over the years as we have taught collection mapping to our various students in library school, we have confirmed that our budding novices grasp the concept easily and come away with impressive collection management skills. What we have envisioned and then watched student adopt is a fluid system rather than a scientific process, one that can evolve as patron needs do. We have discovered ways to make the collection development process transparent to patrons—no back room decisions or personal ownership or private collection building based on the librarian's personal preferences.

The more we have experimented with the technique, the need to evolve with technology, particularly huge databases and search engines, has come to the forefront of collection mapping thought. Library collections are no longer physical items on shelves. In fact, the digital collection of many libraries far surpasses the physical one. Thus, what one sees when walking through a library is misleading. A small fiction collection may be dwarfed by the ebook collection. The audio collection may now be available only as MP3 files. The magazine collection no longer hoards physical space since much, most, or all of it is online, except for a few popular print periodicals gracing the browsing shelves.

The misperception of what patrons have access to led us long ago to recommend the construction of graphical representations of the collection we call the collection map. The picture we draw as the librarian helps the person viewing the map to get a handle of what this library owns, what it is trying to acquire, and how it is prepared to serve the information needs of its patrons.

The collection map simplifies the collection development process since novices can understand what is going on. Government agencies can discover where the money is being spent. Donors can see that their contributions have made a difference. Administrators in schools, colleges, businesses, and city government can understand how the library spends the money once given it and what will happen if proposed funding becomes a reality. It is a technique we all know when evaluating most anything: follow the money. Does that money actually

reach the patrons for whom it is spent? And, if we spend money, can we begin to track benefit and impact on our communities and their needs?

We have observed over the years the stereotypical librarian who reads the review periodicals each month and orders what appeals and is recommended. We have also observed systems of collection development that allot budget based on percentages artificially created for strings of classification numbers in an attempt to build “balance” into a collection. We have rejected simple schemes in the face of the new information world of the 21st century.

The idea of collection mapping actually comes from education, where mind maps are used to help students create a graphical representation of a concept. If you draw a picture of what you know, you build ownership of chunks of ideas and you are able to discover how little you know about topics when you cannot break them down into component parts. Collection maps serve the same function. So while they are not taught often in the general library literature, they are that “trick” or strategy that helps the mind grasp complexity beyond what we think the brain is able to grasp. Every day, we may see a large weather map on television that helps us grasp patterns across a continent and helps us forecast what might be in store for us today and tomorrow. Graphical representations have become a critical part of every aspect of our lives, our communities, our nation, and the world.

There is another reality that collection mapping addresses. Few are willing to just throw money at libraries in a society clamoring for more services. Funders want accountability. They demand it. To say that we spent the money on the best of the best across a wide spectrum of information is not acceptable. For example, in times of scarcity, is it better to buy one book for each of the sections in the library or ten books on a particular topic in high demand? Of course, there is no right or wrong answer here, but the librarian is accountable to patrons for the decisions that have been made and the evidence that those decisions do and have made a difference.

The purpose and function of library collection vary widely depending on the institution and patrons served. For example, school and academic libraries have a commitment to serve the curriculum first. The collection mapping process requires the librarian to connect first into the patronage and the needs of those patrons before a visual is created. Our map may show a collection out of sync with its patrons and goals because needs and goals evolve over time. In such cases, red flags are risen to demonstrate major needs. At other times, our visuals may be used to brag about the progress we have made over time in serving our patronage.

There is another dimension we discuss throughout the book and that is the need to have the collection become a two-way collaborative project rather than a one-way stream of information. We see evidence, much of it in the rise of web 2.0 technologies that push collaborative knowledge construction or huge projects that are created through massive contributions. Wikipedia is but one example of a new era in information construction, building, and dissemination of gigantic

projects. Look at Project Gutenberg, or the massive indexing by volunteers of the Ellis Island records and records of Revolutionary soldiers. Consider the Save America's Treasure Project of the Smithsonian and the Library of Congress where collaboration and support across a wide audience is happening. It is now not a matter of building it and they will come; it is a matter of: if they build it, they will use it. Collection mapping allows such projects within projects within topical areas, within special needs, to happen and be managed. Thus, in many of the chapters, where appropriate, we look to the future and encourage readers to think beyond what we have imagined; to anticipate both current and future trends rather than carry on the traditions of collection building.

We have divided this book into three parts:

In Part 1, we ask the librarian to create a collection development plan. This is a traditional part of collection development and similar advice can be had in many books and articles about collection development.

In Part 2, we outline the method of creating and using a collection map as a part of the entire management of the collection. These chapters are unique to collection development as it is practiced widely.

In Part 3, we cover many of the strategies that are well known to implement the collection development plan including selecting, purchasing, and processing new materials. You will find other accounts of similar practices in library literature and other collection development books.

In Part 4, we discuss strategies for making the collection work by creating a collection development policy, establishing accessibility rules, and making the collection accessible to patrons. These ideas can be supplemented by ideas in the general literature and by comparing them with actual practice in libraries.

Finally, in Part 5, we outline a number of ways to evaluate how the collection is responding to the demands placed upon it. Here you will find a number of unique measures as well as some that are common in the collection development literature.

In addition to the book, we have created a wiki with additional information, projects to do, examples, and other useful forms or advice. Readers of this book may contribute to the wiki. You can find the wiki at:



<http://collectionmapping.pbworks.com>

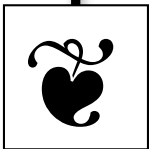
If you would like to participate as a writer, request permission on the wiki to do so.

Caveat: There is one major aspect of collection development we do not cover and that is collecting rather than selecting. A number of libraries around the country try to collect everything on various topics, works of authors, manuscript collection, or topical digital collections. Collecting libraries go by different rules.

They set up a criterion for what constitutes a topic and then try to collect everything that falls within the guidelines. For example, they want to collect the entire works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow including every biography, every bit of correspondence and even artifacts. Everything within these parameters is collected whether in original manuscripts or digital copies of them from other collections. Such practices are closer to those of archives and are not covered here. The other type of library, the one that selects a subset of materials about a topic, is the subject of this book, which covers almost all libraries. Most libraries have small collections they prize as extremely valuable, such as a complete set of a high school's yearbooks, or a total digital run of a local newspaper. These collections can be listed on the collection map we describe as emphasis collections to brag about.

Part I

Creating a Collection Development Plan



Chapter 2

Assemble a Library Advisory Committee

Making the assumption that a single person in the library can build the kind of library collection that will meet the information needs of a community is beyond possibility. Even if it were possible, members of the community are likely to view such a collection as the librarian's property.

Individual community members have unique interests and learning styles, requiring any successful collection to have a wide variety of information sources. Such a collection will not emerge unless those who have a "stake" in a rich information environment, the "stakeholders," participate in the creation and constant enrichment of that collection.

Who might serve on the advisory committee? Who would provide the guidance needed? And, is this a single advisory group or multiple voices?

School Libraries

Who are the stakeholders in the school who should be a part of the advisory committee? Consider the following potential members:

- **Superintendents** are the chief executive officers of the district and as such set the tone for and make policies governing the extent to which technology, information resources, and multimedia materials will be central to their vision.
- **Principals** are the instructional leaders of their schools and as such implement the type of educational ideas that will create an information-rich and technology-rich environment. They vote for, with dollars, the policies to put into practice.
- **Teachers** are the major players in what kinds of materials and technologies get used by their students. Their input will often determine whether the collection is used or ignored.
- **Teacher librarians** are educated in the building of collections to match the curriculum, the choice of technology to enhance instruction, and the human interface between technology and its educational applications. They often feel lonely and weighed down with the responsibility to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars hoping that what they choose will get used and make a difference.
- **Students** don't have to use a library very often before they start to get a sense of whether the collection is helpful or irrelevant for their needs. Most will be quite vocal, if asked, about what a library needs to have if it is really going to serve their needs. They should be consulted.



- **Parents** want a good education for their children and most understand that the quality of the materials their children have access to is a factor in how much their children are learning. Some are afraid that the information contained in libraries may not match their ideals, but when given an opportunity to contribute advice, do.

Sample Advisory Committee: Wilson Elementary School

At the Superintendent's encouragement, the principal at Wilson Elementary School appointed a library advisory committee consisting of the teacher librarian, three department heads, two other teachers, three student representatives, and a representative from the PTA, with the principal as an *ex officio* member. As a part of the technology plan for the school, the principal invited the committee to prepare and implement a plan for building a collection made up of materials, software, and instructional tools needed to create a solid, information-rich environment in which students and teachers could flourish. The teacher librarian accepted this oversight committee, but realized that some segments of the collection, such as computer software or Web 2.0 tools, might need other "authoritative" voices. So, smaller informal groups and individuals had regular input into collection development.

Academic Libraries

Consider appointing the following to the advisory committee:

- **Faculty** have long had input in academic collections. Even at institutions where teaching is primary, the library still needs to be able to support faculty research, even if that means requesting materials from interlibrary loan. Faculty know not only what the curriculum is but also where it is going, and the sources of the best current research in their fields. This makes their input into collections development invaluable.
- **Students**, as much or even more than K-12 students, know their own needs and whether or not the collection is meeting it. For example, students at Pennsylvania State University-Schuylkill formed a Library Student Advisory Board as a campus club (Deuink & Seiler, 2006). Through the club, a student is now a regular voting member of the university's Faculty Senate Libraries Committee. The club has been particularly active in recommending popular titles to supplement the educational collection, and they even do a great deal of fundraising and outreach.
- **Librarians** maintain the big picture of the materials available on the market, and the budget available to the library. They balance out the pet projects of faculty members to keep the collection balanced, and prevent students from skipping over the fundamentals. Librarians keep other members of the community abreast of new technology developments, such as ebooks and open access journals. They are the referees between the information and

technology industry and the needs of the learners and professors in the academic institution.

- **Specialists** – for example, writing tutors - have a broad sense of the undergraduates' research needs. Working directly and closely with so many students on their research gives the tutors insight into which resources students actually use, which they prefer to use, and which they use because assignments require them.

Sample Advisory Committee, San José State University

Various members of the library professional staff are assigned as liaisons to various subject departments for collection development. Each professional creates an advisory committee that will assist him or her in building his or her assigned part of the collection. This committee, plus other voices the librarian cultivates for specific collection segments, examines the various schemes of the information industry to match needs with available budgets to maximize usefulness. The various subject librarians then form a committee of the whole where budget and policies are formulated, discussed and distributed.

Public Libraries

Public libraries typically already have governing boards, but the collection advisory board is different. The idea here is less about the details of budget and operations, for which the Board is responsible, and more about input on community interests and needs.

- **Patrons** are the most obvious stakeholders, and among the easiest to reach. One possibility is to create advisory boards for particular collections - for example, a Teen Advisory Board for the Young Adult collection and programming (King, 2005). However, the librarian must reach out to non-users of the collection to ascertain what collections would draw in new and important audiences.
- **Friends of the Library** can speak for the most engaged patrons. They frequently use the collection, and know its strengths and weakness for their own needs. Bringing the Friends of the Library into the collection development process can have the side benefit of helping to motivate further donations, which allows for further acquisitions.
- **Community leaders**, such as elected officials and heads of civic or ethnic organizations, can help the library reach residents of the community who are not regular library patrons. They are invaluable resources if the library should develop its collection of non-English materials, or other special interest collections, to reach new patrons.

- **Librarians** bring all of these groups together, balancing their various needs with the budgetary considerations and input on the best books and materials from review sources and selection guides.

Sample Advisory Committee, Midlands Public Library, Long Island, NY

Professionals assigned to the children's, teen, adult general collection, and the "owls" collection for senior citizens each have their own advisory committees that assist in the direction their collection segment will take. Such a division of responsibility has been extremely valuable as grants for collection development have been written. The librarian also seeks out groups in the community who do not use library services regularly, making connections and building bridges to new or ignored patron groups.

Special Libraries

Each special library will have a different organizational structure, but here are some probable stakeholders who could be invited:

- **Administrators** of a corporation, hospital, law firm, museum, or other organization will determine the policies surrounding the need and funding for a collection of materials, information, and technology that will support the mission of the institution. While sympathetic to information needs, they are always looking at the bottom line, either of profit or of the survival of the organization.
- **Patrons** of the special library, be they lawyers, nurses, curators, or the general public, will have very specific information needs and are not likely to be patient if those needs go unmet. Patrons in very fast-paced special library environments, such as hospitals, may not be willing to sit on an advisory committee. In this scenario, get creative: you can always at least have a suggestion box, and pay particular attention to what is requested through services such as DOCLINE as a signal of what might belong in your library's collection.
- **Librarians** serve at the pleasure of their patrons and the budgetary resources provided them. They are wise to establish the widest net of advice possible in pursuing their role in collection building. Regular focus groups are held seeking input from various patron groups.

Sample Advisory Committee, Regional Law Library, Northern California

Because this library serves the various courts in its region, but is also open to the general public, the librarian has established two advisory committees - one for the judicial system and the other for the public at large. The librarian also scans various non-using groups, such as the state Bar Association, to ascertain their needs and how those can be met.

Into the Future: Client-Side Collections

How can the library use new technologies to gather input from stakeholders? One of the simplest ways is to have an easily accessible link on the website for patrons to suggest new resources for the collection. (A particularly clever place to have this is when an OPAC search for a specific title or author turns up no results (Levine, 2008).) Ideally, the library should have a page on its website that responds to the requests.

Another way to solicit input is to use online polls. If the librarian has narrowed down a collection decision to two or three comparable forthcoming books (for example, two equally-well reviewed science fiction titles by new authors), but only has space in the budget for one, perhaps the library should post a brief summary and cover image of each book, and then take a poll on which looks more appealing.

Many libraries monitor their ILL requests so that items requested multiple times are acquired for the patrons of the local community.

There are ways of using technology to create almost ad-hoc library advisory committees, so that many more people can participate, if only occasionally. It is not just the regular patrons that need to be served, but nonusers as well. This may require outreach to unserved parts of the community. For example, one public library administrator realized that their collection served the long-standing patrons well but had few services for and almost no input from the immigrant population. That administrator assigned a staff member to investigate those unserved groups and report back from organizations that served those constituencies where connections could be made. It is easy to build collections for the regulars, more difficult if the voices from all patrons are both solicited and heard.

However, in a truly client-based library, perhaps each patron would have an information credit card that would allow access to whatever information was needed at the time needed. Ownership would be based on computer-generated duplicate requests vs. unique requests as part of the access collection. In this case, the collection is elastic and deliverable within budgetary restraints anywhere and on any device patrons prefer. In this case, the central advisory committee monitors the information system being requested and used by the client. Here we think of patron notification systems such as Amazon.com where suggestions of other materials a patron might enjoy from the collection are automatically sent upon request.

In a true client-side information system, each user might design their own information profile into various spaces of information such as profession, education, and recreation spaces. The library might provide this patron with a credit card to the various spaces whether the library actually owned or was just providing personalized information access within budgetary constraints. A patron might purchase access over an above that supplied by the library to

everyone. In such an elastic collection access library, what would the function of the advisory committee be? Building realistic budget proposals based on patterns? Negotiation of better prices from vendors? Providing recommendations of new, notable, and trustworthy materials?

The Bottom Line

Each person charged with collection building needs as much advice as possible in order to ascertain how to provide the maximum information, resources, and technology to the library's potential and actual patrons. It is easy to gather and use the advice of regulars, but casting a wider net for input is not only desirable but also essential.

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Chapter 3

Analyze the Community

The librarian needs to understand the patrons and the community that the library collection is to serve. Obviously, a collection serving an urban population will be constructed differently than a collection serving a rural farming community. Being new to a job, or being in a community or business where demographics are changing or the focus of the parent organization is shifting, will require a new analysis or a re-examination of the clients who are to be served. Such an analysis cannot happen by probing current clients on normal busy days. Today's libraries have a visible client group, a sizable virtual population, and a segment of non-users. Who are these patrons? What are their backgrounds? What are their general expectations of our information services?

The following steps provide a basis for research, a paper, a presentation, or an introduction to a collection development plan.



For Whom? The library advisory committee.

Goal: To understand the audience that the library collection will serve. Examples: Ethnic populations, students, nurses, lawyers, teachers, an aging community, upwardly mobile young families, inner city poverty stricken groups.

What? Do a community analysis so that the entire advisory committee understands the clientele thoroughly (brief discussion; could be a research project). Write a brief statement answering the following questions:

- Who is the potential audience for the library collection?
- Numbers of potential patrons divided into various subgroups.
 - By academic department or discipline
 - By type of user: teachers and students; adults, teens, and children; doctors, nurses, and pharmacists
- Socioeconomic status of the potential patient groups if applicable.
- Cultural backgrounds not only by ethnicity but also by such things as first or second generation immigrants, religious traditions, political persuasions
- Educational background
- Languages spoken and read
- Age distribution

- Academic sophistication or achievement in K-12 or academic institutions

Hint: Most communities have descriptive information available because it is necessary for government grants, census studies, or private studies done by Chambers of Commerce or private institutions. Finding the best and most current studies of the community may be a challenge, but it is usually available or needs to be updated.

- Who currently uses the collection?
 - Regular users and why they are regulars
 - Occasional users and why they only use the collection occasionally
- Who doesn't use the collection and why not?
 - Barriers to collection use: people, facilities, technology, at-risk factors, hours, interests and needs not met.
 - Problems to be solved include...
 - Hint: Find a pocket of non-users and do focus group interviews. For example, one public library branch discovered they were along a gang territory line so that half their potential children/teen patrons dared not come. In a school, a policy did not allow students to pass through the halls except for class visits to the library. In an industry, the new librarian discovered that only patrons on site could access the library while employees of the firm around the world had no connection at all. In a focus group with a distinctively alternative teen subculture, a public librarian discovered that every time the group had entered the library in the past, other patrons complained and they were escorted out. In an academic library, many non-users reported that they used Google for all their assignments and saw no need to make the effort to come to the library or link into their databases.
- Will the collection building plan be targeted toward all users?
 - Theoretical goals
 - Realistic goals
 - Can and will everyone be served given our constraints?
 - Hint: Some patrons may not want access for a number of reasons.

One public librarian discovered that a sizeable segment of the affluent community bought their own books. A school librarian found heavy use of the public library after school when the school library was closed. A small pocket of Greek-speaking folks used the main public library where resources in Greek were available rather than demand those resources in their closest branch.

- Where will they use the collection?
 - In the library and any of its branches
 - In their classrooms; on campus

- In their homes
- On personal devices anywhere, any time.
- What will they use in the collection?
 - Physical materials only
 - Physical items and digital and multimedia items
 - Technology only
 - All of the above
- How will they use the collection?
 - For recreational reading, viewing, listening, and gaming
 - For research papers and homework
 - For job searching and career assistance
 - To support their research
 - To keep up in their profession
 - For immediate problem-solving at work
 - For personal interests and hobbies
 - To compensate for the lack of access at home
- What personal preference for access and delivery of information do potential patrons and users have?
 - Physical access in the library
 - Virtual access at the desktop
 - Access nearby
 - From support staff such as paralegals or graduate assistants, or from reference librarians
- When will they use the collection?
 - During open hours
 - On weekends
 - With whole classes
 - In small groups
 - Individually
 - 24/7/365

Community Analysis Statement Checklist

For most libraries, the community analysis will take very little time to construct if the advisory group is very familiar with the community already. For inexperienced groups or where a new school has been formed or boundaries changed, the task is more difficult. Examine the following sample community analysis statement:

Sample Community Analysis: Wilson Elementary School

Wilson Elementary School is in a bedroom community of San José, California with mostly working class parents who have larger families than is typical of the

city as a whole. The population is 45% Hispanic, 23% African American, 19% white, 10% Asian, and 3% other. Incomes average \$42,000 a year. The trend over the last five years has been in the increasing Hispanic population and in another five years, this group is expected to expand to at least 60% of the population. Academic achievement scores have hovered at about the 35th percentile when compared with other schools in California; much of the difficulty seems to stem from a large population of English learners. Through grants, the school has acquired a rather sophisticated technology infrastructure, but the materials and software in the library have been neglected to the point that the use of the technology as an effective tool is threatened. Most students have an opportunity to use the library weekly, but interest lags because there is such a poor selection of materials, and appeal to the variety of ethnic groups we have is decidedly lacking. The school has initiated a one on one computer program so that every student in third grade and above will have a personal computing device to take home at night and on weekends. The administration is very concerned about what information sources will be available to these students and obviously their family members at home. The administration has asked for a rethinking of virtual collections vs. physical collections.

Write your own Community Analysis

Perhaps someone has already done a community analysis for your library, but it may be out of date and need to be revised. Other times, you will need to start from scratch.

Assess: Did your community analysis:

- describe the makeup of the current community?
- note any changes in demographics, such as a change in ethnicity?
- (for school or academic libraries) note any trends in test scores, or areas in which students are doing poorly?
- describe both users and nonusers of the materials collection and technology?

Into the Future: Client-Side Collections

Few libraries struggle with over-use, and if that happens, major expansions of facilities and collections can be considered. For most, improvements in services and outreach to the unserved is a regular challenge. In the age of technology and virtual collections, equitable access may be a major hurdle. In other settings some potential patrons may be ignored for a variety of reasons. The challenge to open services may actually meet resistance from advisory groups. Altruism may actually be opposed either blatantly or silently through unreasonable policy barriers. The librarian should keep an eye on extension of services to all, since it is very easy to become complacent with the pressure of services to the regulars.

Remember to consider the digital divide: who in your community has access to technology at home, and who does not. If your community is high-income and

technologically adept, then providing e-books and other material they can download at home will really add value. If your community needs help bridging the digital divide, then the library becomes the place to learn about and access new technologies.

The potential to reach every single client has never been better because of the proliferation of various technological devices. The attitude and then the follow-up of "We will link you up and teach you how" can actually become a reality even for the Google Generation.

However, libraries of all types are facing increased competition for user's attention. Many may feel that they Google anything they need, thus negating their need for a library of any kind. What is the percentage of a library's potential patrons who have that attitude? Can libraries really compete with Google? How? If they don't, do they deserve to exist?

Chapter 4

Do an Information Needs Analysis

Few libraries have the luxury to collect everything and make it available to their patrons - at least in the foreseeable future. While we could soon see a device at our desktop containing the entire Library of Congress, because of intellectual property costs, access is still bound up in budgetary realities. Thus, to build a responsive collection, we must try to forecast and keep anticipating the needs of our patrons. In school and academic libraries, this means understanding the demands of the curriculum and assignments. In other types of libraries, the information needs of both regular and potential patrons must be studied and re-studied as time passes. In this chapter, we provide some guidance for doing an initial study of information needs with an eye on keeping up over time.

