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This chapter begins with an introduction to terms and concepts, followed by a capsule history of the practice of collection development, focusing on the United States. A brief look at the history of collection work and the libraries in which collections were developed is useful because contemporary practice builds on that of the past. Selectors work with library collections that have been created over time in accordance with past understandings and conventions. Topics introduced in this chapter are explored in more depth in subsequent chapters.

The first issue to be addressed in a book devoted to collection development and management is an understanding of what this phrase means. Collection development came into wide use in the late 1960s to replace selection as a more encompassing term reflecting the thoughtful process of developing a library collection in response to institutional priorities and community or user needs and interests. Collection development was understood to cover several activities related to the development of library collections, including selection, the determination and coordination of selection policy, assessment of the needs of users and potential users, collection use studies, collection analysis, budget management, identification of collection needs, community and user outreach and liaison, and planning for resource sharing. In the 1980s, the term collection management was proposed as an umbrella term under which collection development was to be subsumed. In this construct, collection management includes collection development and an expanded suite of decisions about weeding, canceling serials, storage, and preservation. Also of concern in collection management are the organization and assignment of responsibilities for its practice.

Collection management and collection development now often are used synonymously or in tandem, a practice followed in this book. For example, the professional organization within the American Library Association’s (ALA) Association for Library Collections and Technical Services that focuses on this topic is called the Collection Management and Development Section. The Reference and User Services Association’s section is called the Collection Development and Evaluation Section, more commonly referred to as CODES. The tasks, functions, and responsibilities now understood to be the portfolio of collection development librarians include selection of materials in all formats, collection...
policies, collection maintenance (selection for weeding and storage, preservation, and serials cancellation), budget and finance, assessment of needs of users and potential users, liaison and outreach activities related to the collection and its users, collection assessment and evaluation, and planning for cooperation and resource sharing.

A literature sampling provides a clearer understanding of how collection development and management are understood by practitioners:

Simply put, collection management is the systemic, efficient and economic stewardship of library resources.¹

The goal of any collection development organization must be to provide the library with a collection that meets the appropriate needs of its client population within the limits of its fiscal and personnel resources. To reach this goal, each segment of the collection must be developed with an application of resources consistent with its relative importance to the mission of the library and the needs of its patrons.²

Collection management is defined as a process of information gathering, communication, coordination, policy formulation, evaluation, and planning. These processes, in turn, influence decisions about the acquisition, retention, and provision of access to information sources in support of the intellectual needs of a given library community. Collection development is the part of collection management that primarily deals with decisions about the acquisition of materials.³

Collection development is a term representing the process of systematically building library collections to serve study, teaching, research, recreational, and other needs of library users. The process includes selection and deselection of current and retrospective materials, planning of coherent strategies for continuing acquisition, and evaluation of collections to ascertain how well they serve user needs.⁴

Those who practice collection management are called variously selectors, bibliographers, collections librarians, subject specialists, subject liaisons, collection development librarians, collection managers, and collection developers. Additional titles for those who build and manage collections also are used. This book uses these terms interchangeably to mean a library staff member who is responsible for developing, managing, and teaching about collections. In many libraries, collections responsibilities are part of a suite of responsibilities for which the librarian is responsible. The responsibilities that constitute collection management include one or more of the following: selecting materials for acquisition and access, weeding, storage, and preservation; writing and revising collection development policies; promoting, marketing, and interpreting collections and resources; evaluating and assessing collections and related services; community liaison and outreach responsibilities; managing budgets; liaison with other libraries and cooperative collection development; and soliciting funds to
supplement the money allocated to collection development and management. Although their assignment and importance vary from library to library, these elements are universal in the practice of collection management. For that reason, this book does not contain separate chapters for various types of libraries.

All these responsibilities imply a knowledge of the library’s user community and its fiscal and personnel resources, mission, values, and priorities along with those of the library’s parent organization. Collection management cannot be successful unless it is integrated within all library operations and the responsible librarian has an understanding of and close relationship with other library operations and services. Important considerations for the collection management librarian include who has access to the collection on-site and online, circulation policies, types of interfaces the library supports, quality of bibliographic records and the priority given to their creation, and the extent to which the local catalog or access portal reflects access to online resources. A constant theme throughout this book is the importance of the environment, both internal and external, to the library, within which the collection management librarian practices his or her craft.

**Historical Overview**

Selection of materials for libraries has been around as long as libraries have, though records of how decisions were made in the ancient libraries of Nineveh, Alexandria, and Pergamum are not available. One can assume that the scarcity of written materials and their value as unique records made comprehensiveness, completeness, and preservation guiding principles. In the 800s, Al-Mamun, caliph of Baghdad, collected as many classical works from the Byzantine Empire as he could, had them translated into Arabic, and kept them in the House of Wisdom. Libraries served primarily as storehouses rather than as instruments for the dissemination of knowledge or a source for recreational reading. Comprehensiveness, completeness, and preservation have continued as library goals through the growth of commerce, the Renaissance, invention of movable type, expanding lay literacy, the Enlightenment, the public library movement, and the proliferation of electronic resources. Size continues today to be a common, though only one, measure of a library’s greatness.

Systematic philosophies of selection were rare until the end of the nineteenth century, though a few early librarians gave written attention to selection. Gabriel Naudé, hired by Cardinal Mazarin to manage his personal library in the early 1600s, addressed selection in the first modern treatise on the management of libraries. He stated, “It may be laid down as a maxim that there is no book whatsoever, be it never so bad or disparaged, but may in time be sought for by someone.” Completeness as a goal has been balanced by a desire to select the
best and most appropriate materials. In 1780, Jean-Baptiste Cotton des Hous-
says stated that libraries should consist only of books “of genuine merit and of
well-approved utility,” with new additions guided by “enlightened economy.”7
Appropriate criteria for selection have been a continuing debate among librar-
ians and library users for centuries.

**Collection Building in the United States**

Libraries developed first in the American colonies as private collections and then
within institutions of higher education. These early libraries were small for three
reasons: relatively few materials were published in the New World, funds were
limited, and acquiring materials was difficult. Even as late as 1850, only six hun-
dred periodicals were being published in the United States, up from twenty-six
in 1810.8 Monographic publishing was equally sparse, with most works being
religious in nature.

