Culling Your Collection: The Fine Art of Weeding

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Agenda

- About me
- Why weed?
- Understanding CREW (Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding)
- Creating your plan
- Policies
- Wrap-up
Why weed?

- Space
  - Limited shelving
  - Increased customer use areas
  - Closing branches/units
- Time
  - User time finding materials
  - Staff time finding and shelving materials

Why weed?

- Appeal
  - “Weeding is merchandising”
- Reputation
  - Reliability and currency
Why weed?

- Collection needs
  - Replace or repair damaged items
  - Missing or stolen items
- Collection strengths and weaknesses
  - Aware of direction for future purchases
  - More familiarity with collection as a whole

CREW

- Texas State Libraries and Archives Commission:
  http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/pubs/crew/
- Continuous
- Review,
- Evaluation, and
- Weeding
CREW formula

- CREW gives guidelines for currency of subject matter and circulation
  - General rule for publics: **80% of what has not circulated in 3 years can be discarded**
- Three part formula
  - Years since latest copyright date
  - Maximum permissible time without usage
  - MUSTIE

MUSTIE

- Misleading
- Ugly
- Superseded
- Trivial
- Irrelevant
- Elsewhere
Elsewhere

- Interlibrary loan
- Reciprocal borrowing
- Electronic format
- Collaborative collection development
  - Consortia
  - Multi-site/branch library

Nonfiction

- Dewey numbers for public libraries
  - Special considerations for subject ranges
- Subject selection areas for academic libraries
  - As academic programs change, materials should evolve
  - Work with faculty as needed
Sample formulas

- 004 (Computers)
  - 3/X/MUSTIE
  - “Works on computers are seldom useful after three years. Works on hardware and software have an even shorter life span (1-2 years), but may be kept on hand longer if there is strong community demand…”

- 520 (Space and Astronomy)
  - 5/3/MUSTIE
  - “Major changes have occurred, so weed titles that include Pluto as a planet or that don’t include information on the space station and Mars expeditions. Stargazing books may be retained longer but should be attractive and mention relevant technology.”
Fiction and biography

- Biography
  - Look for outdated materials for persons of ongoing interest, living or dead
  - Look for gender and race bias

- Fiction
  - Circulation
  - Series

- Easy reader / JF / YAF
  - Use MUSTIE factors for J, currency for YA

Sample formulas

- F (Fiction)
  - X/2/MUSTIE
  - “For most public libraries, circulation is the primary factor for weeding fiction. Discard works no longer in demand, especially second and third copies of past bestsellers. Retain works that are in demand and/or of high literary merit, but replace worn copies with new editions…”
Sample formulas

- B or 92 or 920 (Biography)
  - X/3/MUSTIE
  - “Unless the person treated is of permanent interest or importance, such as a U.S. President, discard a biography as soon as demand lessens. Replace biographies of people of ongoing interest with newer titles, at least once a decade, as interpretation of their lives and public perception of their impact will change over time […] Ruthlessly weed ghost written biographies of celebrities and biographies that were published immediately following the person’s death or a major scandal.”

Multimedia

- WORST (Worn out, Out of date, Rarely used, Supplied elsewhere, or Trivial or faddish)
- Popularity
- Usage
- Condition
- Available in another format
  - Videocassette > DVD > BluRay > Downloadables
The reference question

- Print or electronic?
- Review usage of standing orders and subscriptions
- Track in-house use
- Transfer to circulating, or combine collections

What would you do?

- The Lives of Danielle Steel: The Unauthorized Biography of America’s #1 Best-Selling Author, 1994
  - It’s a great read – her life is like one of her novels
  - Son committed suicide in 1997
  - Out of print
  - Still circulating
  - Over 1,600 holdings in WorldCat
Project planning

- Staff time and affected departments
  - Include faculty or subject specialists as needed
- Procedures and guidelines
  - Forms – withdraw, repair, reorder, etc.
  - Use of book lists and union catalogs
  - Who will settle disagreements?
- Create a realistic timetable

Start small

- Take one shelf in a “collection” area (Dewey, LC, etc.)
- Look at condition of items
- Look for items that have been superseded
- Look at circulation stats of items
- Is it available elsewhere?
Policies

- Must have policies for de-selection, weeding, disposal, disposition, etc.
- Stewardship of funding
- Customer/faculty relations issues
- Ties into gift policy
  - Bad PR possible when donated items are withdrawn

Sample policies – CREW

- “Materials that no longer meet the stated objectives of the library […] will be systematically withdrawn […] Disposal of withdrawn library materials will be at the discretion of the library director.”
- “Gifts are gratefully and willingly accepted as long as no restriction is placed upon their use and disposition.”
Sample policies – SCCCLD

- “Professionally adequate information management also requires the timely removal of materials from the St. Charles-City County Library District’s collection which have become dated or are for other reasons no longer considered suitable for retention […] The disposition of library materials which have been removed on the basis of accepted professional practices shall be at the discretion of the Director.”

- “The St. Charles City-County Library District accepts material donations with the understanding that any material that the library cannot use may be discarded following accepted practices and established procedures.”

Sample policies – IUPU Fort Wayne

- “De-selection of library materials, the process of removing items from the collection, is essential for the maintenance of an active, academically useful library collection. De-selection provides quality control for the collection by elimination of outdated, inaccurate, and worn-out materials. Librarians are responsible for conducting an ongoing de-selection effort in consultation with faculty in their areas of collection responsibility and for maintaining the quality of the collection. The same guidelines used for selection of library materials provide the underlying principles for de-selection.”
Options for disposal

- Friends of the Library book sales
- Resellers
  - B-Logistics, now Universal Anthanaeum

Weeding humor

Wrap-up

- Make a commitment
- Have short term and long term plans
- Use professional judgment
- Document your choices
- Update policies and procedures as needed

Additional resources

- ALCTS Collection Management and Development Section (CMDS)
- AcqWeb’s Directory of Collection Development Policies on the Web
  http://www.acqweb.org/cd_policy.html
Suggested reading


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Questions?

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