Who? The library advisory committee with input from patrons.

Goal: To understand the major topical areas and information needs to be served by the collection.

Objective: To identify those major topical areas that will receive enough funding to build strengths in the collection. The Information Needs Analysis will look a bit different depending on the type of library. In a public or special library, it will take the form of a general Information Needs Analysis, but in a school or academic library, it will take the more specific form of a Curriculum Study.



Curriculum Study

- What are the major subjects and disciplines taught in this school, college, or university?
 - Start with a list of courses taught in the various departments of the institution. Course lists or college catalogs or online course catalogs are often the best source.
 - Ascertain, if possible, courses that have the largest enrollments. This will be some indication of heavy demands that are likely on the collection. For example, if hundreds of students are taking an English course where term papers are the norm, then you will want to note that in your survey. On the other hand, not all large courses rely much on the library: an introduction to statistics, for example, often uses only a single required textbook with included software and datasets that most students purchase. Try to get copies of syllabi for the biggest classes on campus to help you.
- Which departments or courses have historically been heavy users of the current collection?

- Ask library employees who have been around a while.
- Ask department heads or long-time faculty members.
- Which of these major subjects would benefit from an information-rich environment?
 - Make a list. This may be a duplicate list of current heavy users, but not always.
 - Curriculum changes, new trends in the field, new methods of teaching and learning, and new faculty will be factors to consider in looking for new clientele and different topics that will need support from the library collection.
 - Star those that will take precedence or prioritize the subjects having limited resources.
- Hint: Building this list will require interaction with department heads, faculty, and students who are regular users of both the physical and virtual collections. Such an outreach to patrons is a major step forward in building a responsive collection rather than a theoretical collection. Here is where you begin to recognize collection mismatches. For example, the high school may have developed a wonderful collection on Shakespeare, but the current faculty have changed focus and that collection segment seems to be unused. You may become aware of demands placed on the collection that have been poorly supported in the past, so patrons have been going to other information sources or libraries to satisfy their needs.
- Hint: The curriculum of all educational institutions is evolving and rarely static. Thus, the librarian is trying to serve a moving target with all the ramifications that changes in focus represent.
- Hint: in the K-12 arena, look for professional resources that describe curriculum mapping studies. These will provide valuable information on what is taught at the various grade levels. For example, one might discover that units about Native Americans are taught because of their popularity across several grade levels. Curriculum supervisors often use such information to coordinate what is taught across the grade levels. One formal tool to check out for curriculum mapping analysis is Rubicon Atlas.
- What major curricular initiatives, either old or new, will require information-rich or technology-rich environments?
 - Make a list. Departments or individuals may be constructing new courses or making major revisions to old ones. For example, is the university developing a major new distance learning initiative? They may or may not contact the library before these changes are made. This means librarian needs to have contacts in place or membership in curriculum committees to forecast resources before a sudden onslaught of students demanding information and services.

- Star those that will be high priority. There will be budgetary implications to consider carefully.
- Which teachers or faculty departments will need information-rich or technology-rich environments?
 - Make a list. Always be on the lookout to create good communications with individual faculty members. The regulars will find you, but the occasional users and non-users will need to be sought out.
 - Star those that will be high priority. It is easy to serve the regulars among the faculty and subject departments or grade levels. It is more challenging to reach out to develop liaisons with others who, for whatever reasons, have not used library services in the past.
- What major projects or topics (by level) should be on a checklist to guide collection building?
 - Make a list. Some topics can be forecast almost to the day because the faculty regularly do the same assignments at the same time of year. Holidays, Black History Month, hot topic research papers, art history research, etc. become commonplace, repetitive, and sometimes impossible to serve given the lack of information available. In today's tech environment, patterned assignments often invite cut and paste behavior. Students may be looking for finished projects rather than sources for real research.
 - Star those that will be high priority.
- What recreational needs do students have that should be supported by the collection?
 - Make a general topics list.
 - Star those that will be high priority.
- What personal needs of students should be covered in the collection (such as self-help, legal problems, family problems, grooming, etc.)?
 - Make a general topics list.
 - Star those that will be high priority.
- What professional resources should the collection have for faculty?
 - Make a list. For example, professional development may be a constant program for school or university improvement. What

resources will faculty need as a group in these programs but also as individuals as they seek to improve themselves as faculty members.

- Star those that will be high priority.
- Resources for parents?
 - Make a general topics list. For example, an elementary school may be carrying out a major outreach to parents in a low income neighborhood where there are many English learners. In conjunction with the public library, resources on parenting, learning English, homework support, referral to various governmental agencies, or other basic helps are not only acquired but marketed to individual parents and parent groups. Such programs, however, require research into the needs of such groups and what it will take to make those information resources useful to the intended group.
 - Star those that will be high priority.

Sample Curriculum Study (Elementary School)

After analysis of the curriculum and the needs of the student population, our school library advisory committee has prioritized the following curriculum topics for a two-year collection and technology focus:

- The Reading Program
 - A program to have every kindergartener and first grader read at least 500 books each year with connections to the public library for summer reading
 - An infusion of technology into the lower grades to assist in phonics-building along with our current emphasis on reading good literature – the library to fund software and literature
 - Building expository readers by encouraging students to read much more nonfiction
 - Sustained silent reading (SSR) is to be reinvented with ample materials students want to read.
 - Rotating classroom collections from the library to keep titles in the classrooms fresh for SSR.
 - We have had book clubs in the past, but too few. We need to have many book clubs operating simultaneously using club blogs.
- The Science Program
 - A newly adopted science textbook changes the topics previously studied
 - (List of new topics by grade level.)

- Curriculum Areas Needing Materials and Technology Support
 - Three new integrated projects (language arts, social studies, science) at the 4th grade level
 - An experimental math computer simulations project at the 4-6 grade level
 - A renewed emphasis on successful science fairs at grades 5-6
 - Student-built portfolios archived on a computer network requiring both software and hardware

Information Needs Analysis

A community information needs analysis has two stages. In the first stage, the library staff gathers background information from the public record. In the second stage, with the background information shaping your questions, it's time to actually ask patrons and potential patrons what their information needs are, and then figure out how your collection can meet those needs.

- Background information
 - What is the **history** of your community? What beliefs and values from that history shape expectations of and hopes for the future of the community and its library?
 - What is the **geography** of your community, and what are the trends in that geography? Which neighborhoods are growing, and which are emptying out? What are the transit patterns, and how accessible are your library branches by a variety of methods (walking, bicycle, bus, car – including parking, etc.)? Which areas are served by Internet service providers, and where do residents have restricted options in home Internet access?
 - What is the **political** situation, both formally and informally? What is the power structure between the Board, the City Council, and other players? What is the party balance of power in your town?
 - What are the **demographics** of your community, and how are these changing? Provide concrete data here, rather than vague impressions. The US Census is a good source for this information. Pay special attention to age trends.
 - What is the **economic** base of your community, and what trends are likely to affect that in the future? What tax base supports your library? What is the median income and cost of living?

- What is the **civic** life of your community? What are the major social, cultural, and religious organizations?
- Detailed Information
 - **Surveys** can be distributed by either postal mail, or online. Either way, you need a method or mailing list to promote them not only to your patrons, but also to potential patrons who don't currently use the library. Civic organizations might be willing to partner with you to distribute the surveys, either through a link on their website, or by letting you pass out the surveys at the end of one of their meetings.
 - **Telephone surveys** have higher participation rates than mail or web, and telephone numbers can be randomly pulled from the phone book. Since your community is all local dialing, the expense here will probably all be the time. Be warned, however, that cellular phones cannot legally be called for surveys, and you could disproportionately under-count some potential patrons (particularly young people and African-Americans) who are more likely to have dropped their land lines entirely in favor of cell phones. Perhaps a survey to email addresses might be possible using Google Docs spreadsheet.
 - **Focus groups** provide narrative, rather than numerical, information. When they work well, they provide a richer understanding of the process of "sense-making", allowing you to understand all of the information gaps and the whole range of information resources in the community (Worcester & Westbrook, 2004). However, they require a big time commitment on the part of the participants, and the person leading the focus group runs the risk of imposing their expectations, unduly shaping the outcome or creating social pressure for certain kinds of answers. Still, they provide information that there is no other way to get, and they're the only method that allows the librarian to be really surprised by the results.
- Hint: Which of these methods you use depends on how many people you have to survey. If your library serves a large population, you might do best with a mailed or emailed survey, which is relatively cheap to send to lots of people (although relatively few respond). If you only serve a small community, or if you decide to reach out intensively to a sub-set of potential users (such as a new immigrant community, or a teen population) then you might try focus groups.
- Hint: Response rates – the number of people, out of those asked, who are willing to participate - can be very low. To increase them, can you find the budget to offer something in return for completing a survey? Focus groups deserve snacks, at the least; telephone or mail survey participants could be entered into a raffle.
- Hint: If you choose a quantitative method, like a telephone survey, your data needs to be properly analyzed to be meaningful, and to be taken

seriously by many funders. If statistical analysis isn't your strong suit, consider getting a student to help. The techniques needed to present this kind of data could be handled by many college seniors in economics or political science, and they might be willing to work for course credit as an internship in consulting. A Google Docs spreadsheet survey using "forms" is self-analyzing – a major plus.

Into the Future: Client-Side Collections

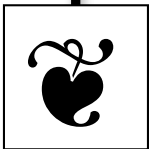
As the library turns more and more into a client-side organization, the patrons themselves take a more and more active role in the development of the goals of the collection. We as information professionals take on a stance of coach rather than expert by developing systems to build and operate elastic rather than static collections. What would a user-controlled collection begin to look like? How would information suppliers of physical objects such as books or sheet music or realia begin to respond? Already, on-demand music, movies, and television are responding to on-demand pressures. These industries shape their collections based purely on demand, although they do promote segments of the less-used or new items they hope will be adopted by the user who may not be aware of new or different areas of interest. The advantage to virtual collections is that usage patterns are measured continuously so that the collectors can make much more intelligent choices of supply in anticipation of demand and can trim budgets as demand slackens.

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Part II

Creating and Using a Collection Map



Chapter 5

Interlude: Overview of Collection Mapping

If a library collection is to truly support the curriculum and/or information needs of its patrons, a systematic effort spanning several years will need to be implemented. Steps are summarized here to help provide an overview of the entire process. The concept of collection mapping is quite simple, but it may be quite a different view than that given in traditional library school course work or library literature.

The librarian who wishes to systematically build a collection of print, multimedia, and digital materials should remember this sage advice: "If you want to eat an elephant, cut it up into little pieces." To follow that advice, divide the collection into a number of small, manageable segments that match the various parts of the curriculum or the information needs profile of the patrons. Each of these pieces could then be built, weeded, or maintained as needs dictate. Each segment would have a corresponding piece of the total budget pie depending on the priorities assigned to that part of the collection (i.e., build, maintain, or de-emphasize). The entire process consists of a number of steps that, when put in place, will occur naturally in cycles and can be integrated easily into ongoing management. Note the following steps that will be explained more fully in the remaining chapters.



1. Build a technology and network access chart that shows, for a specific library in a specific community, what level of access will be made available to patrons' homes, in the classroom, at work, in the library, in the community, and beyond. This chart has major budgetary implications because it shows the library as part, or separate from, a larger information network. It will also have budgetary implications since it begins to outline who in the network is responsible for costs related to specific information provision and sharing.
2. Create a collection map of the existing collection. The collection map is a graphical representation of the topical strengths of the materials that are available in the library and any of its branches or classrooms. It represents quantities of materials, and over time will also show quality ratings, indicating how well the collection responds to the demands of patrons. The map shows core collections and emphasis (specific topical) collections.
3. Build the quality judgments of the collection mentioned above over time. Such measures happen as curricular, group, or individual demands are made upon the collection. In a school library, does the collection provide plenty of relevant information for assigned projects? In a public library, are reference questions difficult to answer with the materials on hand? In a medical library, how much are you relying on DOCLINE versus your own collection? (Of course, the collection could contain the desired materials, but the users do not search long enough to discover them.) But assuming

that some thoroughness has been achieved, the collection's response can be rated to include the following:

- A variety of media (print, multimedia, digital).
- Materials that are current (as needed by the topic studied or used).
- Materials relevant to needs.
- Materials that are durable and in good repair.
- Enough materials for the number of patrons seeking information.
- Materials that span the reading/viewing/listening/comprehension levels of the students or other patrons.

The average of these ratings will be attached to the collection map to create a visual impression of quality, not just quantity.

4. Create a large poster either on paper or digitally of the collection map for public display. Both users and decision-makers will be able to perceive that the collection has a purpose, a direction, a curricular foundation, a recreational focus, and a grounding in essential research. As such, the collection map is a major public relations piece. It can be used as a planning tool, a bragging tool, a begging tool, an evaluative tool, a usage tool, a weeding tool, and a sharing tool. Examples of these uses include:
 - Showing stakeholders such as faculty and students the strengths of a collection.
 - Evaluating whether the strengths of a collection match the curriculum of the institution or the information needs of the community.
 - Suggesting the most logical areas of the curriculum or information needs that can be served the most effectively.
 - Suggesting purchasing targets.
 - Suggesting areas of the collection that might be irrelevant.
 - Demonstrating areas of need and areas of excellence.
5. Create a proposed collection map. This graphical representation will show collection targets for a two- to four-year period and is created in collaboration with stakeholders, administrators, curriculum specialists, and teachers and the users themselves. It can be shown to funders as a goal to be reached that will require a particular budget to achieve. This map could join the large collection map poster as a picture of "where we are and where we want to go." Care will be taken to understand:

- Proposed curricular changes or information needs on the horizon.
 - Normal evolution of topics taught; evolution of information needs.
 - What types of materials are likely to last and which have just transitory value.
 - Changing interests of patrons over time.
 - Types of materials that are likely to be digital vs. printed.
 - Materials that will be owned vs. accessible through networks.
6. Create a realistic budget and an acquisition system that will track additions to the collection. The acquisition system should either be a part of the current automation package for the library or should be computerized using an off-the-shelf database package such as Excel or Google Spreadsheets. Several library acquisition systems already have such features built into their structure. Such a system will assist in decisions such as:
- What materials are already in the collection.
 - What materials are under consideration for purchase by topical area and by priority.
 - What materials are on order.
 - Materials that are desired but are out-of-print or unavailable.
 - Materials that are accessible on demand through networks.
7. Update the existing collection map as materials flow into the collection. Evaluate the emphasis collections that have been designed for special or curricular use. Show these data on the proposed collection map to decision-makers and funders.
8. At specific intervals, revise the proposed collection map to indicate needs changes, curricular changes, new technology initiatives, and changes in the sentiments of the users of the collection. This will create new targets to meet and demonstrate that the collection is evolving.

Over time, collection mapping should provide:

- Evidence that the collection of the library and the school supports the curriculum (academic and school). Or, evidence that the collection meets the needs of the users.
- Documentation that a plan to build a more responsive collection is in place.

- Demonstration that the acquisition system matches the collection plan priorities in place.
- Evidence that each type of material (print, multimedia, digital) included in the library is considered as a system and is supported properly.
- Confirmation that the library collection is only one node in a network of collections that serve the patrons.
- Verification that the library collection reflects democratic ideas, intellectual freedom, and cultural diversity.
- Easy-to-understand evidence of what is being spent on library collections, how the money is being spent, what difference it is making, and what should happen to the collection in the future.

As the entire collection mapping scheme unfolds, the following trends will come into focus:



Traditional practices are organization-based (build it and they will come because experts have built it for them). We are now shifting to client-side practices that make the collection a collaborative conversation (if they build it, they will use it). We are reminded, however, that there are libraries that must function first on organizational principles because of their mission. For example, a state law library collects and needs an expert who knows the sources of the official laws and regulations. These libraries are collecting libraries rather than selecting libraries. Perhaps there are two collection maps in this case: the official collection containing complete collections, and a collection map for the selected part of the collection that responds to more diverse needs. Our previous example was of a law library that served a county court. Their official collection contained all the laws and legal references required in every law library of the state. This library also had a legal collection for the general public that served more diverse and localized needs, ranging from a library in a large urban center to one operating in an agricultural region with small communities.

As will be illustrated in the following chapters, the pieces and parts of the collection are graphically represented rather than just listed to enable the viewer to grasp both the strengths and weaknesses of the current collection and projected collection targets that respond to community or institutional needs. Collection maps inform both the professionals who are managing collection building, but also make the process transparent; i.e., understandable by the intended audience.

Maps will also try to illustrate such things as materials owned vs. those that are accessible; print vs. digital; and networked collaboratives. For the Google generation, the map will draw distinctions between the library collection vs. the world of the Internet in such a way that the patron can understand why the library exists, its advantages, its relevance to their personal and professional information needs.

Chapter 6

Build a Technology/Information Access Chart

The first step in collection mapping is to create a technology access chart. This chart or graph, depending on how you create it, places the library as a piece of the puzzle in a world information culture. Major budgetary implications will become evident as the responsibility and mission of this particular library become obvious. For example, if the public or school library is in a low-income neighborhood where few patrons have access to computers or the Internet, then both the school and public library will try to maximize access to both the network and the availability of computers. If, however, the patrons have individual access to computers, then the libraries in the area concentrate on being a hot spot where patrons can bring their own devices and gain access. Budgets would emphasize different concepts in the two neighborhoods.

Who: The library advisory committee

Goal: Place the library in its position as a part of a larger network of information systems in order to ascertain its relative importance, mission, and budgetary implications needed to make it successful in its role.

What: A picture/vision of the library's "fit" and implications for planning.

1. Think of a number of technology accessibility configurations. Examples:
 - The university campus is totally wired in all buildings plus the library.
 - The school has wireless access in the library and computer lab but not in individual classrooms.
 - The main public library is wired and some, but not all, branches are wireless.
 - Every engineer/lawyer/worker has total access at their work desk plus access anywhere else in the building and from home through protected networks.
 - Every child/teen in the school has their own portable computing device they carry around all day and take home at night.
 - Almost no one owns a personal computing device. It will need to be issued to them and access to networks will be provided in certain area of the school/office/campus.
2. Think of the short and longer-term access possibilities. Examples:

- The organization/school/public library is currently writing a grant to provide wireless access throughout the facility.
 - Access to networks is available in administrative areas and the library but is not likely to become available in instructional areas any time soon.
 - Proposals have been made to wire the public library and its branches but the vote on a bond to do so just failed.
 - While every employee has a computer and access to a network, the equipment is antiquated and the prospect of replacement remote in the current economic downturn.
 - The library is under construction and the architect has planned for total wireless, but the building will not be ready for another 18 months.
3. Now think of access issues on the existing networks. Examples:
- Workers/engineers/students have access only to an internal information network but not to the Internet. However, in the library, access is available to highly filtered databases and websites beyond the facility.
 - Everyone has access to a very tightly controlled and filtered Internet.
 - Individual kids/teens build their own information spaces and access is governed by personal responsibility levels.
 - The public library has fully opened networks for all patrons. (For example: a study in Colorado shows that Internet access was at least one of the reasons for 82% of public library visits (Moe, 2004)).
 - Patrons have limited access in the library but most have open access at home.
 - Access is filtered but most patrons have discovered ways around the filter.
 - Some patrons have personal devices that just bypass the library network and connect to the Internet directly.
4. Now think of the library as a node in a much larger information network both for physical items and digital access. Examples:
- The state purchases certain databases and makes them available through the state library to every citizen in the state. Individual libraries provide access over and above that basic service as budget and information demands dictate.

- Every library "goes it alone" in the provision of information systems and databases.
 - The public library and the school libraries coordinate access to various complementary information systems.
 - Few online subscriptions are provided by the library. Patrons are expected to pay for their own access.
 - Databases are not provided by the school district, but the librarians have helped students get public library cards so that access to public library databases is available from home.
 - Spanish language collections are available at one of the major branches of the public library and patrons needing those materials are encouraged to travel to that branch.
 - Two libraries in Indiana have very large family history collections: the Indiana State Library and the Fort Wayne Public Library. Both make the digital part of their collections available to all comers. Your public library opts to have a small local history collection but link local patrons to these special collections.
5. The next step is to create a visual chart for technology access and a second chart of the library as a part of an information network. This chart can be viewed by the library advisory group but also by patrons who can understand how this library fits into a larger picture of information and technological systems.

Bare Bones School Library Technology/Information Access Chart

Technology Access

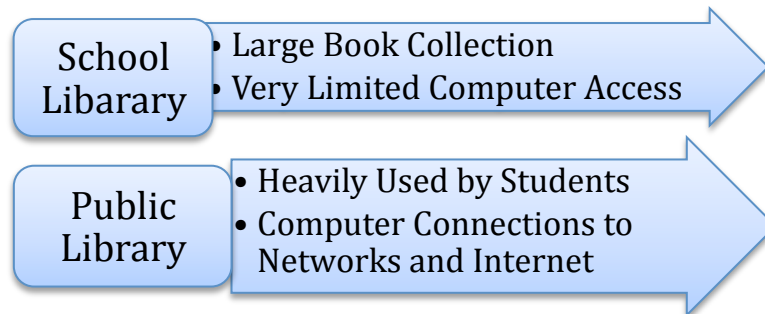
- One computer per classroom for the teacher to do administrative work and grading
- One computer in the library for administrative computing and three computers with access to the OPAC and very limited and highly filtered Internet access. The OPAC can search other school library collections in the district, but the librarian discourages such searching because there is no inter-library loan.
- A majority of students have no computer access at home.
- Some mention that the district will float a bond for technology.

Access to Networks

- State databases are available but the teacher librarian rarely promotes access because the three computers are usually used for OPAC searches.
- Students and teachers are referred to the public library for access to databases and other services.
- The school has a connection to United Streaming for video distribution. Teachers take their classes to a computer lab where videos can be viewed by appointment.
- The public library has a large bank of computers and students use them heavily after school and in the evenings.

Access to Print and Multimedia Materials

- The library book collection is fairly sizeable but old.
- Teachers have classroom collections not connected to the school library
- Many students prefer the collection at the public library.
- Teachers check out temporary collections for their classrooms from the public library.