**ACADEMIC LIBRARIES**

Academic libraries seldom had continuing budget allocations in their first cen-
turies and, therefore, selection was not a major concern. Most support for aca-
demic libraries’ collections came from gifts of books or donations to purchase
them. Less than a tenth of the holdings of colonial American college librar-
ies were added through direct purchase.9 Most gifts were gladly accepted. Any
institutional funds came from the occasional actions of the trustees or boards of
regents rather than from recurring allocations. Student library fees were charged
at several institutions, on either a per-annum or a per-use basis.10 Even by 1856,
when John Langdon Sibley became librarian of Harvard, the total fund for library
acquisitions and binding was only $250 per year.11 In purchasing power, this is
equals approximately $6,100 in today’s dollars (using the Consumer Price Index
as the indicator). In comparison, Harvard spent $27,569,823 on acquisitions and
access in fiscal year 2006.12 Even with funds in hand, acquiring materials was
challenging. Everything had to be purchased on buying trips to book dealers in
large East Coast cities and in Europe.

Collections grew slowly. By 1790, Harvard’s library had reached only
12,000 volumes. It had averaged eighty-two new volumes per year in the preced-
ing 135 years. The College of William and Mary’s library collection numbered
only 3,000, and it was the second largest in the country. The academic libraries
added, on the average, only thirty to one hundred volumes per year before 1800.
Most additions, because they were donations, were irrelevant to the educational
programs of the time.13 By 1850, only one U.S. academic institution had a col-
lection larger than 50,000 volumes: Harvard College collections had reached
72,000 volumes.14 At the middle of the century, total holdings for the approxi-
mately seven hundred colleges, professional schools, and public libraries in the United States totaled only 2.2 million.¹⁵

College libraries reflected American education’s priorities of the time: teaching rather than study, students rather than scholars, and maintaining order and discipline rather than promoting learning and research. Reflective thinking and theoretical considerations were unusual in any college discipline before the American Civil War. As a consequence, academic libraries had only limited significance in their institutions and still functioned as storehouses.

After the Civil War, academic libraries and their parent institutions began a period of significant change. Libraries gained greater prominence as universities grew. The period 1850–1900 witnessed a fundamental change in the structure of American scholarship, influenced by ideas and methods imported from German universities, which had become centers for advanced scholarship. The move to lectures and seminars as replacements for textbooks, memorization, and recitation and the increasing importance of research had far-reaching consequences for libraries. Passage of the Morrill Act in 1862, which created the land-grant colleges, introduced the concept that these institutions were obligated to produce and share knowledge that would advance society. A direct result was a tremendous increase in scholarly journals and monographs. The needs and working habits of the professionalized and institution-centered scholars were quite different from those of their predecessors. Scholars’ attitudes toward the academic library experienced a basic reorientation. The institutional academic library became a necessity. The scholarly profession was no longer confined to those who had the private wealth to collect extensive personal collections. A mounting flood of publications meant that even those few scholars with private means could not individually keep up with and manage all the new information available. They needed the institutional library to consult and to have access to all the materials necessary for research. As the library became increasingly important to higher education, the process of creating collections gained a higher profile.

Well into the 1900s, most selection in academic libraries was handled by faculty members. When Asa Gray was hired as an instructor at the University of Michigan in 1838, he went first to Europe to acquire books for the library. The president at Ohio Wesleyan traveled to New York and Europe in 1854 to purchase library books.¹⁶ German university libraries were unique in placing selection as the direct responsibility of librarians and staff, with less faculty input. A primary advocate of the role of librarians in the development of library collections was Christian Gottlob Heyne, the librarian at the University of Göttingen in Germany from 1763 to 1812.¹⁷ In 1930, faculty members in the United States still were selecting as much as 80 percent of total university library acquisitions, and librarians were choosing 20 percent.¹⁸ This ratio began to shift in the 1960s at universities and had reversed by the late 1970s; faculty continue to have an important selection role in many smaller institutions, often collaborating with
librarians, who may have responsibility for some types of materials and portions of the collection. The change can be linked to an increasing professionalism among librarians, the burgeoning volume of publications, a growing number of librarians with extensive subject training, and the expanding pressure on faculty of other responsibilities, including research and publication. As the responsibility for building library collections shifted from faculty to librarians—or to a shared responsibility—selection emphasis changed from selecting materials primarily to meet the needs and interests of specific faculty members to building a unified collection to meet both current and future institutional priorities.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Academic libraries preceded public libraries in the United States. Established in 1833, the Peterborough Town Library in New Hampshire is usually identified as the first free, publicly owned and maintained library in the United States.19 A library established in Franklin, Massachusetts, through funds from Benjamin Franklin to purchase 116 volumes, was opened to all inhabitants of the town in 1790.20 Though public, it was not supported by public funding. Social libraries, limited to a specific clientele and supported by subscriptions, had existed in the colonies for more than a century. One of the better known is the Philadelphia Library Company, founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1731 and supported by fifty subscribers to share the cost of importing books and journals from England. Less known are the literary society libraries formed by free African Americans in the northeast United States between 1828 and 1860. One of the earliest, the Colored Reading Society of Philadelphia, founded in 1828, directed that all income from initiation fees and monthly dues (excluding that devoted to rent and light) be spent on books.21 The Phoenix Society of New York, established in 1933, aimed to “establish circulating libraries in each ward for the use of people of colour on very modest pay—to establish mental feasts.”22

Other social libraries were established and supported by philanthropists and larger manufacturers to teach morality, provide a more wholesome environment, and offer self-education opportunities to the poor and uneducated drawn to cities. Circulating libraries were commercial ventures that loaned more popular materials, frequently novels, for a fee. When considered together, these early libraries were furnishing the collections that libraries provide today—materials that are used for information, education, and recreation.

Boston was the first major community to establish a public library, in 1852. The trustees defined the purpose of the public library as education and, though they had no plans to acquire novels, they were willing to include the more popular respectable books. In their first report, the trustees wrote, “We consider that a large public library is of the utmost importance as the means of completing our system of public education.”23 The responsibility of libraries to educate their
users and to bring them to the better books and journals has been a theme guiding selection in public libraries since their establishment, and the definition of appropriate materials has been the source of constant debate.

Trusted or committees appointed by trustees selected materials in early public libraries. By the end of the 1800s and as librarianship evolved as a profession, John Cotton Dana was advising that book selection be left to the librarians, directed by the trustees or a book committee. The present practice of assigning collections responsibility to librarians is the result of a slow transformation. In the United States, public librarians generally acquired selection responsibilities before those in academic libraries. The shift happened in public libraries earlier because college and university faculties retained a more active interest in library collections than did the members of public library boards or trustees. The rise of library schools and the professionalization of librarianship led librarians to expect expanded responsibilities for selection and made trustees and, ultimately, faculty members more willing to transfer them to librarians.