Small Affluent Community Technology/Information Access Chart

Technology Access

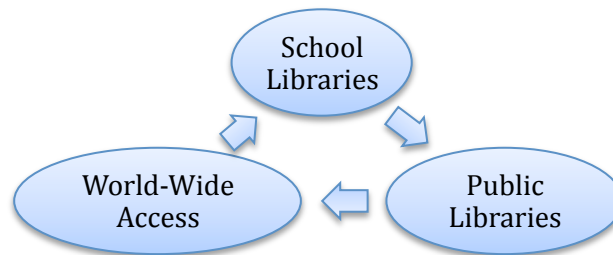
- Almost everyone including children through adults have a personal computing device and are connected at home.
- Both school and public library have wireless access and both have computers that can be checked out for use within the library.
- The public library has unfiltered access; the school libraries have moderate filtering to catch the worst of pornography and spam. Neither accepts federal e-rate dollars, so they make their own filtering policies.
- Classrooms in the school have access to wireless portable computer carts so that each student can have access to networks during a scheduled activity.
- Plans are in the works at the school district to subsidize the purchase of a portable computing device for each student if the parents cannot provide them.

Access to Networks

- The public and school libraries have complementary online databases that also complement state-supplied databases.
- Seamless access to all the databases is a click away on the home page of every person who would like this instant access.
- School and public libraries share the cost of a full-time person lining major Internet resources into a community OPAC.

Access to Print and Multimedia Materials

- Collections of print and multimedia are extensive in every school and in the public library.
- The community library council prides itself in being able to guarantee access to any serious need for information in any format and at any location.



University Technology/Information Access Chart

Technology Access

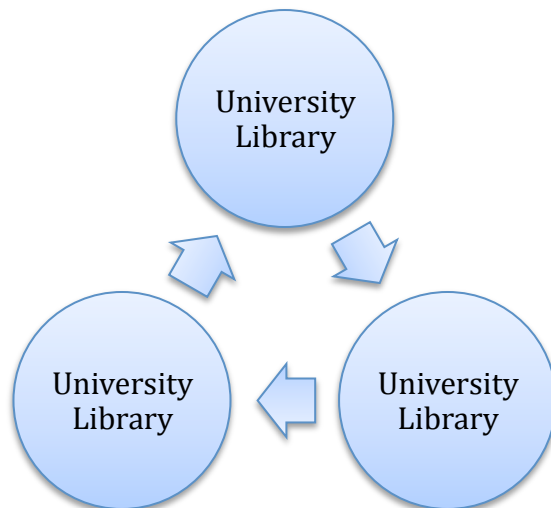
- Wired access in library spaces where students connect their laptops. Some older buildings on campus have wired access in some rooms.
- Newer buildings are wireless.

Access to Networks

- Spam filters on all networks
- Access to online databases have been cut in recent years because of rising costs and declining budgets. Priorities are constantly made and re-examined.
- The library has a cooperative with other libraries in the state for block purchases of databases to reduce costs.
- Agreements with other academic libraries coordinate special collections to be purchased and digitally shared.

Access to Print and Multimedia Materials

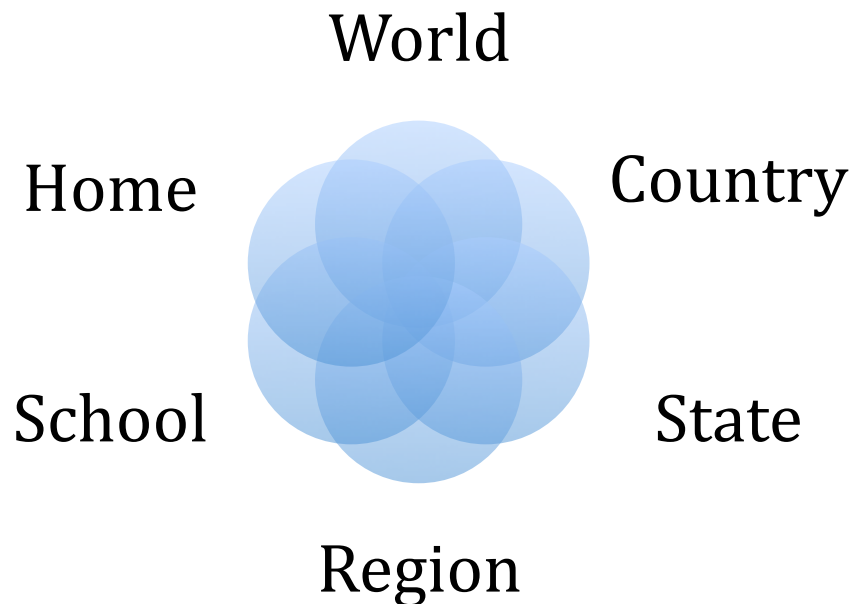
- Book budgets have been declining for the past five years.
- Multimedia collections are in decline and costs shifted to individual departments and colleges.
- Printed periodicals are cancelled whenever a digital copy is available.
- Access to e-books on demand is provided instead of printed volumes.



Into the Future

Theoretically, the world is becoming a truly integrated and seamless information system. The rise of the Internet connects people around the globe and many libraries open their digital collections to all comers. In a client-based library, we think in terms of a seamless information system where the user may acquire what they will, not knowing or understanding the vast network behind the information they are accessing. The opportunity for equity has never been greater. This is already true of information provided freely on the Web. For materials under copyright and proprietary, access still is connected to library budgets. What is the responsibility of organizations, governments, school districts, and parents to fund a foundational information infrastructure to support every citizen, teacher, student, age level, language, and culture? The current attitude that information is free on any search engine masks the continuing need to build systems, networks, and access.

Seamless Integrated Information System



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Chapter 7

Study the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Current Collection

If patrons walk into a library (if there is still a physical facility), they may see rows and rows of shelves stuffed with books or multimedia products. As they use that visible collection, they make judgments about that collection based on its response to their immediate needs. However, they can make almost no judgments about the collection as a whole by just walking around – at least not the important impressions librarians would like them to understand. For example, they might see that all the shelves are almost full, so they draw the conclusion that the library probably does not need any more materials. Or, they may see rows and rows of outdated multimedia formats and wonder why the library is out of touch with the current information formats. In digital space, they may see an attractive library home page but have little ability to understand whether that portal is narrow or wide.



In this chapter, we ask librarians to create visuals that demonstrate to the average patron the current state of the collection, in terms of size and quality. These visuals make comparisons that suggest how this particular collection is doing with respect to other libraries of its type. It is an opportunity for the librarian to communicate an important message to both governing boards and to their patrons in general. It is a technique to begin to compete with “free” information systems that often attract more attention.

Who: The library staff.

Goal: To describe the size, content, and quality of the current collection as a basis for determining the direction needed to support the curriculum or meet the community's information needs.

Product: Various charts, graphs, or data comparisons that accurately describe for a non-librarian audience the condition, the direction, and trends of the collection over time.

What is the size of the library's current collection?

- Hint: use estimates if precise figures are not available.
- Hint: tally by type of media.
- Compute numbers of materials owned by the library (books, videos, CDs, databases, etc.)
- Include materials in other locations if appropriate.
- Include digital items as well as physical ones
- Create a graphic/chart/pictogram that is easily understood.

What is the trend in the size of the collection over time?

- Has it been increasing or decreasing over time?
- Show the growth of newer media or technologies (such as video, DVDs, ebooks) and the demise of older technologies (such as 16mm film, VHS tapes).
- Consider showing the effect of weeding on collection size.
- Do you have enough materials for the number of users in typical topical areas?
- Do you have materials to support new types of technologies used by your patrons and potential patrons?

What is the trend in the currency of the collection?

- Using some of the sample topics identified in step two, what is the average copyright or production date of various types of media?
- What is the current state of weeding to keep the collection current?
- What is the state of computer software and equipment, considering upgrades available, current hardware available, etc.?
- What outdated technologies such as filmstrips and phonograph records are still warehoused but little used?

What is the condition of the current collection?

- Describe the condition of various segments of the collection as a result of use, abuse, non-use, or environmental factors.
- Are various segments of the collection attractive and inviting?
- Are software versions current and usable on the computers owned by the library or parent institution?
- Are equipment and technology in good repair?

What is the quality of the current collection?

- Do the materials owned actually support the current curriculum of the school or information needs of the community?
- Are the materials useful to the age, sophistication level, and /or demographics of the current patrons and potential patrons?
- Are the available types of media those needed by the clientele?
- Are there materials available to satisfy the needs of the various cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the users and community?

How does the current collection compare with other schools, state and national standards?

- How does the size and quality of our collection compare to targets set by accreditation bodies, professional association standards, or state standards?
- How does this collection compare to other local libraries of its type?

- How does this collection compare to other libraries with similar missions?
- Find the state and national documents that best help you compare your library to some type of norm. Search for statistics published regularly by associations, governments, state libraries, or other statistical organizations.
- Look for standards documents for your type of library that list collection targets for both quality and quantity. These can be published by professional associations, accrediting bodies, state laws, or other standards-creating entities.
- For public libraries: *Public Libraries in the United States*, a report by the National Center for Education Statistics (Chute & Kroe, 2007), gives national and state comparative data for print, audio, video, and serials collections. Some states, such as Iowa and Texas, also have statewide accreditation standards for public libraries.
- For academic libraries: Regional accreditation bodies, such as the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, set broad standards for academic libraries.
- For special libraries: Many specialized organizations, such as the Association of Jewish Libraries, also set collection standards for accreditation.
- For school libraries, check state law, guidelines documents from state departments of education, state professional associations, and local requirements.

What impact has spending over time had on both the size and quality of the current collection?

- How has spending on technology affected acquisition of other types of materials?
- What is the spending for hardware vs. software?
- Considering inflation for various types of materials, what has happened to buying power over time?

Sample Collection Size Comparison

Library Collection Size Comparison Wilson Elementary School



	# of items	# of Students	Items per Student
Our Collection	4,256	625	6.80
Comments: Old, ,outdated, ratty, uninteresting mostly.			
State Goal	12,500	625	20
Comments: California recommends 20 up-to-date, enticing,books.			
National Goal	14,063	625	22.5
Comments: Miller & Shontz, 2003 (national median for elementary)			

Your Collection:

Library Collection Size Comparison

Library Name: _____

of Items # of Patrons Items Per Patron

Our Collection

Comments:

Goal

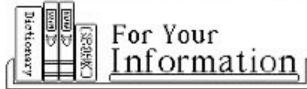
Comments:

Goal

Comments:

Sample Collection Size Comparison

Library Collection Size Comparison Lawton (Oklahoma) Public Library



	# of items	# of community members	Items per community member
Our Collection	126,604	92,757	1.36
State Average	66,071	25,708	2.58
National Average	99,487	31,549	3.09
Comments: Chute & Kroe, 2007			

Your Collection:

Library Collection Size Comparison Library Name: _____

	# of Items	# of Patrons	Items Per Patron
<u>Our Collection</u> Comments:	_____	_____	_____
<u>State Average</u> Comments:	_____	_____	_____
<u>National Average</u>	_____	_____	_____

Tips on Representing Collection Size

The above two examples compare the existing size of the collection with some type of goal or by comparison with other libraries. For example, ARL libraries publish their size statistics regularly as an indication of how they rank with Harvard, Yale, and other prestigious institutions. It is a rank of honor.

Another chart might measure the size of collection segments. This can often be done simply by asking the automation system to produce a report by classification segments or collection segments that are flagged some way in the automation systems. For example, a library can ask for a report by Dewey or LC major classes or the size of the number of materials cataloged as “special collections.” A public library might have a huge Spanish language collection it wants to brag about and promote. Instant access to major and expensive databases may be a piece of news every patron should know. The picture book collection may be one of the largest in the state.

What are the subcollections you wish to brag about? What subcollections do you want to expose as being deficient? In other words, the librarian draws illustrated charts anyone can understand that give information about the size of the collection from various points of view.

Begin with the reporting section of your automation system. What kinds of reports will it generate? Will it create charts and diagrams? Or, will you have to take the data from the report and use another graphical package to illustrate strength or weakness? Understand how an automation system counts things. For example, how does it count a multi-volume set such as a printed encyclopedia – is it one item or multiple volumes?

How are digital collections counted? If cataloged by the automation system, is *World Book Encyclopedia* counted as 30 items in the print collection but only as one item in its digital form?

You may have to adjust or recalculate what the computer says you have. If so, establish the rules you have for counting and record those rules so you can use those same rules over time for a trend analysis.

Estimation may be the only way to count items when there is no automation system or when it does not output the statistics you would like. For example, one can estimate the number of books one owns by multiplying the number of book shelves times the average number of books on a typical shelf.

If you really want to do comparison statistics with another library, than both libraries should be using the same rules of counting. You will need to negotiate those rules across libraries.

Counting Digital Collections

More and more, libraries are providing access to digital collections. Some libraries are almost entirely digital. Most libraries now prefer digital periodicals and digital reference materials to print collections because of both space and accessibility issues. So, how do we give patrons and advisory boards a sense of how vast or narrow such collections are?

The major problem here is that the information industry has been trying a wide variety of ways to sell digital collections to libraries. Much of their effort has been to maximize profits rather than any altruistic notion of equity. Librarians, the good shoppers they are, have made more and more demands on vendors since periodical prices escalate in price exponentially and library budgets don't rise at the same rate. There is considerable tension.

We can only make some suggestions that might work, but the librarian will have to become imaginative in trying to represent visually what is actually happening to the library's digital access over time.

Case #1. You own the digital resource just as you would own a print version

- Count the items just as you would a physical item.
- For periodicals, you might compute the following:

of periodical titles _____ X # of years of coverage _____ = periodical coverage

(Example, we hold 20 years of *Time* and 15 years of *Newsweek* = 35 years)

- Sometimes you cancel a subscription but still own the back issues you paid for, so even though you had scattered years, it would still be counted as above.
- Sometimes when you cancel a subscription you lose total access to the years you subscribed. Charting a significant drop from large to zero provides an opportunity to explain to patrons the reasons. It also might stimulate a discussion with vendors: When I subscribe to a print periodical, I own the print copy forever, but if I don't pay your digital bill, I lose all access. Why?
- Chart on a line graph a trend over years of how many periodicals the library subscribes to, and in another chart about the depth of that collection using the coverage number.

Case #2. You lease certain titles or collections. Thus if you don't pay the bill the next year, that part of the collection disappears.

- Each contract period, compute the number of titles and the coverage as in Case 1.
- Chart this leasing arrangement over time as budgets rise or fall.

Case #3. You own both a print copy and a digital copy of the same item. For example, an information provider might require you to have a paper subscription to a journal before you can acquire access to the digital version.

- Count these items just as you would duplicate copies of a printed book.

Case #4. You have an elastic collection to digital materials. That is, you provide access to a specific ebook or periodical on demand for a limited amount of time or a specific number of searchers.

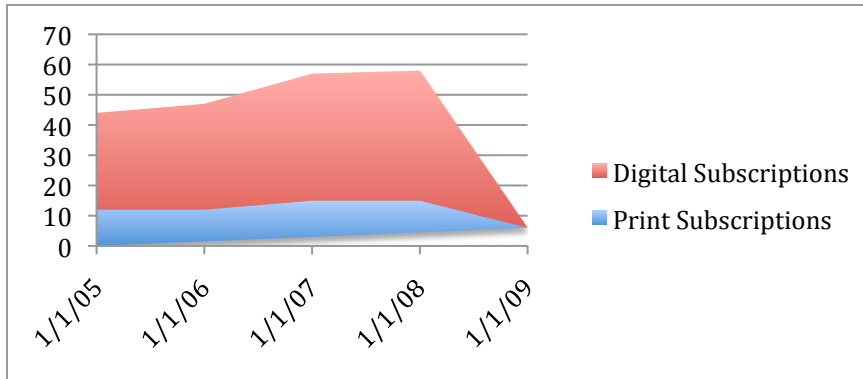
- Count the maximum number of simultaneous accesses as individual copies. Count the number of accesses as you would circulations and report these on a line graph over time.

Case #5. You collaborate with other libraries in access to various databases. For example, the school library funds certain titles and the public library others. And, this access is in collaboration with the state database collection.

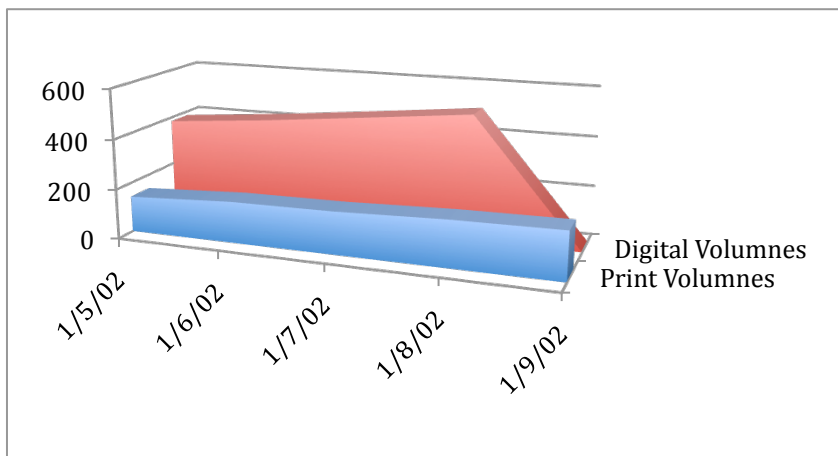
- Use a combination of methods above to present a picture of each of the parts joining together to form a whole access picture.

Sample Chart

Small Library #1: This library has a few subscriptions in print format across the years shown and many more digital subscriptions. The digital package contains larger and larger numbers of titles but when the subscription to the database was cancelled due to budget problems, access to all the digital copies was lost. Problem: the graphic shows the dramatic drop in digital collections and in print subscriptions as well; it does not represent accurately that the print collection for all years may still be accessible to the patron, but the past digital collection is not.



When we convert the number of periodical titles to counting periodical volumes (one year subscription equals one volume) then a different picture is created showing that we so have the advantage of having back issues of print volumes but have lost total access to all years of the digital versions.



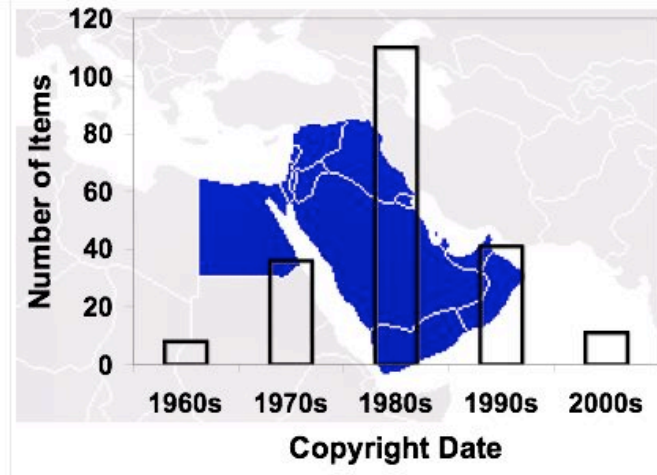
Note that the way we calculate and chart holdings, different messages are sent to the viewer of the chart. What messages would be better for your presentation?

Sample Copyright Age of Materials Analysis

The following chart demonstrates the copyright dates of materials on the topic of the near Middle East: in the library's physical collection (without database access)

Middle East Materials

1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s



Questions:

- If you were trying to write a report about the Middle East, what topic would you choose so that you would have the maximum resources and information from this collection?
- Even if you were to write a paper using the strengths of this collection, what would it still lack? (Example: you might only have points of view from the 1980s with little coverage of that time period from the perspective of the 2000 authors)
- What supplementary collections would you need and where would they be?
- If we superimposed digital collections we could access on top of this drawing, what would the result look like? How would this change our ability to choose topics for research?

Activity: Complete your own copyright age of materials analysis graphics using the form on the next page.

Do a Copyright Age Analysis of Materials for Your Library

List 5 common topics that patrons research in the library. What is the average copyright date of the materials they would encounter? You could do this analysis of materials found only on the OPAC; materials using the databases; and a typical Google search of the Internet. How do the three compare? Taken in total, what does that mean for the average researcher in your collection?

Topical Age Analysis

Topic:	# of Items:	Average Date:
<i>Explanation:</i>		
Topic:	# of Items:	Average Date:
<i>Explanation:</i>		
Topic:	# of Items:	Average Date:
<i>Explanation:</i>		
Topic:	# of Items:	Average Date:
<i>Explanation:</i>		
Topic:	# of Items:	Average Date:
<i>Explanation:</i>		

Conclusions: What are the strongest and weakest areas of your collection? (Note: You can make graphics like those on the previous page using most any presentation software that has a graphics component, such as Microsoft Office or Open Office.)

Strengths of your collection:

Improvements Needed:

Stop! You May Need to Weed the Collection Before You Proceed on to Constructing an Actual Collection Map.

Weeds in nature are simply plants in the wrong place. Likewise, materials in library collections may not be useful to the patrons. The collection may have so many outdated materials that patrons will never find the new items. They will be hidden among the old. However, if the library is serving an archive function, then materials acquired may never be weeded. Or, they might be digitized and the paper copies discarded in order to save space.

Automating a collection, applying for a collection renewal grant, a change in mission, a change in demographics of patrons, or adopting a new curriculum are all good reasons to get rid of materials that no longer belong in the library collection.

Here are a few tips for selecting candidates to leave the collection:

- Rarely or never used. The item may be perfectly good, but has not been used in a long time and is not likely to be used even if attention is drawn to it.
- Poor condition. Materials do wear out with use. Retire them. Perhaps students can clip any good pictures, then write new, more current text, making their report into a new book.
- Lacking in relevance. Items that don't fit the curriculum or meet user needs and are not likely to be a part of any student or patron interest are candidates for a new home.
- Out of date. The copyright date doesn't have to be very old to totally negate the information in the material. However, copyright date is certainly indicative that the information is no more recent than the date of publication. Some material is valuable for its perspective from a certain time period. In these cases, the needs of the curriculum and the type of research students or patrons do help you to decide whether to retain or discard. Don't consider shipping out-of-date materials to libraries in the developing world. They probably have more current resources than you intend to ship to them!
- Usability level. Perfectly good material can be above or below the level of the users of your library - a good opportunity to find the item a new home.
- Outdated format. The phonograph record collection is no longer used because of CDs and MP3 collections. Do you wish to archive such a collection? Why? Do you have the space? Willing to archive the equipment and computers that will still access them? Can you transform or repurpose these formats?

If administrators or board members seem to object:

- Store them if you have the room in a separate location and check use statistics. After a period of time, present your discard plan again.

Other Possibilities in Visualizing the Size and Quality of the Collection

Admittedly, it is easier to measure the size of a collection rather than its quality. What is a quality collection? Collecting libraries such as the Library of Congress, Harvard, or Yale emphasize that size and quality actually merge as you have “everything.” In the digital age, perhaps this becomes possible for every library since if we don’t have it, we can provide almost instant access to it. In the days of interlibrary loan, patrons had to be patient. Now they are impatient and expect instant access.

We have also recommended some kind of quality measure linked to currency of information – access to the bestseller, the latest magazine, the latest news from around the world. We are competing with a wide range of information services in this arena but our mission may be the tried and honored tradition of that public library: equity; equity over time. We provide access when others are only interested in profits.

One of the most commonly charted statistics from any library is one we have not charted here: circulation. The time-honored tradition tells us that if our collection is used, it must be good. Well... Think of the reasons why or why not this might be the case. No matter the conclusions, if circulation statistics impress patrons and boards, by all means use them, chart them, present them. Over time, we have counted only the physical items that actually circulate from the library. Efforts have been made to chart in-house use of collections such as reference books re-shelved each day, or number of items provided to research patrons from our special collection.

In the day of digital collections, we can now chart hits on the library web site. Hits on the library databases. Hits on particular titles within large collections of digital titles. Many information vendors can provide various usage reports to the librarian on usage over time. These statistics are valuable for collection building as well as bragging to users or administrators.

Another frontier is the measurement of uses and users within our own patron base or from without. For example, we may discover and then report that much of the traffic on our local history digitized photo collection comes from patrons outside our community and may be pouring in from around the world. We may be able to brag that since we transferred to digital collections from print ones, every employee of the company has been using the library as opposed to infrequent walk-in traffic of yesteryear.

Check to see if the various vendors you use including the OPAC system has various charts and graphs built into the system for reporting purposes. The more requests we make to vendors, the more likely they are to program interesting and informative graphics we can use.

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Chapter 8

Create a Current Collection Map

In the last chapter, more traditional measure and graphical representations were suggested as pictures of the entire collection or major collection segments. In this chapter we recommend an entirely different visualization of the collection – by topical segments that serve specific functions for the patrons. These might include blocks of materials that serve parts of the curriculum of a school or university, distinctive collections that serve a community purpose such as local history or the personal papers of a local author, or collections that serve a specific purpose such as a collection of teen graphic novels or a Spanish language fiction section. The idea is to communicate with others pictures that are easily understood about pieces and parts of the collection that are under scrutiny. The librarian can be quite creative, diplomatic, aggressive, or just informative about chunks of materials that serve patrons well or need attention.

The reason we recommend the construction of collection maps is that without them, few can understand or know the strengths or weaknesses of a library collection by just walking around the library facility. A person who tours the library may notice that:

- The collection seems to be large or small.
- The collection is in good shape because of shiny covers or in tatters because of a great deal of wear and tear.
- Full shelves or empty shelves.
- Some indication of a variety of media.
- Some indication of the state of technology access by the number of computers available for public use.

However, they will not see:

- The size of the digital collection as compared to the print collection.
- Whether wireless access is instantly available anywhere in the facility.
- Any indication of the quality of the collection.
- Any indication of collections that have been built to serve particular patron needs.

Thus, the collection map compensates for what a visitor cannot understand because visual clues are misleading or inaccurate.

Definition: A collection map is a graphical representation of the strengths and weaknesses of a library collection.

Audience: Decision makers, library advisory committee, patrons, school boards, parents, Friends of the Library, students, faculty, alumni, administrators, elected officials, potential donors.



Goal: To show visually to a non-librarian audience the strengths and weaknesses of the library collection.

Who: The library staff.

Method: Using the data collected in step three, create one or several visuals showing the state of the current collection. The visuals can be graphs, pictograms, words, pie charts, or any other visual that quickly communicates a message about the collection. Collection maps include both collection size and quality representations. Many word processors, databases, and spreadsheets will convert data instantly into charts. Programs such as Microsoft's PowerPoint can be used to make simple yet effective slides for presentation. Create messages that inform, alarm (if needed), congratulate (if deserved), summarize, examine trends, and/or look at various types of materials and technology. Be sure you can back up with facts and data the messages presented in the visuals.

Possible Representations:

- Show the size and quality of the core collection. (The general collection; materials that provide breadth; the core materials on hundreds of topics; the essential materials on many topics and in a wide variety of media)
- Show the size and quality of emphasis collections (in-depth collections built to serve a specific local history strength; curricular topic, teacher, school initiative, faculty research interest; or other purpose)
- Materials to support a particular type of technology (videos, DVDs, desktop publishing, digital photography, software, CD-ROMs, video games)
- Genre materials used for a particular curricular purpose (beginning-to-read titles, quick picks for teens, data banks for science, clip art for publishing, large-print books for the visually impaired)

Defining Various Collection Chunks

Begin thinking about pieces and parts of the collection that you could brag about because they are particularly useful to patrons or are distinctive in some way. Then think about parts of the collection that are in need of attention because of curricular changes, changes in demographics, or new needs being expressed by patrons. What conversations would you like to have with stakeholders, tour groups, potential funders, or administrators? These topical areas will be candidates for the collection map.

We suggest defining chunks of the collection as follows:

- The **Core Collection** is the basic general collection that has a little bit of everything and nothing much of anything. It can be likened to a large lake about one foot deep. The librarian has selected the basic works about many topics so that many and diverse patrons might find at least something of interest. However, one would not expect to find in-depth information about any particular topic. A patron would not encounter

complete runs of a favorite author's works, enough resources to write a major term paper, extensive coverage of a specific medical problem, or a very large selection of possible plays for the local theatrical group. The larger the core collection, the more likely it would be to serve patron needs; however, this would be satisfaction at random rather than intent. Budget restraints usually govern how large this collection segment is and how current its resources. This applies both to physical book collections and digital resources. Space to house the collection may also be a factor in how large a core collection can be. For example, what core works are housed at the main public library vs. those that are stored in a particular branch.

How does one compute the size of the core collection? Perhaps the easiest way is to begin with a count of the total collection size and then subtract from that number special topical collections that you wish to chart separately. Estimation is a friend here. Let us suppose that you have an excellent U.S. history collection that you want to brag about. It is much larger than one would expect. Some of this collection would be core items and others would be above "normal" expectations. You make the judgment. Have a reason for your determination if this is brought up by a person who would be viewing the result.

Next, you will need to make a determination about the quality of the core collection. This is subjective, of course. One would like to assume that an excellent core collection would deliver successful results for a high percentage of patron requests vs. a poor collection that would disappoint a broad range of requests. Such a success rate may be known by reference staff, but it is very difficult to judge how many digital searches produced satisfying results unless conversations with patrons are frequent. We suggest the use of the common five-star hotel evaluation system that you as a professional could make an expert judgment about and one which patrons would readily understand.

A core collection might have various meanings. For example:

- The core collection could be large but out of date so it might receive a rating of one or two stars.
- The core collection might be small, yet the reference staff feels like general reference questions are handled most of the time. Thus you might give the collection a rating of four.
- The core collection might be large and current, but it does not serve the neighborhood well because the demographics have changed. Thus, the collection might be rated one or two stars. Great resources; wrong audience.

Because the core collection is foundational, we recommend that you picture this segment as the base of the collection as a whole. It is the foundation out of which collection strengths are built.

The concept of a core collection is actually common in library literature. Over time, librarians have published major bibliographies of core collections. These might be called opening day collections and some vendors have such lists available for immediate purchase as a package deal. We are wary of such efforts, but with scrutiny, such lists can be suggestive of what “experts” have chosen as essential purchases across a wide variety of topics. We are thinking of publications such as *Children’s Catalog*, *Public Library Catalog*, or lists of core reference works. Resources such as guides to science fiction or major lists of periodicals such as *Ulrichs* would obviously go far beyond the idea of a core collection. Look for such core lists as one way to build expertise in what constitutes core.

- The **General Emphasis Collections** are chunks of resources in a particular topical area that are much larger than one would expect – larger by far than a core collection and one that has been build for a particular purpose or clientele. One immediately thinks of an extensive local history collection in a public library that has been built by a dedicated professional or local history club. The U.S. history collection might be very large because the history department of the community college regularly assigns term papers and the faculties have been excellent and regular patrons of the library. General emphasis collections are used by a larger segment of the patronage – for example, an entire department of a school or college, Spanish language patrons as a group, an in-depth collection of poetry that has been built by the local poetry club but used by children and teens from the local schools. You may have built a large collection of travel guides for an extra large retirement community. A large collection; many uses and user groups.

There are ways to track general emphasis collections and specific emphasis collections that will be covered next. Large university libraries often build general emphasis collections using Library of Congress classification ranges. For example, class F is the history of the Americas and the librarian has built large collections of just the numbers representing U.S. history. Library automation systems often have fields in the database that can be used to mark membership in an emphasis collection. We are familiar with one automation system that allows the creation of “lists.” These can be built by doing subject searches in the collection to gather together materials such a U.S. history what would be scattered around the collection. For example, adding to the F class numbers, biography, reference works, art of historical periods, accounts of wars, etc. Here, the concept of U.S. history is scattered throughout the various classifications rather than being stored in a single location. Of course, the librarian needs to think about digital resources in the count of the size of the general emphasis collection. What groups of periodicals are part of the U.S. history collection? What databases are useful? What ebooks are available in this area?

Make a few decision and estimation rules for how you have computed the size of the general emphasis collections – what you have included, how

items were counted, how items were searched to form a “list” in the automation system. These decision rules can be accurate counts or guidelines for how you created an estimate.

Once the size of a general emphasis collection has been determined, some judgments about its quality can be made or estimated. We recommend the use of the popular five-star hotel rating as an easy method. Five stars would be awarded because patrons doing in-depth research would be pleased with the results most of the time before needing to push out beyond the library to other larger and more specialized collections. We would award one star to a large collection but for some reason, it responds poorly to the demands being placed upon it.

- **Specific Emphasis Collections** are in-depth chunks of very specific topical areas that have been built to serve very narrow but very detailed needs. Using our U.S. history example, not all eras have been built equally. We may have built extensive collections of the Revolutionary War periods of the Civil War period because extensive research assignments are made in these areas. We may have young students doing local history research and so have built a subset of the main local history collection that specializes in materials about the community that young children can use. A public library may have many military personnel as regular patrons who require in-depth information on a host of topics about locating community resources they need to access for short stays. A library might collect everything possible about a narrow topic such as crochet patterns for a local club, extensive resources for new immigrants to the community, or resources for hot topic debates assigned every year in the junior U.S. government classes.

Use similar guidelines for estimating or tacking of specific emphasis collections in terms of size and quality as you did with the general emphasis collections.

How does one decide whether a collection chunk is a general or a specific emphasis collection? It is a judgment call. Often, that judgment can be made during the creation of the collection map graphic. When you chart one collection segment and look at the message that it is saying to the viewer, you might change your mind and map various ways until the graphic clearly represents the message you intend to deliver. Test your collection map on some sample patrons. Do they “get the message” in ten seconds or less? When they can, you have it about right. Consider the following list of possible uses and the message you want to deliver for the use you intend. The instant impact of the visual is the important thing.

Possible Uses:

- Show trends
- Show needs
- Show strengths
- Point to embarrassments
- Congratulate
- Show progress
- Show size and quality

Possible Audiences:

- Boards
- Students
- Administrators
- Decision makers
- Teachers/Faculty
- Departments
- Parent groups
- Alumni groups
- Community stakeholders

Sample Current Collection Map

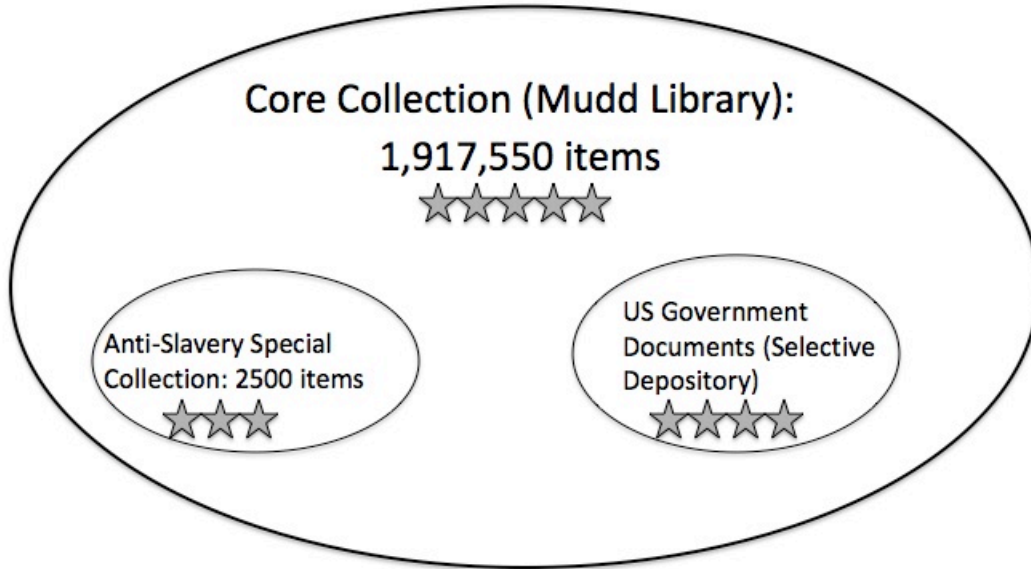
The following collection map was made (by the authors, not Oberlin College) in PowerPoint for the library system of a liberal arts college. The core collection is in its general library, Mudd Library, while its three biggest general emphasis collections are housed in its three specialty libraries.

The core collection map is shown as a Venn diagram, highlighting just two of the special emphasis collections. The core collection earns five stars for being one of the largest undergraduate libraries in the country, with detailed collection development plans tailored to the curriculum. The special collection of abolitionist documents gets three stars: the primary documents included in it are extraordinary and rare, but the collection is small considering the importance of the anti-slavery movement to the college's tradition. (This could be a fund-raising opportunity.) The government documents collection likely far exceeds the research needs of the college, so it earns four stars. The second map shows the three general emphasis collections, housed each in their own libraries.



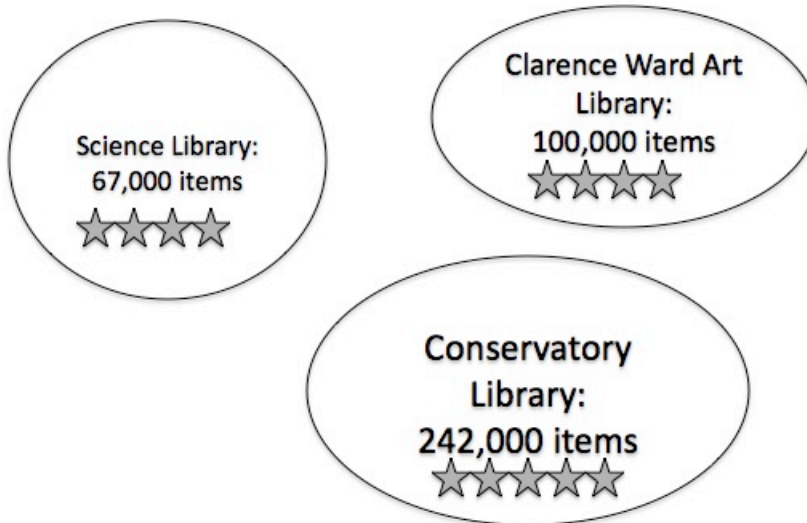
Oberlin College Libraries

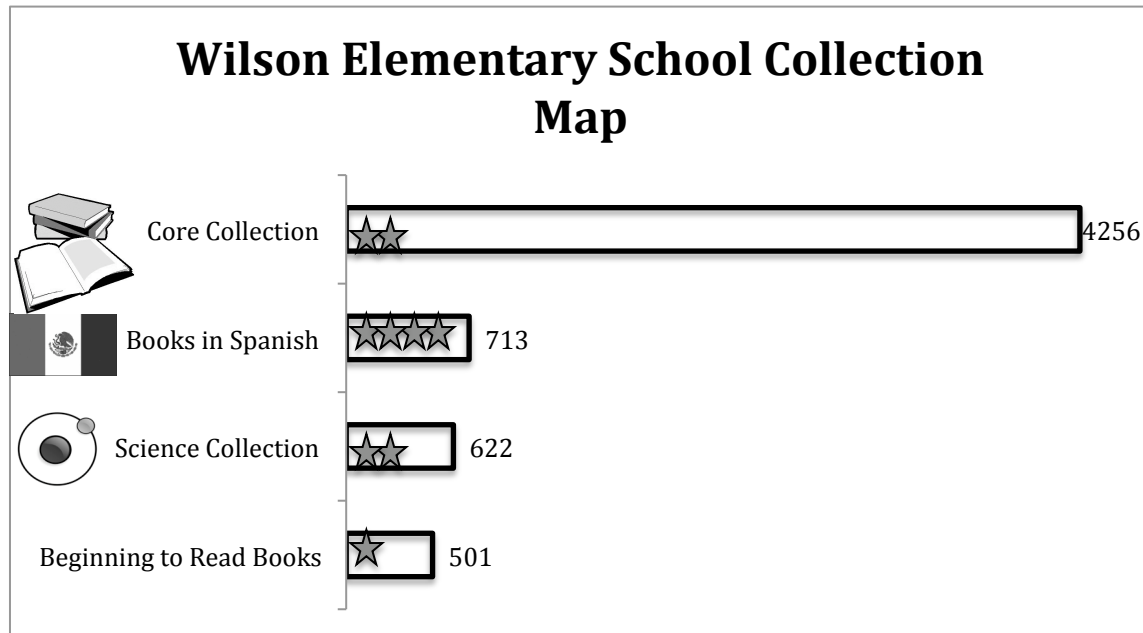
Total Collections: 2,326,550 items



Oberlin College Libraries

General Emphasis Collections





This collection map was made for Wilson Elementary School, so it has more fun graphics, taken from a public domain clip art collection online. The bar chart was made in Microsoft Excel.

Fiction collections are difficult to map. The date of publication isn't a good indicator of relevance for fiction: for example, Jane Austen's novels have gone through fads of popularity and irrelevance (among both recreational and academic readers) many times in the nearly two centuries since they were written. If your library's copy of *Pride & Prejudice* is a high-quality hardcover in good repair, it shouldn't matter if that edition is twenty-five years old. Another barrier to mapping is that some libraries don't include the genre in the catalog record for fiction, or don't include it consistently for all records.

Here are some ways to overcome these challenges:

- Look at a set number of best-sellers for the past few years, depending on the size of your library: say the top twenty fiction books of each of the past three years. How many of these are in your collection? Best-sellers might be a general emphasis collection. Similarly, consider checking your collection against Oprah Winfrey's selections, if your patrons ask for her picks.
- Does your library have any book clubs? What have they been reading? Depending on how widely or narrowly the groups cast their nets (a wide variety of detective stories and mysteries, or slogging their way just

through James Joyce's *Ulysses*), these could lead you to general or special emphasis collections. Check your collections for all the titles they've ever read, and anything else by those or similar authors, in those series, or in that genre. Are there enough copies, in good enough repair?

- Consider making fiction on ebook its own special emphasis collection, to draw attention to this intangible resource.

Uses of the Collection Map

Consider the following ideas for using the collection maps as a part of the librarian's strategy for collection building:

- **A bragging tool:** Show to stakeholders, patrons, administrators, or boards. The community may have made a concerted effort to build collection segments, and they need to see some evidence that their funds were spent on the targets they felt were in need of being built. Collection targets will be a part of the proposed collection map recommended later. As a visual of the current state of the collection, we can be proud of what we have.
- **An evaluation tool:** As viewers if the current strengths of the collection match the targets we presume are in place or match our patrons needs. What's missing? Are we where we would like to be? Are we in touch with our patrons and their needs?
- **A planning tool:** Show where the collection currently provides a springboard to further development. Have stakeholders, advisory groups, or patron groups assist in deciding what collection targets to pursue. What new emphasis areas should be created? Which areas are already good but will require regular updating? Given the current funding, which collection segments should receive priority? If new emphasis areas need to be built, where will the money come from? Grants? New local monies? Fund raisers? Which collection segments should be built first? With what funds?
- **A usage tool:** The strengths of a collection are the most logical areas where the curriculum of the school, the central business of the company, or a segment of patrons can be served the most effectively. If little is being done with the emphasis collection, plan some outreach to the patrons to introduce them to the materials. If they are still uninteresting to the target audience, then the section becomes a prime target for weeding.
- **A networking tool:** Perhaps the in-house book collection may be kept rather small because it is better to use information available online or through a cooperative arrangement with another library. The best information resource may be through a network or collaborative arrangement with other libraries. If this is the case, the collection map

should picture this strength as if it were held locally. Do some experimentation with the map until that concept is achieved.

- **A weeding tool:** Suggest parts of the collection serving a specific topic that are irrelevant. Perhaps blocks of materials should be discarded or traded. If a collection segment might be valuable in the future but it isn't now, perhaps it could be stored elsewhere.
- **A sharing tool:** If you exchange collection maps with other libraries, you know the topical strengths of neighboring collections as well as your own. Explore ways to link the collections together. In an interesting study some years ago, the academic librarians of Pennsylvania were skeptical of linking into the school library collections of the state until they discovered the huge numbers of unique titles held by school libraries that could be of research value to their own patrons. Fears of some collections being net lenders were erased when the entire system of sharing was up and running.

Distribute Collection Maps Widely

Help patrons understand the strengths of the current collection and the proposed collection targets (covered later). This may be done through large poster-sized maps, maps on bookmarks, or links on the library web site. On the back side of program brochures or anywhere else that gets some distribution and leads to an open discussion.

Chapter 9

Create a Proposed Collection Map

Definition: A proposed collection map is a graphical representation of the direction a collection should move in the next year, three years, five years, etc.

Audience: Decision makers, library advisory committee, patrons, school boards, parents, students, faculty, administrators, elected officials, granting organizations.

Goal: To create visual(s) that can be understood instantly by a non-librarian audience showing the direction a library collection should take.

Method: Create a second collection map showing collection targets and estimated costs.

Possible Representations:

- Show the size and quality of the core collection, now and in the future.
- Show the projected size and quality of emphasis collections – with cost estimates. (An emphasis collection is a group of materials that serves specific functions, such as beginning-to-read books; materials to serve the astronomy unit of instruction/department; Civil War materials.)
- Show the materials needed to support a particular type of technology – MP3 players, graphic design software, or online information products. (Information products such as Gale, ProQuest, EBSCO, and NewsBank, are examples of online information systems to be purchased and renewed each year. Many of these products serve multiple topical areas and are Internet-based. Most can be accessed not only in the library, but in the home, classroom, or office as well.)