After the Second World War, increased funding for both education and public libraries at the national, state, and local levels led to a period of unparalleled expansion in all types of library collections. The seemingly endless possibilities for growth broadened the librarian’s collection responsibilities. Moving beyond individual book evaluation and selection, librarians began to view building coherent collections as an important responsibility. Soon they were seeking and acquiring materials from all over the world, and the scope of collections expanded to include Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe as well as Western Europe.

Collections theory began to focus on who should be selecting materials for the library, how selection decisions were made and the appropriate criteria, and alternatives to individual title selection for building collections. The emphasis during this period was on growth and how to handle it effectively. In 1944, Fremont Rider made his famous statement that research library collections were doubling every sixteen years. In 1953, Kenneth J. Brough wrote that the mission of Harvard’s library was the “collection and preservation of everything printed.” During the 1950s, vendors and jobbers began offering services that freed librarians from ordering directly from the publisher. Many of these service agencies began supplying materials through approval and blanket plans, freeing selectors to concentrate on identifying and obtaining more esoteric resources.

Funding for public libraries began to hold steady or to decline in the late 1970s. Pressures to contain taxes at all levels of government reduced the flow of funds to libraries as municipalities began to make difficult choices about how to allocate limited resources. Libraries, in turn, faced choices about their priorities and where scarce funds should be directed—to hours of operation, staffing, services, or collections. Many public libraries closed branches and reduced the purchases of duplicate copies of popular titles. Book vendors began to offer
rental collections that provided a rotating collection of popular titles, often with multiple copies, to help libraries manage limited collections budgets. The average total per-capita operating revenue in the United States for public libraries was $31.65 in fiscal year 2005, ranging from $13.50 (Mississippi) to $56.65 (District of Columbia). These funds had to cover all expenses, not just collections. Financial stringency felt doubly painful as libraries sought to expand their collection through the addition of more media (CDs, VHS tapes, DVDs) and access to online electronic resources.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Dorothy McGinnis traces the origins of school libraries and the idea that these centers should provide a variety of media to 1578, when an ordinance was passed in Shrewsbury, England, according to which schools should include “a library and gallerie . . . furnished with all manner of books, mappes, spheres, instruments of astronomye and all other things apperteyninge to learning which may be either given to the school or procured with school money.” School libraries were present in the early private schools in New England in the late eighteenth century. Their collections primarily comprised reference books and were supported by donations. Public school libraries in the United States were first proposed in legislation recommended to the state legislature by New York governor DeWitt Clinton in 1827, with funds finally appropriated in 1839. By 1876, twenty-one states had passed legislation to support public school libraries. Books were selected by school board members, superintendents, trustees, and occasionally those directly responsible for the school libraries. The debate over appropriate materials seen in public libraries continued in school libraries. School superintendents were complaining about the presence of novels in New York school libraries in 1843. The emphasis was on acquiring materials that would further students’ education and excluding “pernicious publications.”

The roles and responsibilities of school librarians began to be formalized with the establishment in 1896 of the School Library Section within the National Education Association. Mary Kingsbury was appointed librarian at the Erasmus Hall High School, Brooklyn, in 1900, and has been identified as the first library school graduate appointed to a high school library position as well as the first professionally trained librarian to be employed full time in a school. In 1914, the ALA Council approved a petition from the ALA Roundtable of Normal and High School Librarians to form the School Libraries Section, which held its first meeting at the June 1915 ALA annual conference. In 1951, this section became the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), a separate division in ALA. Despite this recognition within the profession of school librarianship as a specialty, most materials were added to libraries into the 1950s through lists prepared by state education boards.
The first standards for school libraries were published in 1918 and were endorsed and republished by the ALA in 1920 as *Standard Library Organization and Equipment for Secondary Schools of Different Sizes*. This document directed school librarians to select books on the basis of what was needed for classrooms, students’ recreational and cultural needs, and curricular needs and recommendations by teachers—but all selection was subject to the approval of the school principal. This first standard stated that “freedom of access to the library must imply, not only freedom to consult books for reference and for supplementary collateral study, but also freedom to read books for recreation and pleasure.”

*Elementary School Library Standards* followed in 1925, and in 1954, the ALA published *School Libraries for Today and Tomorrow*, the first quantitative and qualitative standards for K–12.

In the early 1940s, only 18 percent of public schools nationwide reported having a centralized library. By 1953, 36 percent of all public schools had library media centers; library media centers were more common in secondary public schools, with 95 percent having them, whereas only 24 percent of public elementary schools had them. Early standards supported the creation of a separate library media facility within schools, but elementary school libraries did not exist in most states until the 1958 National Defense Education Act (NDEA) and the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Initially, libraries were not specifically mentioned in NDEA, which was enacted in response to the Soviet Union’s launch of Sputnik in 1957. Books and materials (especially in sciences, foreign languages, and mathematics) could be purchased with NDEA funds, but often these were not placed in libraries. Some school administrators did not see libraries as having a primary instructional role, and selection of materials often was not handled effectively.

Program guidelines were issued and changes were made to NDEA which, over time, strengthened the role of libraries and librarians, including the latter’s responsibilities for selecting materials. ESEA Title II provided $100 million in direct federal assistance for the acquisition of school library resources and other instructional materials. As a result of ESEA Title II, school library media staff were expected to provide leadership in selecting, acquiring, organizing, and using instructional materials. ESEA had a profound affect on the establishment of school media centers. During the years 1965–68, 12 percent of all public schools established a school library, and approximately 193,600 library expansion projects were funded during the same period.

ESEA was reauthorized at five-year intervals until 1981, when ESEA Title IV was consolidated with other educational programs in the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act to create one funding block program, the Chapter 2 block grant. The resulting block grants were distributed to states, which allocated funds to school districts that determined their own priorities. The result has been a decrease in grant funds specifically targeted at school libraries.
The most common use of Chapter 2 funds was for computer applications. By 1984/85, only 29 percent of the local block grant funds were being used for library and media center support. The consistent growth in library media center collections seen over the previous twenty years had come to an end.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was intended to address a portion of the lost funding by providing grants to local schools districts in which at least 20 percent of the students were from families with incomes below the poverty line. In the first year of the program (fiscal year 2002), $12.5 million was available for grants, and ninety-four grants were awarded. This amount seems modest compared to the $100 million made available annually in the early days of ESEA II.

The second half of the twentieth century saw a change in the nature of school library collections as well as their size. School libraries were beginning to include alternative media in the 1960s. In 1960, AASL updated the outdated 1945 *School Libraries for Today and Tomorrow.* The new 1960 *Standards for School Library Programs* included audiovisual materials but provided no recommended quantitative measures. The 1960 quantitative standard for print materials was a minimum of six to ten thousand books for schools with 200–999 students and ten books per student for school with 1,000 or more students. The 1969 revision, developed in cooperation with the National Education Association Department of Audiovisual Instruction, was titled *Standards for School Media Programs.* The name change signaled a shift from the terms *school libraries* and *school library programs* to *school media centers* (or *school library media centers*) and *school media programs* (or *school library media programs*) and stressed the importance of providing a variety of formats to support instruction and learning. The quantitative standard changed to a minimum of six to ten thousand book titles or twenty volumes per student for schools with 250 or more students. For the first time, modest quantitative standards for audiovisual materials were present.

The next revision, *Media Programs: District and School,* appeared in 1975. This document focused on qualitative goals but continued to include quantitative measures. The minimum collection for schools with 500 or fewer students was twenty thousand items, or forty items per student. Items were defined as books, serial subscriptions, audiovisual materials, or associated equipment. Schools with more than 500 students could have fewer than forty items per student.

*Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs,* published in 1988, continued the movement toward qualitative measures, with quantitative data provided in an appendix. These guidelines were revised in 1998 with the *Planning Guide for Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning,* which dropped the quantitative data completely and shifted the focus to information literacy. Although size of collections is not the only measure of a school library media center’s value, recent data suggest that the loss of federal funds has had a profound effect. In fiscal year 2004, only 65 percent of schools had a full-time certified library media specialist, and the average holding per 100 students was
1,891 items—slightly less than twenty items per students. The encouraging news was that 95.1 percent of school library media centers had connections to the Internet, although the number of computer stations averaged only 2.3 per 100 students.

Marilyn L. Shontz and Lesley S. J. Farmer report that local school library media center budgets remained steady during the period 2002–5. Book expenditures kept pace with rising prices, but spending for audiovisual materials, computer software, CD-ROMs, and web-based subscriptions remained unchanged. Most funding came from local sources, but one quarter of those responding to the survey reported receiving federal funds through grants.

**Fiscal Stringency**

By the 1970s, library budgets in all types of libraries began to hold steady or to shrink. Libraries were unable to keep pace with rapidly increasing costs and growing numbers of publications. Librarians began to look for guidance in how they could make responsible decisions with less money. The goal of comprehensive, autonomous, self-sufficient collections became less realistic. Interest grew in developing guidelines for downsizing serials collections and mechanisms for increasing library cooperation. Collection development policy statements became more common as libraries sought guidance in managing limited financial resources amid conflicting demands. The Research Libraries Group was founded in 1974 as a “partnership to achieve a planned, coordinated interdependence in response to the threat posed by a climate of economic retreat and financial uncertainty.”53 OCLC Online Computer Library Center, established in 1967 for academic libraries in Ohio, opened its membership to all types of libraries regardless of location and facilitated the sharing of resources as well as bibliographic records.

Financial stringency has had a profound impact on the growth of library collections. Between 1986 and 2001, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) documented a 5 percent decline in serials purchased and a 9 percent decline in monographs purchased by its member libraries. During that same period, serial unit costs increased 215 percent while expenditures increased 210 percent, and monograph unit costs increased 68 percent and expenditures for monographs increased 66 percent.54 During the twenty years from 1986 through 2006, serials expenditures (for both print and electronic) increased by 321 percent and monograph expenditures increased by 82 percent. These large academic libraries are now investing a major portion of their budgets in serials, including electronic resources, and a lesser portion in monographs.

Interlibrary lending became essential in response to libraries’ inability to meet users’ needs locally. Librarians began to debate ownership versus access via interlibrary loan and document delivery. The older idea of building comprehensive
collections “just in case” a particular item might be needed lost favor. Some librarians suggested that a more responsible use of budgets might be supplying materials to meet users’ needs “just in time.” In 1988, Maurice B. Line wrote:

> Before World War 2, interlending was regarded as an optional extra, a grace and favour activity, to be indulged in sparingly; any research library considered it an admission of failure to have to obtain any item from elsewhere. Now every library, however large, accepts that it cannot be self-sufficient, and some of the largest obtain the most from elsewhere.55

Several pressures, both external and internal, buffeted libraries in the final twenty-five years of the twentieth century. Rapid changes in user community expectations and the makeup of those communities, the publishing industry, telecommunication technology, copyright law, and scholarly communication are among the most significant. Collections librarians in all types of libraries are now seeking to cope with scarce financial resources, preservation and conservation needs, cooperation in collection building and resource sharing, serials cancellation projects, and weeding and storage decisions. Financial austerity, which has characterized libraries for more than two decades, coupled with the need to readjust priorities continually is a primary reason the term collection management has become more meaningful to the profession.

Another challenge for libraries emerged in the late 1980s—digital information. Some academic libraries had been acquiring data files on magnetic tapes and punched cards for several years, but widespread adoption of microcomputers presented libraries of all types with a variety of information resources on floppy disks, followed soon by CD-ROMs. The growth of the Internet and ubiquitous access added online resources to the choices to be considered. Librarians selecting electronic resources faced new decisions about licenses, software, technical support, operating systems, interfaces, and hardware. User expectations about ease of access and ubiquity have continued to increase. Purchasing the rights to access online electronic resources has meant that collection management librarians have had to master the language of contracts and license agreements. Much of the literature in the early twenty-first century has focused on the challenges libraries face operating in both print and electronic environments simultaneously.

Nevertheless, this is an exciting time to work in libraries, especially for those charged with developing and managing their collections. Users continue to visit libraries in person and online to meet their information and recreational needs. Drawing on data collected in five surveys of 1,000–1,600 individuals each, an IMLS study, completed in 2008, examined how adults in the United States search for information in the online age and how this affects the ways they interact with public libraries and museums, both online and in person.56 The research team, led by José-Marie Griffiths and Donald W. King, found that libraries and
museums are the most trusted sources of online information among adults of all ages, education levels, races, and ethnicities. Libraries and museums rank higher in trustworthiness than all other information sources including government, commercial, and private websites. The explosive growth of information available online appears to stimulate Americans' appetite for more information. Further, Griffiths and King found that the Internet is not replacing in-person visits to libraries and museums and may increase on-site use of libraries and museums. The InterConnections report provides evidence that public libraries and museums are thriving in the Internet Age as trusted providers of information to people of all ages.