Steps in the Creation of the Proposed Collection Map

1. Make a list of the various collection segments represented on the current collection map created in the previous chapter.
2. Add to this list any collection segments that you, in consultation with others, feel should be added to the collection map. For example, your advisory committee has encouraged you to make a major addition to the online databases available to patrons 24/7/365. A new course has been added to the curriculum that will require substantial support. A change in demographics in the neighborhood has created a demand for materials in Chinese.
3. Add the estimated number of items it would take to achieve your collection goal.
4. Decide the fate of each of the current collection segments and the



proposed ones. This will require thinking ahead at budgeting factors such as the trends in regular budgets, possibilities for grants, or the likelihood that the supporting organization would support a one-time or long-term budget increase. There are three decisions that can be made about any collection segment:

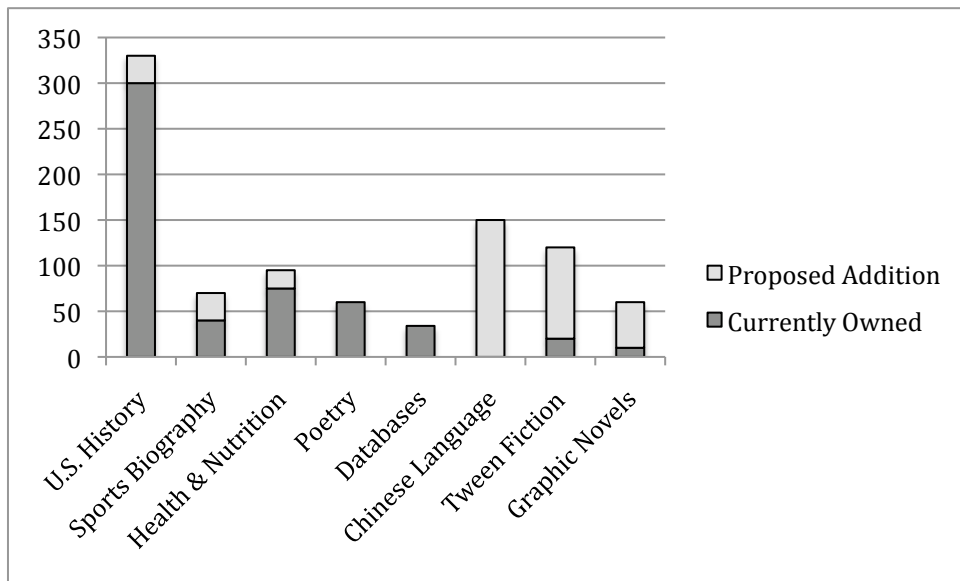
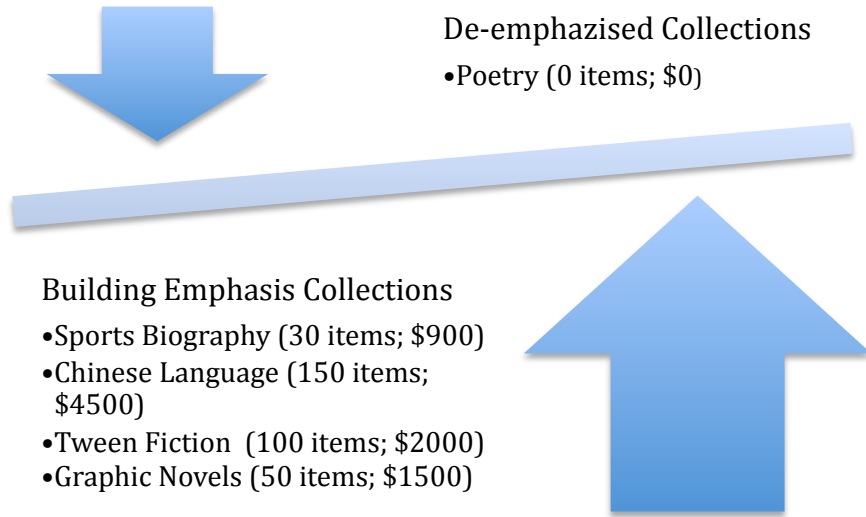
- a. **Build it** - Major amounts of money will need to be budgeted, and it and the current collection will need to be weeded.
- b. **Maintain it** - The collection will need to be weeded regularly and money budgeted to replace valuable materials and purchase the best of the newest materials published in that area.
- c. **De-emphasize it** - (let it die) Less money will be spent on the collection and it will be weeded regularly. Former emphasis collections will eventually recede into the core collection.

Sample Collections Proposed Collection Map

Collection Segment	Current Size	Decision	#s to Add	Estimated Cost
The Core Collection	25,800	Maintain	100	\$3,000
Current Emphasis Collections				
U.S. History	300	Maintain	30	\$900
Sports Biography	40	Build	30	\$900
Health and Nutrition	75	Maintain	20	\$500
Poetry	60	De-emphasize	0	\$0
Current database subscriptions	34	Maintain	0	\$25,000
Proposed Collection Segments				
Chinese Language Collection	0	Build	150	\$4,500
Tween Fiction	20	Build	100	\$2,000
Graphic Novels	10	Build	50	\$1,500

Note: Each decision in such a chart should have a justification attached as well as realistic estimates of what the estimated costs would be.

5. Prepare an easy-to-understand visual of the table above. This will be your Proposed Collection Map that can be shown in presentations, simple handouts, or longer reports.



Possible Uses:

- Show audiences where we are and where we propose to be.
- Demonstrate the need for funding.
- Visualize as part of a grant proposal.
- Demonstrate problems, trends, and possibilities.
- Engender support.

Tip: If you love to do presentations by PowerPoint, then take a look at the video presentation titled "What not to do with PowerPoint" embedded at collectionmapping.pbwiki.com



Chapter 10

Match the Money to the Needs

Who: The library advisory committee and decision makers.

Goal: To prioritize wants and needs to available funds and to account for monies as they are spent.

Activities:

- Understand the budgeting system of your organization.
- Itemize available funds.
- Do preliminary estimates of proposed spending for the various collection segments taken from the proposed collection map.
- Project the effects of money on outcomes. Will you be able to acquire the desired items for the amounts budgeted?
- Prioritize the requests to the available funds (separate needs from wants).
- Spend the money to acquire the desired materials.
- Explore additional funding possibilities:
 - Extra local allocations
 - Governmental funding sources
 - Grants
 - Gifts
 - Partnerships with other libraries
- Fundraise for collection targets not in the regular budgets.
- Put in place reporting mechanisms to account for proposed spending vs. actual spending on the various segments of the collection.
- Make regular reports to advisory groups and to fiscal offices or administrators.

Many libraries already have accounting departments that handle the budget, acquisitions, and reporting. Small libraries expect the librarian to handle all the money matters. All library directors, collection developers, and department heads are advised to understand the budgeting system for the library and to keep a close watch on monies as they are expended and as they impact the actual collection development targets created by the staff with help from the advisory group. It is all a part of being accountable to your patrons. Follow the money trail if you really want to know what's happening to the library's potential to serve information needs. Transparency in budgeting matters is always a good idea since so many organizations have legal responsibilities to the general public, patrons, benefactors, or to the management heads of the organization.

What do you need to understand about the budgeting process?

1. **The Official Budget.** This budget comes from the organization itself such as the corporation, a school board, the state/county/city, the federal government, or other official source. This money will have linked to it all

the official rules and procedures for accounting and reporting. If money matters are a part of your job description, you need to understand those rules and procedures whether or not you actually write the checks, do the acquisition, or produce the monthly reports. Budget oversight comes with it the responsibility to expend funds responsibly, lawfully, and ethically. You may have the responsibility to account for every penny to the funder of each part of the official budget. Failure to do so usually has consequences, all of which you should know and understand.

Official budgets often are categorized in ways that do not match the collection mapping scheme we propose. For example, you may have a lump sum of money to spend at your discretion. Other times, the budget will be categorized by type of materials such as books, multimedia, digital, etc. Hopefully, money for materials is separate from salaries, equipment, supplies, and building or equipment maintenance.

Many libraries have acquisition systems already in place where blocks of funds can be allocated to individual segments of the collection you designate. For example, you may allocate from the lump sum, sub categories for the children's collection, the adult collection, online databases, etc. Further breakdowns can then be made by collection building targets matching the proposed collection map.

If the current acquisition system can only handle the official budget and not spending by detailed categories, then you will have to create two budgets: one for official purchases and accounting, and the other to help you track where the money is actually being spent. The official budget must abide by the rules of accounting. The other budget, the one we describe as the emphasis budget, is more relaxed and used to communicate with various advisory or patron groups.

On the following page is a real sample official budget that is itemized according to the budget categories that must be reported by law for a county public library.

Bullitt County (Kentucky) Public Library District's Budget 2006-2007

Books	\$230,000
Periodicals	\$5,000
Reference Digital	\$15,000
DVD	\$12,000
CD Music	\$2,500
Books on Tape	\$10,000
Books on CD	\$16,000
Processing Supplies	\$10,000
TOTAL MATERIALS	\$300,500
Interlibrary Loan expense	\$1,000
Internet Service	\$7,200
Software & Support	\$20,000
Electric & Gas	\$55,000
Water & Sewer	\$3,000
Telephone & Data Lines	\$7,000
Tower Rent	\$3,000
Maintenance	\$10,000
Office Supplies	\$8,000
Postage	\$2,500
Insurance	\$30,000
Trustee/Staff Development	\$10,000
Membership and Dues	\$1,500
Program & Promotional	\$16,000
Miscellaneous	\$3,000
Legal Fees and Audit	\$5,000
TOTAL OPERATING	\$496,200
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	\$856,496
Payroll Expenses	\$1,100,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,452,696

In this budget, the librarian has \$290,500 (the materials budget minus the supplies allocation) to spend on the core, general emphasis, and specific emphasis collections all together.

2. **The Emphasis Budget.** If there is not a way to use the official budgeting or acquisition system to categorize the collection so that you can track money spent on collection segments, then you will need some kind of unofficial way of tracking so that you can report targeted spending. Here are some examples of the reasons for this unofficial tracking:
 - a. A target of the proposed collection map is to build the children's picture book collections by at least a hundred titles. Part of the money is coming from the general collection, and part is coming

- from a grant made by a local business. The librarian tracks this money so that reports can be made to the sponsoring organization.
- b. A local history collection has donations in kind, grant funds from the local historical club, an agreement with county libraries for the joint funding of some online databases, and some money from the general budget. The librarian wants to track and create a visual for the local club so that everyone understands the funding sources, what they are used for, and needs over and above what the current funding will allow. The librarian keeps a simple spreadsheet page to track expenditures. In the official budget, only the official funds are tracked. The club's funds are handled and items paid for by the local history club.
 - c. A school has received a grant from the federal government to purchase math and science materials to support a major school initiative. The official budget asks only for lump sum accountability. The librarian creates a spreadsheet to track segments of the collection that are benefitting from the grant so that program reports can be made.

The following sample emphasis budget demonstrates how the emphasis collection money is tracked. Sometimes it is impossible to track emphasis budget spending to the penny. For example, picture books for the emphasis collection are mixed in with other orders by the children's department. When jobbers fill the order, some titles are reported out of print, others will be supplied later, and then there are usually some straggler problems. In such cases, an estimated amount can be entered into the emphasis budget since detailed tracking would be more effort than it is worth.

The following is a hypothetical example spreadsheet of a simple emphasis budget tracking, based on the real budget above. Each of these categories could include each of the media listed in the official budget from the county: books, periodicals, DVDs, music, and audiobooks. For example, the local history specific emphasis collection might include both books about towns in the area, and CD recordings of traditional Kentucky bluegrass. The hunting, fishing, and wildlife topic might include a subscription to relevant magazines as well as instructional DVDs. This variety is what makes keeping two budgets worthwhile.

Bullitt County Public Library Topical Collections Budget

	<i>Allocated</i>	<i>Spent</i>	<i>Remaining</i>
CORE COLLECTION	\$200,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Hunting, Fishing, & Wildlife	\$30,000	\$13,000	\$17,000
Romance Fiction	\$25,500	\$15,000	\$10,500
GENERAL EMPHASIS COLLECTIONS	\$55,500	\$28,000	\$27,500
Regional Gardening	\$10,000	\$8,000	\$2,000
Local History & Genealogy	\$5,000	\$2,000	\$3,000
Beginning to Read	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
SPECIFIC EMPHASIS COLLECTIONS	\$35,000	\$20,000	\$15,000
TOTAL COLLECTIONS BUDGET	<u>\$290,500</u>	<u>\$148,000</u>	<u>\$142,500</u>

Spending the Money Wisely

It is one thing to budget money to spend. It is quite another matter to see that the money is spent properly and buys the best and most usable materials. The professional literature is full of suggestions on how to spend your money wisely. Suggestions may include using:

- Bibliographies of the best materials
- Critical reviews
- In-house previewing
- Previewing at conference exhibits

Vendors are also anxious to provide lists and catalogs that praise their products. These aids should always be held suspect, as they are biased -- no matter the claims made to you by the vendor. Sales representatives love to sell blocks of materials at high prices using hard-sell techniques. For example, a company might hire a cadre of salespersons to play golf with company officials, principals or superintendents, or library directors to sell their expensive high-tech information system. Such questionable practices happen and can easily disrupt the best planning.

Here are a few common-sense tips. You can add to the list:

- Understand discounts.
- Don't buy materials just because they are cheap.
- Buy paperbacks, particularly if the topic is of temporary interest or is popular fare.
- Don't buy printed materials if electronic sources are just as usable (space considerations may become more and more a deciding factor).

- Invest in “steel-case” (library bound) bindings for materials that will be heavily used (if the number of circulations make this a good investment).
- Return items that don’t meet your scrutiny to publishers or jobbers (you must return them in saleable condition). Yes, this is a hassle and sometimes a nightmare.
- Don’t fall for special deals if you have to buy in blocks of materials, many of which you do not need.
- Resist high-powered sales techniques.
- Rarely respond to a telephone pitch.
- Preview if possible.
- Include patrons in previewing.
- For expensive computer software, if you can’t try before you buy, don’t buy.
- Never buy a pig in a poke (that supposedly wonderful item in a plain brown wrapper).
- Know your sources. Know your jobbers. Know your sales reps.
- Understand the ramifications of multi-year contracts for materials, equipment, and network requirements.

The list can go on and on. People who are expert shoppers in a mall generally make good librarians because they have an eye for quality and price. A few automated selection tools are now available. These automated systems often have done much of the work for you on assembling reviews for their titles. More will be said about these systems in a later chapter. Again, know how these systems work and how they compare to other automated services available.

At times, materials and equipment may fail significant numbers of the above guidelines. There may be so few materials published or only one brand of equipment available that you have a choice between acquiring the inferior product or buying nothing. In these cases your expertise will be tested. Remember that you will need to defend your choices.

Scenario

Jamie Williams moved to a small western town to take a job in the local middle school. Soon after her arrival, she met Sonia Johnson, the public librarian, and they struck up a friendship. Sonia had begun a column for the local newspaper a year ago and invited Jamie to write some of the columns and joint-author others. The local school board had enthusiastically embraced technology and had wired the middle school as a pilot project. Sonia saw the newspaper as a chance to spotlight some of the fun things that were starting to happen with instructional units that were taking advantage of the Internet.

As units of instruction using the Internet began to develop, the teachers soon found out that Internet resources were insufficient for the projects being designed. Thus, Jamie would map the collection and use the results in planning sessions with the faculty. Jamie found that the faculty had champagne tastes on

a beer budget and that the 10 or so collection segments the faculty wanted to build would bankrupt her budget in a flash.

For one of Jamie's columns in the local newspaper, she described an upcoming unit of instruction and hinted in the article that resources were needed. She was surprised when she received a call from two organizations in town wanting to "adopt" a unit with financial support. Using this as her springboard, Sonia divided her proposed collection map into several categories:

- High-priority units to be funded immediately with her school budget.
- Units that would be funded by grants that she had pending.
- Units that would be available for "adopt-a-unit partners."

The first year she had only two funders, but as her columns continued to spotlight good learning experiences and gave tips to parents on how to connect into the Internet, she found interest increasing. In the fall of the second year, she was asked to speak at one of the service clubs that had funded a unit the previous year. She prepared a transparency that described the unit, showed the breakdown of materials that had been purchased with the club's money, indicated how the materials had been used, and spotlighted some of the students' projects. A couple of students came and did five-minute demonstrations of their projects, and their teacher participated in the presentation along with Jamie.

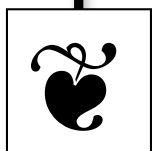
The club members were so impressed that they asked Jamie if they could become annual partners in such efforts. Sonia went back to her faculty and asked for volunteers to plan a unit, knowing that there would be \$1,000 to fund materials. The problem was, there were too many takers!

References

Bullitt County Public Library. (2008). Bullitt County Library statistics at a glance. Retrieved 20 January 2009 from <http://www.bcplib.org/pr.htm>

Part III

Implement the Collection Development Plan



Chapter 11

Acquire the Best: Selection Criteria

As we have pointed out earlier, there is a difference between collecting and selecting. Most libraries have some parts of their collection where they want to be as extensive as possible. This might be a collection of high school yearbooks, a complete run of the local newspaper, the complete works of a campus author, or other collection special to the local patrons or sometimes a collection that is a gift from a famous person. In this case, the collector sets the criteria for inclusion and then goes after everything fitting those criteria. Thus, if we were to have a collection of first editions of 19th century American literary authors, then anything that qualified would be acquired. Interestingly, as the world of text goes more and more digital, the possibility of collecting “everything” on a particular topic actually becomes more and more possible. If we don’t “own” the item, we link to it and make it available through a seamless network. For example, we might allow patrons to download to a digital device an ebook using the library credit card as if the library were a rental service.



However, most libraries cannot afford to collect everything, so they try to assemble a collection representative of the best works or resources that satisfy the most requests from the widest possible patronage. We set up criteria as guidelines to use as individual items are considered for purchase or accessibility through a network.

Selection criteria have been well known and publicized for many years in the library literature. They show up now even more as guidelines for patrons who are barraged with information on the Internet and are trying to make some sense of the thousands of voices that are vying for attention.

But before we create a set of criteria to choose materials in general, or criteria for selecting a particular genre or chunk of materials for the collection, we need to develop some understanding of what is available in various topical areas: how materials or information come into existence and become available for acquisition. Histories of a particular genre or technology can be quite useful in understanding of the scope, sources, evolution, and availability of materials. A few examples are given here that warrant investigation. Readers are encouraged to branch out into whatever materials are candidates for inclusion in their collections.

- **Book Publishing**
 - The history of the printed book beginning with the Gutenberg Bible
 - The emergence of major publishing houses that select, edit, produce and sell their products
 - The growth of both national and international publishing conglomerates

- The creation of jobbers who fill orders from a wide spectrum of publishers who deal with libraries but also directly to the general public
 - The development of bookstore chains and independent booksellers
 - The emergence of small publishing houses and individuals who publish their works themselves and market directly or through jobbers such as Amazon.com
 - The concept of intellectual property and copyright vs. open source publishing causing the conflict between fee or free
 - The creation of mass “ownership” or collaborative creation of large bodies of information such as Wikipedia
 - The world of books in the public domain available to everyone such as Project Gutenberg
 - The experiments to make the entire spectrum of information available at the desktop such as Google Scholar or the availability of ebooks on devices such as the Kindle
- **The Recording Industry**
 - The 19th century invention of audio recording by Thomas Edison
 - The development of the various analog recording devices and media
 - The rise of recording giants and their record labels
 - The emergence of MTV
 - The development and transition to digital recording formats
 - The invention of audio file sharing across the Internet (Napster) and its impact on intellectual property and potential for profits and losses.
 - The realization by recording artists that they could distribute their own work via the Internet and its effects on the major recording studios
 - Industry attempts to control free distribution of audio files through iTunes and other distribution systems
 - The invention of the iPod and other MP3 players

Clearly, during the 20th century, we experienced a massive change in the way information and multimedia materials are created, produced, and distributed. The development of user-created resources such as Wikipedia brings into question: What is quality information? What do we mean by “the best?” Which of all the voices crowding around deserve attention let alone representation in library collections?

Library literature is full of lists of criteria for selecting the best of a particular genre or sorting through ideas to develop a representational sample of the best. Because of the proliferation of formats, media, genres, and the opening of the world of ideas through the Internet, guidelines for choosing quality vary across the range of materials available. Here we list some of the traditional ideas and

encourage the reader to search out and help develop guidelines for new media as they emerge as candidates for selected literary collections.

Authority and Accuracy: Great care should be taken to ensure that the information found in any factual source can be substantiated. Because new knowledge is being discovered rapidly, much information in our collection is superseded on a regular basis and needs replacement. Even in the areas of point of view, political concepts, religious beliefs, ethnic cultures, and historical reports, accuracy over unsupported hearsay is required.

Relevance: Information and materials that target the school curriculum, age, and sophistication levels of the patrons are always to be preferred over just filling shelves or disk drives with “stuff.” A wonderful book about the Civil War too sophisticated for the readers in the library is not a wonderful book. Hundreds of thousands of Internet sites provide only data rather than essential information directly related to the needs of the user.

Content: Good content on topic is always preferred over peripheral materials, particularly when funds are limited. Choose a source that has good coverage of the topic at hand rather than one tangential to it. For example, several good comprehensive biographies of Abraham Lincoln help more than a single book on Lincoln’s law career, unless Lincoln is a subject in an emphasis collection. Begin with core works, then branch out to more specialized sources.

Usefulness: An item that helps real patrons doing real projects or trying to find solid information is appreciated and preferred to materials that may be pretty, “glitzy,” esoteric, or critically acclaimed but don’t “pay their dues” when patrons need help. For example, when information is need about a foreign place for travel or research, a tourist picture collection source may be attractive and slick but not particularly useful for normal patron queries.

Technical Qualities: Multimedia items, digital materials, and online resources need to be designed and produced in such a way as to be informative and relevant to the type of information your patrons require. Researchers will not get a sense of a time period, a foreign country, or a science concept if the technical quality is so poor that misunderstanding is the result. One thinks of examples of Revolutionary War films that have telephone poles in the background; costumes not representative of the period; poor quality sound or visuals.