Theories of Selection

The origins of collection management and development can be traced to theories of selection. The first American guide to selection was prepared by Thaddeus M. Harris, Harvard librarian, in 1793. In his introduction to a catalog of books suggested for a “small and cheap” library to serve common readers at a distance in the country, he wrote that “books have become so exceedingly numerous . . . that the greatest caution is necessary in selecting those of established reputation from the many that are indifferent or useless.” Until the 1960s, most theories of selection promoted in the United States focused on choosing materials for public libraries. Libraries of all types have experienced a continuing tension between demand and value, and much of the literature on selection has focused on this tension between what people want and what librarians believe is good for them. This has been particularly true in public libraries, which have seen the education of citizens as a primary goal. Part of the demand-value controversy has been the question of what to do about fiction. The public’s preference for novels was troubling to early library leaders, in part because of the long-term effects of Puritan condemnation of fiction reading. Writing to the Library Journal in 1899, Lucious Page Lane (New York State Library School, class of 1899) quoted a school principal who stated that “the voracious devouring of fiction commonly indulged in by patrons of the public library, especially the young, is extremely pernicious and mentally unwholesome.” Many early librarians took a paternalistic, even elitist position about selection and collection building.

Librarians as Arbiters of Quality

Such early legends in American librarianship as Melvil Dewey, John C. Dana, Herbert Putnam, and Ainsworth Spofford insisted that libraries’ primary role as educators implied that their responsibility was to provide only the highest-quality materials—with quality defined, of course, by librarians.
Many librarians were proud of their role as censors, by which they meant arbiters of quality. Arthur E. Bostwick explained the positive role of public librarians as censors in his 1908 ALA presidential address. He stated that they had a responsibility to censor anything that was not Good, True, and Beautiful. In contrast, other leading librarians of the time, including William F. Poole, Justin Winsor, and Charles Cutter, supported the selection and provision of more popular materials.

One of the most powerful early statements in support of popular reading materials in public libraries was written by Poole, first head of the Chicago Public Library. He voiced the still widely held view that reading less sophisticated materials leads readers to more cultivated works. In 1876, Poole wrote:

To meet, therefore, the varied wants of readers there must be on the shelves of the library books which persons of culture never read, although it is quite probable they did read such books in some stage of their mental development. Judged from a critical standpoint, such books are feeble, rudimentary, and perhaps sensational; but they are higher in the scale of literary merit than the tastes of the people who seek them; and, like primers and first-readers in the public schools, they fortunately lead to something better.

Not all librarians were confident they could select the Good, True, and Beautiful or identify the primers that would lead readers to a higher level. As the profession of librarianship developed, librarians turned to their professional associations and librarian authorities for guidance in selecting individual titles. Several reviewing tools appeared in the early 1900s to help librarians select the best books, including ALA Booklist (1905), Book Review Digest (1906), and Fiction Catalog (1908). The first edition of Guide to the Study and Use of Reference Books (now Guide to Reference) was published in 1902 by the ALA.

Despite the theoretical debate among library leaders over value versus demand, the volume of fiction in American public libraries continued to increase. By 1876, practically all American public libraries offered at least some fictional materials, though it was often of the “better” kind. During the First World War, the opponents of fiction in U.S. public libraries felt that the serious mood of the country provided a logical argument against the frivolity of popular fiction. Cornelia Marvin, state librarian of Oregon, suggested a new librarian’s slogan: “No new fiction during the war.” All the same, many librarians selected materials for military camp libraries and were not hesitant about choosing fiction to entertain and distract the troops.

After the First World War, the controversy about the role of fiction in public libraries continued. Many wanted libraries to be as attractive as possible to returning soldiers. Nevertheless, with the declining economy of the Great Depression resulting in reduced library funding, fiction continued as a point of contention among librarians. Some library leaders felt that the 1930s was a
time for libraries to focus on educational reading. Carl B. Roden of the Chicago Public Library asked, “Who among us would not rather supply the books and competent guidance for ten self-students than the latest novels for a thousand fiction readers?” Others felt that libraries had an obligation to provide fiction as part of their public mission. The debate over suitable library materials is documented in Esther Jane Carrier’s two volumes on fiction in U.S. public libraries, which gives a detailed picture of the arguments for and against fiction and its rise as part of collections.

**Evolution of Selection Theory**

The first comprehensive American works on book selection were textbooks written by Francis K. W. Drury (1930) and Helen Haines (1935). These early works are reflections of their times—with statements such as Haines’s “Consider what books mean in individual development: in the formation of character, in the activation of intelligence, in the enrichment of resources, and in the deepening of sensitivity”—and a testament to the continuity of guiding principles in collection management. Drury’s goals have relevance today, with a few exceptions that seem amusingly dated. For him, the purposes of a course in book selection and, by implication, the goals of selectors were

- to analyze the nature of a community;
- to recognize the various uses to which books of varied types are to be put;
- to consider the character and policy of a library in adding books;
- to cultivate the power of judging and selecting books for purchase, with their value and suitability to readers in mind;
- to become familiar with the sources of information;
- to renew acquaintance with books and writers from the library angle;
- to develop the ability to review, criticize, and annotate books for library purposes;
- to decide where in the library organization book selection fits;
- to learn how to perform the necessary fundamental tasks of book selection; and
- to scrutinize the mental and personal fitness of the selector.

According to Drury, “A qualified selector, acquainted with the demand from his community and knowing the book and money resource of his library, chooses the variety of books he believes will be used, applying his expert knowledge.”
The continuing tension between demand and value was a recurring theme in the professional literature on selection. A vigorous proponent of value was Leon Carnovsky, who framed his position by saying that public libraries should provide materials that were true.68 Before the Second World War, he offered a scholarly position that supported internal censorship. He held a strong conviction that the public library should be a force for truth on vital issues. He advocated censorship of local prejudice and opinion and said the library is “acting democratically when it sets up the authority of reason as the censor.”69 The political implications of the Second World War, combined with a loss of confidence in librarians’ knowledge and ability to choose what is true and what is not, caused Carnovsky to moderate his position in the 1950s and 1960s.

The debate over popular materials in public libraries continued. The Public Library Inquiry of the late 1940s once again raised serious questions about the place of light fiction. Funded by the Carnegie Corporation and conducted by the Social Science Research Council, the inquiry focused on describing libraries and their services, collections, and users. Bernard Berelson wrote the summary volume, in which he held to an elitist view of public libraries, recommending that the library’s purpose is to be “serious” and its proper role to serve the culturally alert community members rather than to try to reach all people.70

Other librarians responded that a public library’s duty was to supply its users with the books of most interest to them. They believed that democratic principles should operate in libraries as well as in society. These librarians were increasingly conscious of the importance of the freedom to read and the right of each reader to find what he or she liked best. In 1939, the ALA adopted the first Library Bill of Rights to provide an official statement against censorship and to oppose pressures on the freedom of citizens to read what they wished. Lester Asheim, in his 1953 paper “Not Censorship but Selection,” stressed the concept of selection as choosing good books instead of excluding bad ones.71

Librarians in the second half of the twentieth century began promoting the ideal that subjects should be covered evenly or equally within collections. Balanced coverage has meant seeking to select materials that represent all viewpoints on important and controversial issues. Librarians have become increasingly aware of their responsibilities to be attentive to both content and format in selection of library materials.

Collection Development and Management as a Specialization

As selection of materials shifted to librarians, the responsibility often fell to acquisitions librarians. The early acquisitions librarians found their professional home in the ALA Board of Acquisition of Library Materials, created in 1951. The ALA Resources and Technical Services Division (RTSD) was created in 1957, and the Board of Acquisition of Library Materials became the Acquisitions Section within RTSD.
A preconference held before the ALA annual conference in Detroit in 1977 is often identified as the landmark event in the recognition of collection development as a new specialization separate from acquisitions in librarianship. Conducted by the then new Collection Development Committee of the Resources Section of the ALA RTSD, the preconference and the section were created and organized by a group of forward-looking librarians including Juanita Doares, Sheila Dowd, Hendrik Edelman, Murray Martin, Paul H. Mosher, and David Zubatsky.

The volume of new publications was increasing rapidly, the publishing world was becoming more complex, and acquisitions budgets had slowed libraries’ expansion. Part-time faculty selectors and librarians without special expertise could no longer manage selection adequately. The planners of the 1977 preconference, who were primarily academic librarians, saw a need to develop research collections in a more solid, conscious, planned, and documented manner. They called this new specialization collection development to distinguish it from acquisitions. The goal of the 1977 preconference was to educate the library profession about this new subdiscipline—its nature, components, and functions. The first Guidelines for Collection Development, published by the Collection Development Committee, followed soon after the preconference. This 1979 publication has since been revised and published as several more focused numbers in the Collection Management and Development Guides series.

The first Collection Management and Development Institute, sponsored by RTSD’s (now Association of Library Resources and Technical Services) Collection Development Committee, was held at Stanford University in 1981. Planners were increasingly aware that the management of collections—not just their development and growth—was the primary issue for the future of this new specialization. They focused on boundary-spanning aspects, including the integration of collection management with acquisitions and other internal library operations and services, and on working closely with interested constituents. They sought to define collection management in ways that had meaning to librarians in all types of libraries.

Many professional groups were focusing on collection development and management in the early 1980s. The Public Library Association sponsored a preconference in 1984. The ARL established its Collection Development Committee, the Research Libraries Group initiated the Collection Management and Development Committee, and other divisions within ALA, including the Reference and Adult Services Division (now Reference and User Services Association), the Public Library Association, and the Association of College and Research Libraries formed committees that concentrated on collection development and management. Whereas collection development had always been closely associated with acquisitions, these two functions began to be separated in larger libraries, with acquisitions more typically associated with technical services units and collection development and management as separate or, perhaps, allied with public services.
In the late 1970s and 1980s, the profession took up collection management as a cause célèbre. Numerous textbooks, manuals, overviews, and journal articles were published. Specialized journals, including *Collection Management* (1976), *Collection Building* (1983), and *Library Collections, Acquisitions and Technical Services* (previously *Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory*; 1977), began publication. Several textbooks on collection development, which was more broadly defined than acquisitions or selection, appeared in the 1970s. Research in the field was summarized in the important *Collection Development in Libraries: A Treatise*. By the mid-1980s, most professional library schools were offering one or more courses that focused on collection development and management. Richard Kryzs identified the topics covered in a basic collection development course of the time; these included the historical background of books and libraries, types of libraries and their communities, library materials, publishers and publishing, selection of materials, acquisition of material, and collection evaluation, which covered storage, weeding, preservation, and replacement decisions. By the mid-1980s, the position of collection development librarian was firmly established.

**Collection Development and Management since 1980**

The 1980s were a challenging period for libraries of all types as librarians became increasingly concerned about the condition of collections built during the periods of prosperity. Libraries were running out of space and collections were deteriorating because of heavy use, poor environmental conditions, and highly acidic paper. Many large libraries established preservation departments with conservation laboratories to address the fragile materials, with collection development librarians playing a role in selecting materials for treatment. The National Endowment for the Humanities funded numerous cooperative microfilming projects that aimed to preserve the contents of thousands of brittle books. *Slow Fires* introduced librarians and the nation to the fragility of acidic collections.

The right to read, censorship, and intellectual freedom became important concerns. The ALA initiated Banned Books Week in 1982 to highlight the challenges to books in school and public libraries. Librarians sought to raise awareness that materials on potentially controversial topics including politics, religious beliefs, sexuality, and social philosophies have a place in many libraries. The need to represent diverse communities, a pluralistic society, and world perspective in collections drew attention. The ALA Ethnic Materials Information Exchange Round Table (renamed the Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table in 1998) was created as a source of information on ethnic and multicultural collections, services, and programs.

Nonprint media (audio and video recordings, slides, films, photos, drawings, filmstrips, and realia) remained a hot topic in the 1980s but were overshadowed by the arrival of computer software, computer files, and CD-ROMs. The lat-
ter were still considered nontraditional formats, and librarians debated whether libraries should acquire them, whether the acquisitions budget (still often called the “book budget”) should be used for them and for supporting hardware, and what the appropriate criteria were to evaluate them. Librarians had their first experiences with license agreements as publishers sought to protect their products. Collection development librarians began a continuing relationship with lawyers as they questioned what the licenses and contracts meant, how to revise them, and who could sign them.

The most traumatic issue before collections librarians at the end of the 1980s was the escalating cost of journals, often referred to as the “serials crisis.” The ARL began tracking both serial and monograph unit costs, expenditures, and number of titles purchased against the consumer price index. Librarians in all types of libraries were preoccupied with journal pricing projections, journal cancellation projects, electronic publishing ventures that might affect pricing, and perceived unfair pricing practices. How best to allocate limited funds among different subject areas and formats and demonstrate financial accountability concerned collections librarians.