Patron Appeal: Materials that patrons have interest in are good candidates for consideration. These materials may be considered part of the popular culture but wise librarians start where patrons are and gently lead them to the better materials. In other words, start with the popular because of the demand, but nudge patrons toward the quality sources. This stance, however, does conflict with the idea of selecting only quality. Our patrons may want a large collection of graphic novels. Personally, we may think this genre inferior but realize that a collection will draw many patrons to our stacks.

Appeal over Time: Data banks and online information services should have content over time that is easy to find, use, and satisfies user needs. Patrons will need both current and retrospective information. Full-text sources are to be preferred over just “listings” of possible articles. The proliferation of databases, each with their own login procedures, often presents a wall over which many patrons are unwilling to navigate.

Format: Think of the format evolution over the last two decades that has required libraries to rethink what formats they offer their patrons. Phonograph records and reel to reel tapes, eight-track tapes, audio cassettes, CDs, mp3 files ...on and on it goes. The question becomes, what formats will our patrons want, use, and expect? And, what do we do with the materials we have in outdated formats? Should a public library have mp3 files that are not compatible with 90% of their patrons who do not have personal computers or portable players? When should Blu-ray begin to replace the previous generation of DVDs? Should the library try to compete with iTunes or Netflix?

With few reliable crystal balls available, we might look around at what other libraries are doing, but perhaps our best solution is a strong and forward-looking advisory committee whose members keep their eyes and ears open, making a regular effort to keep patrons involved. Librarians who are afraid that the book is on the decline must recognize that the patron is really the final determinant of what formats circulate.

Cost: The adage, “You get what you pay for,” has true implication in information resources. Buying remainders at the book sale may get you quantity, but they often lack quality and may not fit the patron’s needs. Purchasing a more expensive database may provide more resources than a lesser-priced product. Don’t be afraid to justify the high cost if the source delivers a higher percentage of relevant information.

Vendors and entrepreneurs are anxious to capitalize on content creation as a way to earn money. Large packages of information are packaged and re-packaged in ways conveniently directed at patron segments at a contract price. Wise shopper librarians need to follow the money trail to discover and negotiate the best price for patron access to information. For example, some companies sell packaged information databases to the public library for use by everyone in the community but want to restrict access to school kids during the day in an attempt to double dip by requiring the schools to purchase the same information a second time. Smart librarians vote against such practices by talking to company representatives, driving a hard bargain, and most of all, voting with their dollars. You will find ways to shop talk with other librarians on the web and opportunities to compare products and services on convention exhibit floors.

Even though librarians have made a consistent effort over the years to choose the best, personal bias and the principles of intellectual freedom often enter into the selection process, not to mention political pressures.

For example, one of the authors was examining a collection of 19th century fiction for children about the American West. Opening any of these treasures revealed

line after line of the description of Native Americans as “savages” – something that would not be tolerated in today’s society where inclusion and dignity of all peoples is paramount. We look back at those times when authors, publishers, reviewers and the general readership would have thought any of the titles to be quality literature and wonder about our own biases that color our selection of “the best.”

Oft times, there are very few quality sources from which to choose. We search and search and discover less than desirable items. Is something on the topic better than nothing? If diet books are in high demand and we know that half of them have been discredited by medical research as merely fads, what do we do? At what point does the percentage of outdated or misinformation make the item a candidate for weeding?

We may be in a community that favors a particular point of view, major ideas, and narrow but strict standards. Do we provide materials that do the best job of putting many ideas in a larger frame of reference? Do we stick to selecting materials that adhere to the party line? No one has said that selecting quality information is either easy or scientific. It is certain, however, that both librarians and their patrons get more and more sophisticated at making judgments about what constitutes quality. Everyone needs to ask the basic questions of the plethora of information crowding into our heads: Who is saying what to me, for what reasons, and for what gain? Who can I trust? What is really worth my attention?

Chapter 12

Find and Use Good Review Sources and Bibliographies

There are hundreds of bibliographies compiled by knowledgeable experts to help you sort through the maze of published materials. Set aside some of your budget to acquire the best of these bibliographies, and scrutinize these lists before you automatically purchase what they recommend. Automation systems often use these bibliographies or review sources to suggest titles to you for consideration. For example, one might search for materials on tigers and find a list of ten possible titles, two of which have multiple positive reviews.

Check out the following types of sources useful for your library:

Basic Selection Tools. Buy or borrow basic lists of recommended materials for your type of library. Major publishers produce such lists on a regular basis. Titles may include: *High School Catalog*, or *Public Library Core Collection*.

Topical Bibliographies are published in book form (check their currency), in list form, and are increasingly found on the web. Judge each bibliography for authority, currency, relevance for your patrons' needs, and appropriate age and sophistication level before you automatically order from the list. Oft times, these major bibliographies are selected by subject experts which is a major plus.

Examples include: *Historical Fiction for Young Readers: Grades 4-8*, *Encyclopedia of Latin American Literature*, and *American Reference Books Annual*. Many of these major tools are available online by subscription, such as *Ulrich's Periodical Directory*. For printed editions, these lists are out of date and much of their content is out of print. One looks for lists that are under constant revision by experts.

Jobbers often publish helpful lists targeted at libraries and now even the general public. Try to find out the credentials of the persons who chose the list. A source such as Amazon.com on the web has many lists and reviews connected with titles you find.

Review Periodicals. Review sources both in print and online are essential tools. Titles include: *Choice*, *Library Journal*, *Voya*, and *Booklist*. Many professional subject journals contain regular reviews.

Best of the Best Lists. There are literally thousands of "best" lists created by individuals, groups, associations and publishers – most of which are online. These include bestseller lists, Amazon.com, and the many new Web 2.0 communities such as Good Reads. More and more, anyone can submit a review to Amazon.com, LibraryThing.com or the Internet Movie Database (imdb.com). It's not just the experts reviewing and distributing evaluative comments any more.



Publishers' Catalogs. Yes, these printed or online notifications are advertising, but news of trusted authors and authoritative works are usually announced here first.

Library Advisory Groups. Assemble the best experts in your own patron area to advise you on purchases. This may be a college professor, the local science fiction club, teen advisory committees, and even local booksellers with whom you do business.

Review sources have biases of their own. For example, the list "Books for the Teen Age" published annually by the New York Public Library is a wonderful sophisticated and urban list of titles. It is only after using such a list and evaluating the titles as they come into our collections do we begin to understand if that source is a good one for our teens in rural Iowa. A basic collection of recommended picture books may have little relevance in our English learning community. Experience will lead you to the most trusted sources for recommendation.

Add to this list your own expertise as you survey the literature, read and use databases, do research, and listen to others at conferences or online. Many librarians become excellent critics of what really appeals and is useful to their unique set of patrons.

Into the Future

Traditionally, librarians were the collection-building experts. They took a course in library school, built selection criteria lists, and surrounded themselves with the best selection sources in order to select the best for their patrons. In a client-side library, the library patrons have more and more say in what is stocked because they help build it, fund it, use it, help weed it and collaborate with the librarian selector coach. Budgetary constraints usually dictate our role as coach, negotiator, and final decision maker. In an era of LibraryThing.com, personally cataloged collections shared with friends begin to merge with what libraries can supply to become "my" library and world of trusted information.

There seems to be another role that has always existed but is emerging as more and more important. This is the role of information broker/information arbitrator/ chief information officer. Many commercial entities would love to take over the job of building package collections or information repositories so complete that, for a fee, they will decide what the patrons have access to. Perhaps librarians keep them honest, encourage competition, critique their quality, and promote a sense of democracy where many voices are respected and represented. What information do we stock? What gets recommended to the user? Current search engines are for sale to those wanting their information at the top of the heap. Perhaps our arbitration role is stronger than ever.

Chapter 13

Build a Consideration File

A consideration file is a shoe box, a card file, or a database containing a list, notes, reviews, or other information needed to order an item you *wish* were in the collection or you plan on buying. The collection development plan should provide you a list of areas in which to build the collection. Finding the best materials to purchase to fulfill the dreams of a quality library is a slow process. There is no magical source, no one publisher's catalog, no one vendor who will have just the right items to create a perfect collection (even though the commercial vendors would have you think otherwise).

It would be nice to be able to preview every Blu-ray DVD, book, or web site that you are considering to add to your collection. Unfortunately, none of us have that kind of time. So while you spend time previewing whatever you can (particularly expensive information sources), you will be taking "expert opinion" or published reviewer's word for whether a particular item belongs in your collection.

When you see a review, get a trusted bibliography, or receive a teacher or student recommendation and you decide to acquire the item, add a description of the item to your consideration file until such time as you are ready to purchase the item for the collection.



Here are a few simple procedures:

- Check our your current automation system for an acquisition module. Study how it works.
- Consult local librarians who may have ideas for constructing consideration files.
- Prepare a storage mechanism for your consideration file (a shoe box, a card file, or a computer database). Create sections in that file to match the topics of the proposed collection map, such as "beginning-to-read," "African-American materials," "science collection," "materials in Spanish," etc.
- Include sources or vendor information on selected items if these items must be ordered directly from the source.
- When you order from a section of the file, delete from the file items once thought appropriate but have now lost their appeal for one reason or another.
- Have this file ready at all times to respond to spending requests. Example: An administrator tells you that a \$500 grant is available if you can prepare an order over the weekend.

- When you start to prepare an order, select the materials from your consideration file, sort them by priority, decide what you will buy based on the amount of money you have, make out the purchase request, and re-file the items you did not buy but still want.
- If you are using a computerized database to create a consideration file, much of the above can be done with power and precision. Many vendors accept orders directly from databases as long as you set up your files to be compatible with their systems.

Recommended Fields for a Consideration File Database:

- Descriptive information such as author, title, publisher, price, ISBN
- Who requested (if you will need to report back to someone)
- Priority for this item. Example: 5 = high, 1 = low but still desirable if I have the funds.
- Collection segment where this item will end up. For example, core collection, health emphasis collection.
- On order status
- Received?

Why are all these data points necessary? Consider the various reports that will help you communicate with patrons and help you control this system:

- You will be able to know how much money you have already spent on an emphasis collection.
- You could print out a report to a patron group on what items were purchased with their grant.
- You would know what is currently on order and what has been received.
- You could check the status of a specific title.

If one of these data fields is not a part of your automation system, then you can often add it by tricking an available field for your purpose. For example, there might be a field that is supposed to be used for one purpose but you use it for another without asking the programmer to change it officially in the system.

The bottom line for the consideration file is that we want a system that allows us to add potential purchases at any time, prioritize them, prepare orders for blocks of materials as needed, know the status of what we have ordered, and report to any group where the money has gone and for what purpose.

Chapter 14

Select a Vendor/Purchase Source

There is a wide array of sources from which to purchase materials. Smart librarians know their sources well, know who gives the best prices, and remember who stands behind their products. It is no different in the library world than in the world of personal shopping where clever buyers recognize clever purchases. If you are new to the process, ask librarians with experience. They are great sources for inside information. Attending conventions and trade shows is another wonderful source of information, albeit a sales pitch. Personal representatives from companies will usually call on the library trying to net a sale. Publisher's catalogs will arrive at your door unannounced. And don't forget the Internet as a source for companies offering products.

Here are a few basics:

- **Direct purchasing** can be done from the company who created the item, system, or service. For larger purchases, this may be the best way to go since they may offer the best price and provide better service. Business offices, however, do not want lists of hundreds of individual publishers or suppliers because it costs them too much money to process a single order. For example, they may protest saying: "You really want to purchase an item for \$15.95 when it costs \$25.00 to process the order?" They would rather that you lump orders from various publishers into a single order from a jobber/vendor so that there is one order, one check to cut, one entity to deal with. Know your business office policies on such materials.
- **Purchasing from a jobber/vendor** is a common practice. These companies will advertise that they can get any book from any publisher for the library at the lowest price. They also provide other services such as cataloging and processing so that the item is almost shelf ready when it arrives. These companies usually exhibit at most library shows so that you can compare their services, prices, and fill rates (what percent of a typical order they can actually supply) Fellow librarians have definite opinions about which companies they like and don't like and are more than willing to share this information. In the digital world, a vendor will package various packages of information sources into a single service at a contract price for a specific time period. Again, colleagues will offer their advice on these services but the librarian will want to inspect the package carefully to see if there is a true fit with patrons. It is like selecting packages of



television channels from the vendors in your area. You often get the channels you want but many others come in the non-optional package.

- **On Demand** purchases are common in the book world since you can order only those titles you want when you want them from a jobber. This has not been common in the digital world to date. Here too, librarians may keep asking for digital packages individually tailored to a library's patrons for the time periods we specify. Elastic collections that respond based on patrons' demands require instant access or release. Companies only know how to respond if customers are making demands and requesting changes to the products or packages they offer. Thus, you need to be aggressive in asking for what you want and making sure that you are talking to the persons who have some decision-making power in the company. Many of the most important company officials attend the large library convention exhibits and it is easy to find and talk with them about your pet peeves or recommendations.

When looking for reputable vendors, look for those who will:

- Give you good value for the price.
- Promptly fill your orders and report out of stock or out of print (unavailable) titles.
- Provide good invoicing and billing procedures that your business office can handle.
- Accept returns on unwanted items, incorrectly shipped items, damaged items, etc.
- Fulfill any warranty requests for repair or replacement.
- Give competitive discounts.
- Respond promptly and courteously to requests for help with problems encountered.
- Help you stay within budget on a group of items (Example: They will fill an order up to \$500 including shipping and handling).
- Supply cataloging information with the materials in the format required for your automated system.

- Have the materials sent to you in shelf-ready condition (Example for books: A plastic jacket, call number, and bar code will already be attached, and cataloging information will be provided on a disk or direct link ready to enter into your system).
- Provide seamless and reliable digital services so that patrons can access digital information whenever, wherever, and on common devices. Know how often databases are updated with new information as it is created.
- For digital information, if you purchase a subscription to a group of periodicals, what happens if you cancel some of those subscriptions? Do you still retain access to those previously purchased?

Rules of the Road:

- Know a good vendor when you encounter one (experience is a great teacher).
- Be a good customer.
- Make relationships with commercial entities a win-win situation.
- Know that the information companies are changing all the time. What was true about a vendor last year may not be accurate today.

Chapter 15

Build Good Relations With the Business Office

Create and build good relations with the business office, the purchasing manager, the ordering clerks, or the secretary who handles the purchasing of your materials and equipment. All types of benefits accrue to those who create good will in an often frustrating task. One could even give the advice “It’s not nice to fool with Mother Nature—or the Business Office!”

Knowing when you can order, how long before the purchase year closes, and when all materials must be received and bills paid helps you understand how to approach the vendors from whom you are ordering. Further, you need to know the ordering process. For example, are you able to place orders frequently? Does the business office want you to do major orders two times a year rather than smaller purchases throughout the year? You should also know who authorizes purchase orders, whether in the library hierarchy or at the business office. There are a myriad of details to know and understand. Following a single purchase through all the channels will help you understand the normal routines. Then learn the exceptions such as rush orders, orders that can be paid from different funding sources or budget categories, and what to do as fiscal years begin and end.



We hesitate to urge you to “play the system,” but those who understand the ins and outs of purchasing rules, regulations, timing, and legal responsibilities generally come out ahead. The real procedures are often not as transparent as they should be even though they may be “open to the public.” Following the money through the system is very helpful, but it also can be fraught with politics and sometimes illegalities. For example, one public library board member we know wanted to know where all the money from public book sales went in a large public library system. When he got too close to the truth and suspected graft, he was bounced off the board.

Business office configurations vary widely. A public library may be dealing with the business office of the city. A library could have its own purchasing department. A school might have to go through a school district purchasing department. There may be few bureaucratic levels or many. You may have much or little access to the right people or procedures. You may be able to help streamline procedures or may be politely asked to leave those matters to others. Remember that procedures do change over time, particularly when personnel changes are made. It’s at those times that you might be able to make a difference, but only if you understand how the system works.

Simple things can make a difference. Knowing when the fiscal year begins and ends helps you know when to place orders. For example, some librarians know that if they don't do the bulk of their ordering at the beginning of the fiscal year, they may lose funds when the organization is tightening up purchases. Try to understand what happens when an invoice is either more or less than what you originally thought. How does the business office respond to small or larger differences in what was allocated and what is actually paid out? When are vendors likely to get paid after order fulfillment? Does the business office only do business with an approved list of vendors? Are bids involved? How do they work? You did not know that you need a business degree to be a successful librarian, we suspect. A little or a lot of knowledge goes a long way.

Having good relationships with a variety of important persons in critical positions provides you with the knowledge you need to get the materials your patrons need and when they need it. We have heard of librarians ordering materials that take a calendar year to acquire. Others have a credit card in their wallet that can be used for instant purchases. Obviously, there is an element of trust along with personal relationships that will matter.

Niceties, if you can get them, include permission to:

- Order any time throughout the year and instantly to get "good deals."
- Target your orders to the sections of the collection you are building such as beginning-to-read, African American materials, etc., instead of having to mix them all together.
- Use open purchase orders with a local bookstore so you can go often to pick up a few emergency items desperately needed.
- Use a credit card or have a pre-approved invoice available for ordering directly from some suppliers or at conventions.
- Understand the way to be reimbursed for items you buy personally.
- Use open purchase orders you can take to a convention or trade show.
- Have your order ready to go before the fiscal year ends, asking the vendor to "post-date" the order so that materials arrive at the earliest moment.

Whatever the financial system you find yourself in, you do have a responsibility to serve your patrons and the funding organization in the most ethical manner possible, and certainly within the laws governing your organization. The best advice is to keep your nose clean.

Chapter 16

Create an Order

Every business office has a set of procedures to purchase materials and equipment, and to renew ongoing licenses for information products. You will need to follow the office's procedures and also be prepared to recommend streamlining those procedures to fit your needs in the library.

You can expect to encounter the following:

- **An ordering system** that is an official library order to a company for materials, equipment, or services for which real monies have been allocated and committed. This often comes in the form of a signed purchase order. Vendors will want such official authorization so that they know they will be paid.
- **A procedure** for submitting orders through channels from the library to the business office and on to the supplier. (An administrator beyond the librarian may need to sign each order).
- **A system of contracts or agreements** that accompany such things as equipment maintenance or the supply of digital information through networks. Reading and understanding the fine print is essential.
- **An audit system** to see that the right things were ordered from accepted companies who then billed the items correctly and were paid when the items were received and accepted.
- **A bidding procedure** if materials or equipment are expensive (as defined by the administrative structure such as a university, a school district, or the business office). Supposedly, this helps the library get quality items at the cheapest prices. If bids aren't well constructed you may get lesser quality items which, in the end, cost more if one must always take the lowest bid.
- **A returns policy** that establishes ways to return materials or equipment that is unsatisfactory or in poor condition when it was received.
- **A system of handling complaints** to suppliers with whom problems develop.



- **A calendar for ordering** that will allow the library ample opportunity to order and receive the item before the purchase year has ended.

Once you know the procedures to follow:

- Prepare the order form (list, requisition, or purchase order) with the supplier's name and address and telephone number.
- Check to see that you have ordered using correct item numbers, model numbers, ISBN number, author, title, publisher, and edition so that you get the product you want.
- Send the order to the appropriate administrator for signature. Maintain a list of what you have ordered and the approximate cost so that you can keep a close estimate on what you have spent from your allocation.
- Confirm when the order should be expected to arrive. Mark a calendar with the anticipated date of arrival so you can check if materials are not delivered as specified.

Chapter 17

Receive Materials and Pay Bills

In a perfect world, everything you ordered would come immediately after you ordered it, in good condition, and would cost precisely what you planned on spending. In the real world, receiving materials from suppliers and getting them paid can be an easy task or a nightmare. Having someone at the site who has a sharp eye for errors, omissions, and “out of the ordinary” incidents really helps to make life in this maze livable.

Certain procedures will help streamline this part of the business end of the acquisitions program. Whether you do the tasks yourself or hopefully have someone who will do it for you, a constant eye for accuracy and quality is a must.

Take note of the following checklist and check with your purchasing manager, receiving department, and billing clericals to see how things are done. Do suggest ways to streamline the operations as you become acquainted.



- Locate your order (list, requisition, or purchase order) for the items you have received. (Note: Packing slips and invoices always have the purchase order number on them. Confirm this is your order and not someone else's order even though it has your library address. Mistakes happen.)
- Check carefully to see that the items that have been shipped match perfectly the items you have ordered. In some cases, a particular item may no longer be available just as you have ordered, such as when a software program is updated. If this is true, you must see if your system will accommodate the newer version before you accept it.
- Return the checked invoice or purchase order to the appropriate office for payment only *IF* all items are correctly shipped. If not, make note of the incorrect items and then return the invoice. Draft a letter to the company explaining the discrepancy and send to the business office explaining the problem. Business office staff may not understand the materials shipped to libraries and will appreciate your explanations of problems.
- Pay the bill as soon as possible. Vendors must meet their obligations and they will be less willing to help you if you do not pay your bills in a timely fashion.

- Adjust your acquisitions account to reflect differences in your anticipated amount due.

Other hints:

- Don't property stamp materials until you know they belong to you! Most companies will not take back a computer that has the library ownership engraved on the front of the equipment.
- Most companies require you to return items in saleable condition since they will not be able to sell items that have been damaged in shipment back to them.
- Vendors may report an item as "out of stock." This means the item is not available at this time. You may wish to cancel any "out of stock" item if it is near the end of the purchase year. If not, it may be shipped and come out of your next year's budget.
- Vendors list books as "out of print" when they are no longer available for purchase.
- Damaged items should be noted and repackaged for return. You may wish to return an entire system if a part is damaged. It may be impossible to replace the damaged part before the system has been upgraded.
- Old editions of books or computer software should be returned if you have ordered the newer version. The older may not work on your new equipment.

Chapter 18

Process/Install Materials

Materials ordered and delivered to the library must be processed for the shelves. Equipment and software will need to be installed and tested before patrons can use it. Here are a few suggestions. The procedures used previously in your library will be hints of how things have been done but not necessarily how they should be done. Colleagues in other libraries generally are glad to share what works in their libraries. Streamlining this part of acquisitions work will save you lots of time.

Preprocessed Items will come from the source almost ready for the shelves. You may need only affix or stamp on a property stamp, add a security strip, and add the cataloging data to the online public access catalog (OPAC). If you have the urge to redo the work you have already paid for, think twice. There will be errors to correct, but these should be few. If not, then your specifications to the company for processing are inaccurate or the company is doing sloppy work.