The consolidation of publishers and vendors has profoundly changed the marketplace in which collection development librarians make their decisions. Six groups (Reed Elsevier, Taylor and Francis Informa, Wolters Kluwer, Candover and Cinven, Wiley Blackwell, and Verlagsgruppe George von Holtzbrinck) now control more than forty major publishers, with Reed Elsevier controlling 24.6 percent of the market as of 2007. With mergers have come price increases. When Elsevier Reed purchased Pergamon, Pergamon’s journal prices increased 27 percent; when Kluwer purchased Lippincott, Lippincott’s prices increased 30 percent.

The impact of automation on the nature and meaning of collections—and on the processes and decisions of managing collections—joined the challenge of coping with constantly increasing serial prices in the last decade of the twentieth century. When the 1980s began, many librarians still relied on labor-intensive manual searching in *Books in Print*, publishers’ catalogs, and national bibliographies to identify titles to acquire. They typed five-part order forms on electric typewriters—or manual typewriters, if they were less fortunate. Within the decade, Tim Berners-Lee had proposed a global hypertext system (the Web) and initiated technological developments that now support communication with publishers and vendors—and information creators—around the world. The rapid development of the Web provided access to and delivery of content, forever changing the nature of collections and the role of those who build and manage them.

The term *digital library* made its appearance and was defined as organizations that provide the resources, including the specialized staff, to select, structure, offer intellectual access to, interpret, distribute, preserve the
integrity of, and ensure the persistence over time of collections of digital works so that they are readily and economically available for use by a defined community or set of communities.  

Collection development librarians began to explore how technology—that is, expert systems, in-house web pages, automated collection analysis tools, and other vendor products (including online selection)—could support their activities. They continued to ponder criteria for selecting electronic resources and struggled with the question of how to move these materials (including those available on the Internet) into mainstream practices.

The number of electronic journals swelled. The first issue of the Directory of Electronic Journals, Newsletters and Academic Discussion Lists (1991) listed 110 journals and newsletters and 517 academic discussion lists, or e-conferences, and by 1997 the count had grown to more than 3,400 journal and newsletter entries and more than 3,800 e-conferences. Most of the growth occurred in 1996 and 1997, when large commercial publishers such as Academic Press, Chapman-Hall, Elsevier, and Springer-Verlag began publishing e-journals. At the time, librarians had hopes that e-journals would provide an alternative to the high cost of serials facing libraries. The end of the 1990s introduced the “Big Deal,” in which commercial publishers bundled packages of e-journals for a single price with the promise that cost increases would be controlled if libraries accepted the package, often with conditions prohibiting cancellations.

Licenses and contracts to acquire or access online electronic resources became a major issue for libraries and librarians who had little or no experiences in this area. Several organizations offered workshops to help librarians with licenses and contracts for e-resources. In 1996, Yale launched Liblicense (www.library.yale.edu/~llicense/), an educational website to assist librarians in negotiating licenses. This site continues to serve the librarian and publisher community, providing standard license terms and definitions, suggesting language to use and language to avoid, and presenting a model license among other tools and resources.

The 1990s introduced the debate over ownership versus access. Librarians pondered the shift from traditional ownership of print collections to an increasing reliance on online electronic formats. They worried about the consequences of canceling print with the electronic version now available and preferred by users. Leasing access provided no guarantee of perpetual access, unless negotiated in the license. Licenses for electronic content also often included restrictions on its use for interlibrary loan, hindering cooperative collection development. These and other troubling areas led librarians to consider which contractual clauses should be considered deal breakers.

The need to manage the reality of serials cancellations and to negotiate the best price for e-content revitalized interest in cooperative collection development. Library consortia took on new life, often negotiating agreements that
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provided several (if not all) consortium members a discounted subscription cost. The International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC), intended to foster communication among consortia and with publishers and vendors, was organized in 1997. In 1998, ICOLC issued its “Statement of Current Perspective and Preferred Practices for the Selection and Purchase of Electronic Information.” ICOLC monitors new electronic information resources, electronic content provider and vendor pricing practices, and related issues of interest to consortium directors and governing boards. Negotiating costs and licenses became a new and continuing responsibility for collections librarians.

Other legal issues, in addition to contracts and licenses for e-content, captured the attention of collection development librarians in the last decade of the twentieth century. They learned about intellectual property and copyright law, digital rights management, open access to works, copyright exceptions for libraries and archives, orphan works, fair use and electronic reserves, and protecting children from harmful materials on the Internet. The Communications Decency Act (Title V of the Telecommunications Act of 1996) sought to regulate both obscene and indecent materials on the Internet but was ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court for violating the First Amendment. Eventually, the attempt to regulate obscenity was addressed in the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), which became law in December 2000. CIPA requires schools and public libraries to use Internet filtering software on computers with Internet access to protect against access to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornographic, or harmful to minors. If a library receives federal E-rate funds (discounts to assist most schools and libraries to obtain affordable telecommunications and Internet access), this provision applies only to adults; if a library receives only LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) grant funds, the provision applies to all patrons. Public librarians protested against CIPA, which they viewed as infringement on the right to read and a form of censorship. The ALA challenged the law as unconstitutional in 2001, but the Supreme Court upheld it in 2003.

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (enacted into law in 1998) criminalizes production and dissemination of technology intended to circumvent measures taken to protect copyright, not merely infringement of copyright itself, and increases the penalties for copyright infringement on the Internet. It amended Title 17 of the U.S. Code to extend the reach of copyright while limiting the liability of online providers from copyright infringement by their users. The Copyright Term Extension Act of 1998—also known as the Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act and as the Mickey Mouse Protection Act—extended copyright terms in the United States by twenty years. Before the act, copyright would last for the life of the author plus fifty years, or seventy-five years for a work of corporate authorship. The act extended these terms to life of the author plus seventy years and ninety-five years, respectively. The act also affected
copyright terms for copyrighted works published prior to January 1, 1978, increasing their term of protection by twenty years. The library community expressed concerns that such protection of copyright holders disenfranchised libraries and their ability to retrospectively digitize materials for preservation and access while increasing protection and rights of authors and producers.

The 1990s introduced the idea of scholarly communication as an information food chain: academic libraries purchase the resources that researchers use, researchers write up their findings, which they give to journal publishers, who then publish the research in journals and sell them to libraries. Librarians began to question this system, which placed libraries at the low (and expensive) end of the food chain and potentially reduced the dissemination of scholarship. In 1997, the ARL started SPARC, the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (www.arl.org/sparc/), an alliance of universities, research libraries, and professional organizations, as a constructive response to market dysfunctions in the scholarly communication system. Collections librarians in academic libraries joined to raise the consciousness of their faculties about their own roles and responsibilities in the creation and dissemination of knowledge.