Items Needing Processing will come no matter whether you have a contract with jobbers to process your materials or not. Multimedia materials, online products, and Internet site cataloging will often have to be done by someone in your library. Invariably you will think that all the easy cataloging has been done and the difficult items are left for you. You will need some tools to help:

- A classification list such as the Dewey Decimal System or the Library of Congress Classification System
- A subject heading list such as *Sears List of Subject Headings* or the Library of Congress List of Subject Headings.
- *Easy MARC* by Scott Piepenburg (from LMC Source) if you are cataloging for an automation system.
- Supplies for processing such as book jackets, tape, labels from library supply companies.
- Supplies for storage such as DVD display cases, and bland containers if the original packaging for the item will not hold up for circulation.

Library supply house catalogs such as Highsmith or Demco provide wonderful clues about how other libraries handle materials just by looking through the supply catalogs.

If you are having trouble cataloging an item, find one that is already processed on your shelf that is very similar. This will help you find an appropriate classification number and subject headings.

Classification and Subject Headings are important since they allow the patron to find and retrieve materials. In the online world, classification ceases to exist so the entire burden for location comes onto the subject headings that have been assigned. Be liberal in the number of subject headings you add to the collection. If you are a knowledgeable cataloger, catalog outstanding Internet sites on your OPAC.

If you find that cataloging will be a regular part of your job, make sure that you have taken a cataloging course as a part of your library and information science degree program.

Installing Software or Database Systems. If you are a novice - don't. At least not without a thorough reading of the documentation. Many vendors provide training or will actually supervise the installation. There may be one person designated in a school system or public library system or in the academic library charged with system installation and maintenance. While it is easy to rely on these technicians, it doesn't hurt to know as much as you can about the systems in order to trouble shoot problems so that systems keep operating. Nothing is more frustrating than to turn patrons away and then find out that if you had just pushed "that button," or plugged the machine in, all would have been well.

Into the Future

Since so much information and resources the library owns is now digital, subject access is critical. Tagging by patrons is a common practice in folksonomies. This means that patrons are assigning terms they think they would use to search for an item without consulting any official list of subject headings. The inclusion of patrons in collection access is just one more way of extending ownership and encouraging use. Investigate ways that your OPAC system will allow for patron input.

<http://collectionmapping.pbworks.com>

Web Assist Here! Find links to OPACs that include on our wiki.



tagging by users

Chapter 19

Automation Systems

Our interest in this chapter is in the acquisition system built into the various automation systems that libraries have. One usually thinks of the automation system having two essential components: an OPAC and a circulation system.

For collection building, the automated acquisition system needs certain features that allow the collection mapping idea to function. In the previous chapter, we listed the fields that need to be present in any acquisition software or database as:

- Descriptive information such as author, title, publisher, price, ISBN
- Who requested (if you will need to report back to someone)
- Priority for this item. Example: 5 = high, 1 = low but still desirable if I have the funds.
- Collection segment where this item will end up. For example, core collection, health emphasis collection.
- On order status
- Received?



What these fields allow is the ability to control acquisition of materials in chunks matched to the proposed collection map. We want to introduce more certainty into our purchases so that we can be accountable to patrons and to the collection building targets we have spent time constructing. We do not want any system that merges all titles in an order into a single list that we cannot control once it is in the system and on order.

Thus, we scrutinize the automation system in existence carefully to see if we can identify whether a specific item belongs to the core collection or one of a number of emphasis collections that we designate. If these features are not present, then we have only a few choices:

- We can lobby the automation vendor to include additional fields in the database that we can control.
- We can trick the current system into doing the task we need done. For example, using a field constructed for a purpose we don't need into one we can use for tracking what we need to track.
- The next time we are selecting an automation system, we can insist on the features we need in the acquisition module.
- We can construct a parallel system that has the features we need. Hopefully this choice will be unnecessary.

For example, some libraries track emphasis collections using blocks of classification numbers. A library might track professional materials for materials about libraries in the particular LC classification number for the library type (in

the Z's) or the Dewey number for that library in the 000's. The problem with this approach is that a particular emphasis collection might include materials from many classification numbers. An emphasis collection about the U.S. Civil war could have materials in every Dewey Decimal class: the art and photography in the 700s; religion of the time in the 200s, the war itself in the 900s, the various weaponry in the 600s, etc.

A better system is a named field in the system that can be queried automatically such as graphic novels, Insects, Chinese Language Collection, Local history, etc. These designations should be able to be created and modified easily and reports done both on the acquisition side and on the current holdings in the OPAC.

Of course, the librarian should keep in mind that such a system may track only items that are owned rather than those that are linked. It may track physical items but not digital resources. It may track books and multimedia items, but not periodical articles in that topical area. Such deficiencies might be tracked separately and charted separately as "segments" of a particular topical area.

The librarian might worry that no system can track segments of materials exactly. Such is not needed, since estimates can serve just as well. As libraries move toward more elastic collections, the holdings on particular topical collections expand or contract at any given moment and as dictated by the needs of users. Again, the fact that what we own can be supplemented almost instantly when a particular demand arises in certain topical areas is the most important characteristic. Librarians can advertise the fact that their systems are robust enough to fill in a void when demands change and collection targets evolve. The automation system should be able to satisfy such policies, not be a barrier to the idea.

Some years back, library automation systems were new and many companies jumped into a competitive market. Lately, since the market is saturated, we see more and more mergers so that the feasible choices for most types of libraries are narrowing. There is also at least one open source automation system. Harry Chan's Media Flex system known as OPALS is one we are familiar with.



<http://collectionmapping.pbworks.com>

Web Assist Here! Find links to open source automation systems on our wiki.

Into the Future

More and more catalogs are becoming conversations rather than one-way streams of information. If patrons are assisting in the building of the collection, then there should be some mechanism for them to make comments, recommend additions, and help connect the in-house collection to other collections anywhere in the world. Collaboratives such as LibraryThing.com allow personal collections to be seen by others in order to share information, opinions, and communicate. Perhaps automation systems should be more transparent so that patrons can look at collection segments, see what is on order, suggests links or additional items for consideration. Such advantages should certainly be available to advisory committees if not the general patron. Another example is Amazon.com where the general public can submit reviews of items so that others can make purchasing decisions. Perhaps our OPACs should have patron reviews to comment about the usefulness of various items or even notes about collection segments and links to other libraries where more complete materials on a particular topic might be accessed.

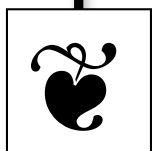
<http://collectionmapping.pbworks.com>

Web Assist Here! Find links to social OPACs on our wiki.



Part IV

Making the Collection Work



Chapter 20

Write or Revise a Collection Development Policy

A collection policy is the official library document that sets out the conceptual framework, the guiding philosophy, and major procedures of the library's collection development plan. Most libraries have such a document or have had one in the past. It is created by the librarian and adopted by the library advisory committee and is extremely useful in setting the direction for the collection and dealing with challenges or changes as they arise. The policy is an open document and should be available to patrons, boards, accrediting bodies, and funders.

The contents of the collection policy varies by type of library but might contain the following elements:

- The library's mission, goals, and objectives
- A technology access chart
- A brief statement about the curriculum of the educational institution or a needs assessment of the community
- Advisory groups: their establishment, roles, and responsibilities
- A collection map
- A designation of who is responsible for selection of materials
- Criteria for selection of materials in the various formats and technologies
- Criteria for weeding or de-selection from the collection
- Sample selection tools and preview procedures
- How gifts will be handled
- Cooperative relationships with other libraries and systems
- Procedures for dealing with challenges to materials
- Inclusion of statements such as *The Library Bill of Rights*, published by the American Library Association, plus statements concerning equitable access to information in a technological society. Statements from accrediting bodies or professional organizations might be included or linked to the policy.

Collection policies are like a lot of other official documents in any organization that are created, officially adopted, and then filed until a question arises, a challenge is issued, or an accreditation visit it about to happen. Policies take a good deal of effort to write and establish and might be forgotten unless some emergency arises. It is good to have the policy reviewed by the organization's legal counsel to see if it would hold up under a challenge.

Does your library already have a collection policy? Look for it. Ask questions:

- When was it written?
- Was it officially adopted by the library advisory committee, the sponsoring organization, or other official body?
- Is it current? That is, does it reflect the practices that are happening now?
- What's missing?

Why does any of this matter? Accrediting agencies will want to check to see if the library collection supports the various curricular departments of the school or college. A hospital or law library may have an official review necessitating the inclusion of a current policy. A parent or public library patron may challenge the existence or lack of materials on a topic such as politics, religion, or some other hot topic of concern and ask that materials be added or removed from the collection. The policy will dictate procedures for dealing with these challenges.

Even if the library has a current collection policy, it is a good exercise to compare its contents with those of other libraries of its kind. These can often be found on the web or in published books or the professional literature. Compare and contrast the various tables of contents you find for sections of interest, and check the language, comprehensiveness, and ideas included compared to that of your library. If your library does not have a policy, then collecting other sample policies will be a great help in writing your own.

<http://collectionmapping.pbworks.com>



Web Assist Here! Find links to collection development policies for all types of libraries.

Into the Future

Whether building a traditional book collection or the latest virtual learning commons where collaboration is the mainstay, policies governing the collection in all forms of media are essential, particularly in a collaborative environment. We are reminded that in virtual worlds, rules for participation and behavior are the norm rather than the exception. In a litigious society, it is wise to be prepared with a defensible collection policy. Challenges can arise at any time, and the heat of the moment is not the right time to begin writing or dusting off a document long forgotten.

Chapter 21

Making the Collection Accessible

The process of collection development results in a library full of wonderful items just waiting for patrons, students, teachers, and specialists to use. Creating policies, distribution systems, and access mechanisms to deliver information and materials when and where they are needed becomes the next challenge. Opening the library's information resources to potential users requires the following:

- Policies that encourage rather than discourage use.
- Distribution systems that expand rather than restrict use.
- Access mechanisms that record use and help justify expansion of programs.

Policies that Encourage Use

- **Maximize open hours.** Patrons expect digital collections to be accessible 24/7/365. For the physical collection, how can open hours be extended to times most convenient for various segments of the intended community? For a bedroom community, a public library may open at noon and extend into the late evening. Universities often have extended hours during exam weeks. School libraries often open their doors before and after school and sometimes into the evening hours in neighborhoods where access is limited to public libraries.
- **Signage and Finding aids.** In a physical space, patrons need excellent signage to the sections of the collection and places within the facility they would like to use. In digital space, web sites need to be designed with the minimal amount of clicking possible. Resources three or four clicks down are not likely to receive much attention. Comparison with the best commercial sites and other very successful libraries will provide clues for design principles. Don't forget finding aids for patrons with disabilities.
- **Maximize circulation policies.** The more materials circulate, the more libraries brag about their value to their patrons. Question every policy, particularly in automated systems that deny access. When were the rules constructed? Why were they created? Are they in the users' favor or in the library's interest? How could they be liberalized to serve every patron better? For example, one public library's circulation system would deny a circulation if there were any fines due. Patrons who could not afford to pay even a 25 cent fine were denied access whether or not they could afford to pay. Some libraries limit access to one or two items per visit. Why? Digital collections sometimes have rules that limit access to one patron at a time. Why?
- **Open restricted collections.** Many archives of rare materials are opening up their treasures to the world through digitization of their contents. The

treasures of the Library of Congress, the Louvre, government documents, or the personal papers of a scholar or famous person are just a few examples of the opening of the world's treasures without destroying the originals. What treasures does your library have that could be shared and appreciated? As we know, Google now has a privileged position to make orphaned works available - for a fee. But much classic literature has been scanned and is available freely on the web from not-for-profit organizations, such as Project Gutenberg or the World Digital Library.

<http://collectionmapping.pbworks.com>



Web Assist Here! Find out how your library can contribute free digital access of its public domain holdings to the digital commons.

Distribution Systems that Expand Use

- **Maximize access through digital networks.** Does the library have wireless access and is the bandwidth broad enough to handle patron load during maximum load times? Banks of computers can be cut to a minimum if access on a patron's preferred device is available in any location throughout the library space. From home, what is the procedure for logging in to the library's digital resources? In Indiana, if a patron is accessing the state library through an Indiana ISP, access is automatic with no login procedure. Passwords to school and public library collections are often distributed to the patrons widely in order to maximize availability from anywhere in the city or neighborhood. In special libraries, access passwords may be changed often on a need to know basis to protect sensitive information or access to privileged information.
- **Examine and reexamine policies on filtering.** Fear is driving schools and some public libraries to restrict access to information through the Internet. Some of the rules for filtering come from rules made by states or the federal government. This creates a constant struggle between access for the ideals of intellectual freedom and supposed protection from various threats to children and teens.
- **Reexamine policies on the circulation of blocks of materials.** Can patrons benefit from the use of a large quantity of the library collection for a period of time? For example, a school library might rotate a hundred or so books every two weeks to form classroom collections. A professor might need a "private" collection while writing a book. A public library might loan to one of its branches a block of materials to support a neighborhood initiative. Circulation policies should be flexible in order to accommodate special needs of various patrons ranging from individuals to groups. What do they need? When? For how long? Why not? If the current distribution systems don't allow for such chunks to be circulated, how could they system be modified or changed? What special arrangements with vendors could be made to accommodate special usage needs? Systems are often designed by individuals who "program" usual

needs or broad policies. Machines should be the slaves of patrons, not the other way around.

Access Mechanisms that Record Use

Funders, parent organizations, governments, and patrons want to know that their support results in use and benefits to the target audience of the library. Traditionally, the circulation of books was the measure used to establish how well a library was serving its patrons. Now, with the size of digital collections surpassing printed ones, the circulation of physical items may not reflect any kind of accurate picture of usage. Physical circulation was never a very accurate measure of usage and the new frontiers of usage in the digital world are becoming more and more important. Many commercial entities know exactly what is being accessed on their web sites, for how long, and with what result such as sales. At least, the librarian can count access to web resources. Vendors can supply information on use of their databases from your library. More and more sophisticated means are available to track who is using what and when. Of course, the right of privacy looms as a major issue. What statistics do we need for usage measures? How detailed should our records collection be? How long will records be kept, reported, or tracked by the library? It is a major issue. Check with the various automation systems and data vendors for the possibilities and then make policies about data gathering and its use to be included in the official collection development policy. Here is an area where advisory committees will assume a major role in decision making and strategies that will be employed.

Into the Future

As more and more of the world's information resources become available digitally, patrons expect unlimited access anywhere, any time, and on any preferred device. At the same time, organizations, groups, governments, and individuals may have major reasons for limiting access. This issue will be discussed further in the next chapter on intellectual freedom.

Chapter 22

Maintenance of the Collection

Seeing that all systems are up and running, maintaining all materials in serviceable order, removing items from the collection, and keeping all pieces and parts to multiple-part items together requires more time than a single person has in a day. And for the most part, maintenance and repair is a technician's job, not a professional's.

It is easy to become the "fix-it genius" of the library. Just look helpful, drop everything else, get everyone's computers running again, and keep your head full of trouble-shooting tips. You will be overwhelmed with requests. The problem is that nothing else will get done. The same can be said for weeding the collection, repairing books, or fixing subject headings in the online catalog. All are enticing tasks at times, but as a professional, resist the temptation as much as possible.

It is often thought that one person should be able handle the library. That has never been true, but it is a particularly egregious error in the age of information technology. Every library staff must have professionals at the helm, clerical assistance, and technical staff. There is no other solution if the myriad of professional tasks is to receive attention.

Good technical assistance is hard to find. Some find that students attending vocational institutions can successfully work at a library part time. Others recognize the true situation and hire a fully-qualified technician at each library site. For repair of materials, many libraries have a system of paid students or volunteers who learn how to keep materials in good condition. For some of the maintenance tasks of the library, the professional may have the expertise but conducts classes or in-service training for the staff assigned to these duties.

Suggestions for the Repair of Physical items:

- **Repair only** items that are worth retaining. It wastes effort and supplies to repair a book or other printed item that should be discarded.
- **Book repair** techniques can be learned from library supply houses that sell repair supplies. Most have booklets and even videos to help learn more difficult techniques. A rule of thumb is that if it takes more than a few minutes to repair a book, it should be sent to a professional bindery.
- **Repair supplies** should be ordered from reputable supply houses so that the right repair materials are used. Mending books with the wrong kind of tape destroys the pages rather than repairing them.
- **Disasters** such as water damage, mold, or accidents require an exercise of judgment to determine whether to repair or replace the collection. Extensive repair of valuable items or whole collections that cannot be



replaced requires professional expertise not usually available locally. Search the literature for accounts of libraries that have suffered hurricane, fire, flood, or malicious damage for tips on how to respond to major repair challenges. A good overview for all types of libraries is available in the Winter 2008 issue of the *Oregon Library Association Quarterly*.

<http://collectionmapping.pbworks.com>

Web Assist Here! Find links to disaster preparedness and response resources on our wiki.

- **Equipment** repair for the various multimedia and computers in the library can become a major headache if not managed regularly. Library technicians can be trained to do what is termed first echelon maintenance that will contribute greatly to the continued use of equipment. This includes tasks such as cleaning, very simple repairs like replacing projector bulbs or updating/installing computer software, and teaching patrons to respect equipment by teaching them operational and care procedures. For second echelon maintenance, where more extensive repairs are needed, a fully trained technician might be employed by the library or system to handle more complex issues. For third echelon maintenance requiring extensive repair, contractual services will be required. There is a whole range of factors to be considered in equipment warranties and repair beyond the scope of this book, but constant comparisons with other libraries and other organizations on ways of handling equipment repair will require the attention of the professional if costs are to be kept reasonable and the equipment is to be kept operational.
- **Technology professionals** are often employed by various organizations to oversee all computer networks and repair. These can be employees or the library or separate departments in the organization. Oft times, these professionals may know their systems very well, but lack understanding of the role that technology plays in education or in library service. Tech directors can build kingdoms with giant signs over their virtual desks: JUST SAY NO, that seem to command the services available rather than support the services or functions set out in a client-side organizational structure. These professionals should be involved enough in the uses of technology to promote education, learning, information access, and patron service. When they understand the vision of how technology fits into an overall strategy of service, they are much more likely to build systems that serve those purposes rather than the other way around. Good relationships between librarians and technology professionals are essential if the entire program is going to work and perform successfully over time.
- **A sense of community** is vital in the new information world. It only takes about thirty seconds to bring down an information network. An essential

attitude toward technology by every patron, student, teacher, library staff member, or virtual visitor should be:

You teach me,

I teach you,

We all teach each other, and,

We all help keep it running!

In the era of collaborative networks, collections, and folksonomies, the library can face almost instant disasters or wonderful collaborative services – depending on the relationship with patrons. A problem patron can bring down a network, cause irreparable damage to equipment, sabotage information systems, or wreak other malicious mischief. Building a set of strategies for handling problems is the responsibility of every library staff member and volunteer.

There is something about the ambience of the library, both physical and virtual, that can encourage respect on the part of patrons. An attractive physical facility encourages respect. A friendly and useful interface on library web sites, or just friendly and courteous service, can go a long way in the direction of a preventive maintenance strategy. Accessible rather than protectionist rules need to be thought and re-thought as the library keeps the needs of the patrons central to its service.

Suggestions for the Repair and Maintenance of the Virtual Library

Library websites, online databases, computer software, and collaborative projects done by volunteers need the same amount of attention to detail as their counterparts in the physical world. Who will be charged with the myriad of tasks associated with the virtual library or learning commons? A professional librarian? Everyone on the library staff? Patron volunteers? Hopefully, all the above groups can be included in some way.

Make the distinction between administrative computing and instructional or patron computing. Administrative computing is a protected space where essential systems are managed such as budgeting, OPAC maintenance, online database management, payroll, and network control happens. Instructional or patron computing is a public space where education, information construction, or other collaborative projects are happening. Patrons may be working on web 2.0 applications to index parts of the collection; students might be using blogs and wikis to help in the use of the collection in the creation of projects and completing assignments. Administrative computing is high protected. Instructional and patron computing is as open, flexible, and inviting as possible.

Administrative computing requires constant attention to protection, updating, and repairing by those charged with and who have the expertise to operate and maintain the administrative systems. For instructional or patron computing systems, maintenance can be farmed out to almost every library staff member,

and patron volunteers can be trained in the maintenance of “their section” of the virtual library. For example, patrons may be in charge of virtual book club discussions with the guidance of a library staff member interested in the book club’s theme. A library volunteer might be in charge of a library wiki where many persons are indexing the local newspaper. Students might be trained to help others in the creation of multimedia projects that are stored on the library servers for access by anyone around the world. Because so many patrons now produce content, the library becomes a place where that content can be shared as part of the library collection. Such collaborative projects will require attention in a similar way that Wikipedia has been able to build to handle its collection. Library professionals will need to coach the various creators of these types of systems and occasionally step in to save or refit a foundering project.

Weeding or Repurpose the Collection

The extensive weeding that we discussed in Chapter 7 was not a one-time project. As new editions come in and old items wear out, continue to comb through the collection to keep it current.

Once candidates for weeding have been selected, procedure for discarding them should be a part of the library collection policy, and discards should follow the outlined procedure. There are a number of possibilities:

- Sell the discarded items or unwanted gifts to patrons.
- Dispose of them after removing library ownership marks
- Delete them from library databases or remove links from the library website.
- Gift them to interested libraries or archives
- Digitize them and discard the printed copies
- Allow patrons or library staff to “repurpose” the item by transforming it into a new product. An example might be the conversion of an oral history slide collection into a current and accessible format. Runs of *National Geographic* could be cut up for illustrated student reports.

We are not yet certain how long digital collections can be preserved when they are of archival importance. Digital local history collections can be lost in an instant. What then? Will digital collections need to be “renewed” from time to time? How are local digitized collections going to be archived? On location? In several remote locations? Such issues have to be thought through before disaster strikes and the information no longer exists in the universe. If you have lost a hard drive on your computer or a fire has destroyed your home, you have personal knowledge of the need for backups.

For long-term preservation, the Library of Congress recommends that you look for widely available formats, not bound to any specific playback device, that contain their own metadata, and are not bound by overly restrictive patents or digital rights management limitations. In practice, this means open source software is often your best bet for cheap creation of digital records that won’t become obsolete. For more information, see www.digitalpreservation.gov.