As the 1990s drew to an end, the concept of “pure” bibliographers, subject specialists whose sole responsibility was collection development and management, began to fade as libraries of all types placed emphasis on outreach and liaison roles within the context of subject responsibilities. Conversely, many librarians (reference librarians and technical services librarians) who had not selected materials and managed collections were assigned these responsibilities.

Responsibilities for managing e-content (books, journals, indexes and abstracting sources, reference materials, media, archival materials, etc.) continued to expand in the twenty-first century. The number of e-journals was estimated to be between 25,000 and 50,000 in 2007, with libraries spending an average of 35 percent of their acquisitions budgets on electronic products and services.83 The proliferation of e-resources is changing the nature of collection development. Research conducted in 2003 by Daniel G. Dorner verified that the levels of responsibility and time spent on activities related to digital resources had increased compared to five years previous.84 Keeping track of these contracts and licenses, their renewal dates, terms and conditions, and access and copyright restrictions has become overwhelming for collection development librarians and serials staffs. Several libraries initially developed in-house, stand-alone tools, now called electronic resources management (ERM) systems, to manage licenses, but these required duplicate data entry and were seldom linked to existing automated library systems. Soon, commercial vendors began offering turnkey systems, often integrated with integrated library systems or subscription agent services.

The proliferation of e-journals led to the development of link resolvers, which provide context-sensitive links between indexing databases and the electronic full text in both aggregated databases and online publisher sites.
This technology links catalog users directly to the e-resource from within the catalog with a single click. Many link resolvers come packaged as a suite of services that include searchable A–Z e-journal lists, e-journal title collection tools, and MARC record services. The combination of these tools allows librarians to manage access to their full-text resources centrally and can help them make electronic full-text collection decisions.

Link resolvers are part of the emphasis on bringing together through a single interface, portal, or federated search mechanism the ability to locate, identify, and access all the resources selected by librarians. The goal is to aggregate content or information about content for local library users. Selecting this content and these sources is often the responsibility of collection development librarians, who continue to select resources appropriate to a particular user community. Enterprise-level solutions such as Primo (from ExLibris) and Endeca aim to facilitate discovery and delivery of institutional resources and materials from different types of collections (digital and print, local and online) through one user interface. They can provide librarians with the ability to select repositories and websites to be harvested or crawled while normalizing and enriching data harvested from various applications. By combining targeted web crawling and collocation in a single catalog-like solution, these systems can be powerful collection development tools.

Digitization projects and the preservation of digitized and born-digital content are a pervasive theme of the twenty-first century. In 2001, the Research Libraries Group and OCLC issued a joint report, “Attributes of a Trusted Digital Repository: Meeting the Needs of Research Resources,” and conversation continues about the long-term persistence of digital content. Libraries are moving from small, boutique digitization projects to coherent collections containing print resources digitized for preservation and access. Defining a sound and consistent plan for digitizing content owned by the library is often the responsibility of collection development librarians. Google’s move into mass digitization in December 2004 may be the biggest story for collection development so far in this century. Google began the project by announcing partnerships with the University of Michigan, Harvard University, Stanford University, the University of Oxford, and the New York Public Library through which approximately fifteen million volumes will be digitized. The project plans to digitize all library holdings, including copyrighted works. Since the initial announcement, other libraries in the United States and abroad have joined the project. Publisher and author associations quickly challenged through the courts Google’s plans to digitize titles still under copyright. Google’s project spurred a group led by Yahoo to begin a parallel project, the Open Content Alliance (www.opencontentalliance.org), to digitize works in the public domain and make them freely available.

Simultaneously, academic libraries have begun developing institutional repositories to collect and preserve the intellectual output of their parent institutions.
in digital format. Called digital depositories, repositories, and conservancies and most often located at academic institutions, these digital libraries contain electronic versions of published research journal articles by institutional faculty, along with other digital assets created at the institution; these can include administrative documents, course notes, learning objects and other education materials, numeric and other forms of born-digital research data, multimedia (audio, video, etc.) products, and theses. These repositories are intended as archives to store and preserve digital assets and to provide open access within the institution to these resources. Collection development librarians and archivists generally have an important role in identifying and securing content and in encouraging faculty members to deposit their publications and research.

Summary

The theory and practice of collection development and management have their origins in the selection of materials for library acquisition. In early U.S. libraries, a combination of limited budgets and a small volume of publications caused selection per se to receive little attention. Decisions about what to acquire were in the hands of faculty and trustee boards for colleges and universities, trustees and library boards for public libraries, and school boards, trustees, and school superintendents for school libraries. As acquisitions budgets and the amount of material being published increased and librarianship developed as a profession in the second half of the nineteenth century, selection responsibilities shifted to librarians in public libraries. After the Second World War, the same transition occurred in large academic libraries. Simultaneously, the shift to shared responsibility between librarians and faculty members for developing college library collections began. The move to selection by librarians for school libraries began earlier—in the 1920s.

A tension between collecting as much as possible and collecting only the best and most appropriate has been a constant feature of library selection. This is coupled with defining what is good and appropriate and balancing user demand against librarians’ perception of value. Public librarians have struggled with the place of popular fiction in their collections and how to fulfill their mission as a public institution, funded to serve the public interest. Much early theory of selection for public libraries focused on the responsibilities of libraries to lead their readers to the “better” works. In the twentieth century, librarians began to consider the implications of intentional and unintentional censorship and libraries’ responsibilities for guaranteeing intellectual freedom and the right to read what one wishes. Librarians began to strive for broad and even coverage in collections. Balancing immediate need and long-term responsibilities to develop collections remains a troubling issue.
Collection development and management as a specialty can be traced to the 1970s, when professional associations, conferences and institutes, and professional literature began focusing on a variety of collections responsibilities in addition to selecting materials. Collection development and management are now understood to include selection; the determination and coordination of selection policy; assessment of the needs of users and potential users; collection use studies; collection analysis; budget management; identification of collection needs; community and user outreach and liaison; planning for resource sharing; decisions about weeding, storage, and preservation; and the organization and assignment of responsibilities for its practice.

Tremendous and continuing growth in worldwide publications, rapidly inflating prices for information in all formats, and library budgets unable to accommodate either have stressed libraries and collections librarians since the late 1970s. Simultaneously, deteriorating print collections are requiring decisions about appropriate preservation expenditures within already strained budgets. These pressures have been compounded by the electronic information explosion and associated legal issues and concerns about preservation and perpetual access. User expectations about the services, collections, and access that libraries should provide are profoundly affecting collection development and management.

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- Marketing, and many more

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