Into the Future

We are uncertain as yet about the preservation and maintenance of many of the modern digital collections. The Gutenberg Bible may be here much longer than are books printed on acid paper. The reinvention and emergence of so many new digital products is a constant issue. Suddenly, we find that our old floppy discs containing great historical information can no longer be accessed on the equipment we own or the version of software we just upgraded to. As we update and push into more and more digital collections, every update proposal has to be accompanied by the question: what about the old materials, information, versions, or formats that this new technology will replace? These considerations will be a part of collection development for the foreseeable future.

Chapter 23

Advertising the Collection

In the era of Google, libraries have competition for attention. Someone else is at the center of our patrons' information needs. Do we need libraries anymore? If we were gone, would anyone miss us? The answers to those questions depend on you, the library professional. The popular notion of the past was "If we build it, they will come." Now this changes to "If they build it, they will use it." The latter idea is the foundational principle of Wikipedia, folksonomies, and other Web 2.0 collaborations.

Part of collection mapping is the collaborative identification and selection of materials and information central to the needs of patrons, whether in schools, universities, firms, organizations, or public institutions. How do we ensure that the target audience not only knows of our existence but takes advantage of our services and participates in the growth and development of the shared library?

There is a whole field of advocacy, advertising, and marketing with accompanying literature worth exploring that we can but refer to in this book. Library schools often have whole courses devoted to these topics as related to libraries. Certainly information systems such as Google and the barrage of advertising crowding to get our attention every waking moment are worthy of study. It is said that attention is the currency of the 21st century. Google hopes that each of us will click on ads in their side bars. Bookstores place materials on end shelves and tables in our path to attract a buyer. Many participate in services such as Facebook, so that ads for new materials greet us daily.

How many libraries are represented on your own start page? How many ads flood your email concerning new services or acquisitions of the libraries in which you are interested? When you need information personally, what is your first information system to access? Google? Newspapers once were the chief source of information about current events. They are reinventing themselves in the face of declining readership. What is the state of usage of your library? Increasing? Declining?

A great deal of warm and fuzzy feelings may surround the existence of your library and its collection, but lack of use is a certain predictor of its future when other information systems succeed at becoming center stage.

We can make a starter list of good marketing practices here, but all of us need to construct a list for our own type of library and constantly test the ideas that produce the best results. Here is our starter list.

- For libraries in educational institutions, librarians collaborate with faculty to plan, create, teach, and assess learning experiences where information and technology are central factors in mastering both content and process knowledge.



- The librarian makes collaborative connections with other entities in the community or organization.
- Public libraries become community centers where children, teens, and adults like to come to share not just information, but activities central to community life.
- The library becomes a repository of its patrons' creations and events related to their community or school or organization. Local history and creative works such as art, music, and literature are archived; events are documented from sports events or poetry readings. In other words, the library has become the extension of the creative and collective community of its patrons. Many libraries use the free photo sharing service Flickr for this purpose.
- Patrons can bring the library blog to their inboxes or start pages through an RSS feed.
- The library sponsors both on-site and virtual programming. For example, the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County has extensive programming in the virtual world Second Life: patrons can create and edit films, and teens can even earn real Girl and Boy Scout badges at the virtual library.
- The library sees that every potential patron has a "library card."
- A credit card for the wallet contains library passwords and access instructions.
- Stories of how money is being spent are recorded for use by legislators. See fundourfuturestories.pbworks.com for an example of a compelling grassroots lobby for school library funding.
- The library collection is listed on a social cataloging site, where potential patrons can discover the collection and tag it to create a folksonomy. For example, Los Robles Regional Medical Center Library lists its holdings on LibraryThing.com; GoodReads.com is another option.

Chapter 24

Issues in Collection Development

Intellectual Freedom

Every item in your collection has the potential to be questioned, for there is no such thing as a noncontroversial book, video, or Internet site! How you handle the controversy depends upon your attention to detail before the controversy happens.

Here are a few suggestions so you're prepared:

- Make sure you have a collection policy that includes procedures for anyone who wishes to question an item in your library.
- Be prepared to listen politely to the complaint should one occur.
- Allow the person to read and complete a complaint form.
- Notify your administrator or head of the library that someone is making or has made a complaint.
- Follow the process that has been outlined in your collection policy.
- If you really have made an error of judgment, rectify the problem and move on.

Should the situation become a wider issue:

- Remain as calm as possible.
- Call in professional assistance such as the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom or your state library professional association's Intellectual Freedom Committee if you feel isolated during this time.
- Find professional reviews of the item(s) in question as evidence of quality (if indeed, reviewers recommended that item for your type of library and its patrons.)
- Gather support from the local media. The First Amendment is especially important to them.

If the situation does not resolve itself to your satisfaction:

- Follow the decision of the library policy procedure.
- Plan an initiative to inform advisory committees and stakeholders of the concept of intellectual freedom.
- Revise or update as needed the procedure for handling complaints in the collection development policy.

There is a wide range of advice, library practice, and sample collection policy statements in the professional literature. It is best to keep abreast of the latest news and developments on this issue.



Patrons' Rights of Privacy

During the aftermath of 9/11, the FBI asked libraries to reveal what certain people were accessing and checking out. While the 2006 reauthorization of the PATRIOT Act is slightly more stringent in what the FBI is permitted to request, and libraries now have some ability to challenge the requests, these improvements still do not rise to the level of the protections guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution. In some industries, employees relinquish their right to privacy, since every click on their computer is monitored.

The professional literature is full of accounts defending a person's right to explore any topic they would like without the accompanying oversight and suspicion. A number of libraries have responded by "flushing" circulation records shortly after items are returned so that a patron's records cannot be retrieved. Can you track what individuals are accessing in your library? Do you really need to, or can you understand your patron base in more aggregate and anonymous ways? What data do you retain, and for how long? Such matters deserve research in the professional literature, consultation with your advisory committee/administrators and a statement in the collection development policy.

Copyright and Fair Use

The emergence of the free public library in America has a major extension in the world of the Internet. Patrons often assume that everything they find on the Internet or in the library is free. Easy copying has led to a general practice of students and the general public of cut and paste, copy and play. Fifty-six percent of teens think that pictures, music, and software should be free to download (Valenza, 2008). For a balanced, accessible resource for teaching about copyright, try www.teachingcopyright.org, a project of the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

Librarians need to study the laws regarding copyright so that they build into their access systems the appropriate policies. But this issue is not just one-sided in favor of the publishing industry that is trying to maximize income. Patrons have the right to fair use that allows them to use copyrighted materials for educational purposes. The advent of open source materials plays into this issue as creators try to allow access to software and information without undue cost. And, because this entire issue keeps evolving, one investigation followed by a standard policy entry is insufficient. Keep tuned to the discussion about this issue in the professional literature.

Equity, Equity, Equity

We live in an opportunity society. Librarians have been major players in the last two centuries in enabling more and more people to achieve, pushing access, making us aware, reaching out, and trying to level the information playing field. It is part of our proud heritage, yet it remains an issue in times of plenty and times of famine budgets. It is easy to build collections based on how we have done things before and based on our regular and avid fans. It takes constant vigilance to reach beyond the majority of our users. For example, one large

public library served its Anglo middle class patrons well but hardly noticed the large and growing Spanish speaking population. A school librarian began to worry about the larger community and kept bringing up the issue at staff meetings. Sometimes, such issues become divisive and uncomfortable. Someone needs to be an advocate for those who either don't know how or are ignorant of the possibilities.

Internet Safety

Much discussion of the Internet revolves around the fear factor in our society. Easy access to everything and everything brings out the worst in some who push pornography, predatory behavior, as well as all types of fraudulent schemes. What is the responsibility of the library to protect its patrons against such openly destructive behavior? The arguments are readily available from both the mass media and from the professional literature. Much of the discussion surrounds children and teen access. Consider the following points that begin to approach the problem for in schools. How would you alter such statements to provide the maximum access yet provide the safety mechanisms we all expect, for example, on the public highways?

- Have students and their parents sign an acceptable use policy card showing that the student understands that the Internet is to be used as an educational tool. If inappropriate sites are accessed, the student knows to get off them immediately.
- Have Internet station screens clearly visible to the open room so they can be easily monitored.
- Explain to parents and the community what each filtering product can and cannot do. Most parents after learning that it is impossible to keep students from pornography and violence on the Internet if they are determined to find it, agree that filtering is, at best, an ineffective answer.
- Suggest that parents should talk with children and have an understanding about how they should use the Internet. Many school librarians have an Internet driver's license signed by parent and child.
- Learn to trust young people as they use all forms of information and ideas, building their sense of critical judgment as they encounter ideas both popular and unpopular.

Such actions, policies, problems, and discussions are not likely to go away any time soon. Responsibility and access are intertwining concepts: every person builds their own access depending on a responsibility index something like a light dimmer switch. Patrons need input on how tightly to control access, rather than one size fits all policies.

<http://collectionmapping.pbworks.com>

Web Assist Here! Find information on the long debate and eventual resolution and implemented policy for Internet filters at the San José Public Library.

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Part V

Evaluating the Success of the Plan



Chapter 25

Evaluation Talk

Evaluation asks the central question: “So What?” It is one thing to amass a large collection of information, materials, multimedia and the accompanying technology, but sooner or later, someone is going to ask if there is any impact to justify the costs associated with building the collection. Advisory committees, funders, government officials, and patrons are likely to ask about accountability, benefit, output, usefulness, or how the library “makes a difference”.

Generally, there are two forms of evaluation: formative and summative. Formative evaluation looks at a system or activity as it is being developed and carried out. Summative evaluation looks at the end result of an initiative. Examples might include:

- Is the collection actually responding to the needs assessment that drove acquisitions over the past couple of years? (summative)
- What is happening over time as accessibility rules to the collection are liberalized? (formative)
- Does the creation and updating of the collection map communicate to stakeholders the strengths and weaknesses of the collection? (formative)
- Did the newly acquired databases affect the quality of student research papers in history classes? (summative)

Throughout this book, we have presented a method for planning and building collections that match the needs of those who draw upon them. In this final chapter, we present a variety of ways to answer the “So what?” question.

One thing is certain: No librarian can trust the data flowing into a single mind about the “So what?” issue. Each librarian must reach out beyond single observations to gather in data from other perspectives to discover how systems are responding, how plans are being carried out, or what impact our actions are having.

While our evaluative measures are not exhaustive by any means, they might get you thinking about variations that could be done in your library. Do a survey of the various ideas that are already happening in your library, those recommended in the professional literature, and talk to colleagues about what they are doing.

Idea #1 Tell Stories and Anecdotes

Patrons, boards, administrators, tax payers, legislators or any other stakeholders want to know how money is spent in any organization and what impact it has had. Simple stories or anecdotes can often suffice or at least begin the advocacy effort of the library and its services. Be prepared to tell success in person, in news releases, in official reports, and on line.

Washington state moms from Spokane began an initiative with the state legislature to get funding for the school libraries of the state. Their efforts



resulted in a \$4 million appropriation for one year. Legislators will be asked to renew such appropriations as they consider whether to continue the funding. In an effort to report back from the field, librarians created a wiki:

Fundourfuturestories.pbworks.com

This wiki was divided by legislative district and librarians were invited to tell brief stories of how the money was spent and what good it did. Each legislative representative can look online for stories from their district. Simple messages begin to add up:

- Various curricular units of instruction were supported with fresh new materials.
- Children were able to participate in the state children's choice awards for the first time in several years because we could afford the books.
- Books have been purchased to help English-language learners learn to read.
- Sets of dictionaries were purchased for each classroom.

The message became clearer and clearer that the money actually reached the children and teenagers of the state and had some positive benefits rather than being gobbled up in administrative overhead.

Idea #2: Measure and Report Collection Size and Quality

As part of the collection mapping process, you collected data about collection size, including the entire collection, the core collection, and the various emphasis collections, as well as estimates of collection quality. Publish these in newsletters and official reports. The messages of such reports could include:

- Collection size over time
- Collection quality over time
- Size and quality of collection chunks
- Circulation changes as collection size and quality change/improve
- Stories and anecdotes of the usage of collection segments as they change over time.
- Comparisons of print vs. digital collections over time.
- Evolution on various formats in the collection as technology changes happen.
- Results of patron surveys as collection chunk size or quality rises or falls.
- Progress made toward collection targets for accreditation or to meet various standards.
- Progress in meeting best practices research as reported in the professional literature.

Idea #3: Query Patrons About Their Use of the Collection and Its Impact

Patron feedback is essential in order to gauge the usage of the materials we have selected. Beyond a mere suggestion box, there are many ways to collect more reliable user feedback. In one totally online science library, engineers were asked

to fill in a single query after each use. This appeared on the screen and the user clicked:



Surveys are easily put together on free web 2.0 technologies such as Survey Monkey and can be given to random patrons or everyone for a short period of time such as students after an assignment or patrons after a workshop. Shorter surveys typically have higher response rates, which means that they more accurately represent the entire user group you're trying to observe. Consider the following simple questionnaire items. Which would give you the information you need about your collection?

When I need books and materials from the library I find: (circle your answer)

- | | | | |
|---|-----|-----------|----|
| 1. books and materials that are interesting | Yes | Sometimes | No |
| 2. information that is up-to-date (current) | Yes | Sometimes | No |
| 3. enough information to do my assignment | Yes | Sometimes | No |
| 4. books I want to read | Yes | Sometimes | No |

What books or materials and technology would you like the library to have?

Idea # 4: Mine Existing Statistics

With the increasing number of data systems in the library, there are more and more opportunities to gather data with very little effort. It is worth investigating and talking to vendors or reading manuals to see what data gathering mechanisms already exist and the kinds of reports that can be generated. For example, we have talked to a number of librarians who never ask online database system vendors to report usage by their libraries' patrons. It's an undiscovered gold mine of information but it does take a bit of effort to figure out how to retrieve it and create reports, graphics, and importation possibilities from one program to another. Here is a starter list of possibilities but each librarian will have to investigate the local potential.

- Circulation system reports and statistics leading to reports about circulations over time.

- Counters on the library website as a whole, or on individual pages, to determine how many clicks are happening. Some programs can ascertain which site your users came from, and how long they spent on your site.
- Online database usage. Talk to vendor reps. There are many ways to ascertain not just general counts but which parts or journals are accessed, when, and by what category of user.
- Number, length, duration, and audiences for training sessions on library databases, Internet access, assignment workshops. This could include individual reference/training assistance given by the staff to individuals.
- Number of contributions to library wikis, views of Flickr images or YouTube videos, comments on library blogs, or downloads of library podcasts.
- OPAC reports of collection segments, age charts of collection segments, types of patron queries of the OPAC, and patron's comments on OPAC embedded questionnaires.

Once the data has been discovered, the system may only be able to do simple reports and few graphical charts. In such cases, the data can often be imported into a program such as Excel where data can be analyzed and represented visually.

Also, watch for commercial programs that can be used to gather data. For example, Nancy A.S. Miller has created a program for school librarians known as *Time and Task Tracker* (LMC Source) that has librarians track the uses of their time on random days over several months and then draws elaborate charts for analysis and presentation.

Idea # 5: Impact of Collections on Learning

In academic and school libraries, collaborative opportunities to co-teach with classroom teachers and professors provide a direct way to link the resources of the library into learning activities and assignments. For example, Loertscher, Koechlin and Zwaan have created 18 models for integrating the rich information and technology resources into instructional activities in their book: *Beyond Bird Units*.¹ Using instructional design principles, rich information resources are brought into the center of teaching. It is easy to track such activities as “case studies” that can be presented to stakeholders.

Actual learning can be tracked. The librarian might be interested in whether library resources actually become a part of student projects and assignments. For example, bibliographies can be checked to ascertain the sources of information:

¹ Loertscher, David V., Carol Koechlin and Sandi Zwaan. *Beyond Bird Units: 18 Models for Teaching and Learning in Information-Rich and Technology-Rich Environments*. Hi Willow Research & Publishing, 2007. (available from <http://lmcsources.com>) This title is directed at school librarians. A similar publication by the same authors but directed at academic librarians is titled: *Super Teaching: 15 Think! Models for Instructional Improvement in College Courses, and Online Learning* and is available from the same source.

library databases? Google? The print collection? The reference collection? Other libraries? Another measure would be to compare projects from two classes, one of which had the benefit of instruction from the librarian and the other class which had to fend for itself. Blind assessment of the products and then analyzing project scores by class would reveal what impact the library had on student grades.

In these examples, we see that the library is going beyond the role of storage and retrieval to become active partners in the use of those materials. It is a connection increasingly demanded by stakeholders including accrediting bodies.

Idea # 6: Investigate Various Output Measures and their Links to Collection Building

Over the years, there has been considerable interest in using output measures to justify the existence of and as the data upon which to base future plans. An output measure can be thought of as the end result of a system that provides evidence of worth, efficiency, or impact. It would be akin to the “bottom line” of a business if the idea were to make a profit. Two popular books include Virginia Walter’s *Output Measures for Public Library Service to Children*, and Frances Bradburn’s *Output Measures for School Library Media Programs*. Various states and authors have issued manuals for looking at measures that could be collected. Some recommend circulation statistics, number of patrons per day, size of collections and facilities, and many other aspects. It is worth looking at the measures they recommend that might connect to collection development, use, and evaluation, particularly if they would assist in the collection development planning process with advisory committees, funders, and accreditation agencies.

Idea # 7: Do an Action Research Study

Action research is the study of local problems in context without the formal gold standard rules of formal research. That is not to say that it is sloppy work or without tough thinking and analysis, but it has many advantages because the findings apply to your own situation. The steps of action research parallel the scientific method:

- Develop a question
- Collect data
- Analyze the data
- Draw conclusions
- Take action

For example, a library acquires a large Spanish language collection of popular books and creates a major guide to online materials in Spanish. The librarian notices that this does not instantly result in higher usage. Two initiatives are proposed to make the community of Spanish speakers aware of the collection. One method is to make Spanish resources more prominent on the website; the other, to do outreach in the Spanish speaking neighborhoods directly with potential patrons. Both initiatives are done and circulation data and web access

tracked. The analysis of the data suggests that while the website prominence did help, the best rise in circulation could be attributed to the direct contact. Continued action on both fronts signaled that collection use in that library could be affected by outreach to unserved patrons, so the library advisory committee planned other initiatives with accompanying monitoring systems for the next three year usage targets.

Hundreds of similarly probing questions might begin with: "I wonder what would happen if we did this, or that?" Or, "Why is this happening?" Instead of worrying about a problem, action research is designed and carried out to help the librarian make better decisions.

There are a wide variety of guides and books about doing action research in various types of libraries. Find several titles that suggest methods that match your level of expertise ranging from novice to intermediate skill. It is just a part of good decision-making practice to base those decisions on data rather than upon whim, fear, personal preference, or in some cases, just plain ignorance of the factors at work.

Idea #8: Participate in Formal Research and Statistics Gathering

There are many opportunities to participate in formal research studies that would investigate various aspects of collection building, the impact of the collection upon patrons and learning, and a host of other topics connected to information, information patron information needs, new technologies, and even radical redesign of library practices. For example, major academic institutions often use the LibQUAL+ survey. Other of these studies are doctoral dissertations. Others can be proposed by members of the library staff to granting organizations or the organization that the library serves. Expertise in research, research methodology, data gathering, data analysis, and interpretation of data is needed for such studies because they may be a part of a larger study that is generalizing beyond the walls of the library itself. Perhaps there is a person on the library staff with research expertise. Perhaps you as the librarian have such expertise or are willing to develop it. Perhaps a researcher will propose that your library become a part of a larger investigation. It is certain that unless basic research and development is or should be a basic part of not only collection development but other major ideas affecting the role of libraries in the 21st century.

Idea #9: Chart Trends Over Time

Collection mapping provides a way of chunking the collection for particular purposes and if used, provides an ideal way of tracking trends over time. What happens before and after an initiative to support foreign language speakers in the community? What happens when new technologies and formats are added to the collection? Does circulation improve? What happens when teaching librarians are added to the staff to the quality of use made by patrons? What happens when a teen center is carved out of the existing library space and staffed by a professional librarian? What happens when online databases are promoted

to patrons? Tracking the impact of initiatives connected to the growth of collection segments provides both indirect and direct evidence that funders are asking for.

Idea # 10: Report to Stakeholders

Who is interested in evaluative measures that are collected, analyzed, and are ready to report? We can think of many: advisory committees, funders, organizational administrators, accrediting bodies, allied community groups, the voters, parents of school children, and the general public. Libraries are expensive; they are not revenue-producing entities, but rather are revenue-consuming. That means they require constant justification. It is not wise to assume the libraries, mom, and apple pie notions are so entrenched in the popular mind that they will not be on the budget chopping block. Wise librarians collect data, analyze the results, and create clever presentations for anyone who will listen.

Reflection on Collection Mapping as a Whole

As we come to the end of our proposal on collection mapping to build client-side collections, we hope the ideas here have had an impact on your thinking. Here is our starter list of reflective questions:

- Are you able to build the kinds of advisory committee or committees that actually share the burden of building quality collections?
- When you do a community study, what questions arise about the match between the library collection and the patrons it was designed to serve?
- Whether you have studied the curriculum or done a needs assessment, how does this knowledge provide you and others with the expertise necessary to build a collection?
- In reflecting about collection mapping and the chunking of the collection into manageable pieces, what advantages do you have in the planning, assessment, and projection about where the collection was, is now, and where it should go?
- What perspective have you gained on the idea of quality information rather than the amount of information in a library collection?
- Considering the advances in technology, what have you learned about how the library collection should respond to such rapid changes?
- How can the librarian manage to maximize the impact of a collection while facing budgetary constraints?
- How can the creation of a collection move more toward a conversation with patrons rather than a one-way stream of information?
- Vendors would be happy to take over the job of furnishing all patrons' information needs if given the opportunity. What do you see as the role of the librarian in a very information-rich environment?
- What streams of data would help you as collection developer to get and remain to be an expert in collection development for the patrons of your library?

About the Authors

David Loertscher has had a long career teaching library and information science at various universities around the United States and is currently a professor at San José State University. He has written many books and articles and lectured in almost every state of the Union.

The concept of collection mapping was first published by Dr. Loertscher in 1986 under the title *Computerized Collection Development for School Library Media Centers*. Since then, he has written about the technique in several publications. Now it has become necessary to rethink the entire concept as high technology dawns upon the library world. No longer can collections be groups of books with a sprinkling of multimedia materials. The digital age has forever changed what librarians do, think, and create.

Laura Wimberley holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of California San Diego, and an M.L.I.S. from San José State University, where she first collaborated with Dr. Loertscher. Her current projects are online at www.laurawimberley.org.

