Purdue University
Purdue e-Pubs

Charleston Library Conference

Wasted Words?: Current Trends in Collection Development Policies

Matt Torrence
University of South Florida, torrence@usf.edu

Audrey Powers
University of South Florida, apowers@usf.edu

Megan Sheffield
University of South Florida, msheffield@usf.edu

Maureen James
University of Arkansas - Little Rock, mejames@ualr.edu

Donna K. Rose
University of Arkansas - Little Rock, dkrose@ualr.edu

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/charleston

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

An indexed, print copy of the Proceedings is also available for purchase at: http://www.thepress.purdue.edu/series/charleston.

You may also be interested in the new series, Charleston Insights in Library, Archival, and Information Sciences. Find out more at: http://www.thepress.purdue.edu/series/charleston-insights-library-archival-and-information-sciences.

Presenter Information

Matt Torrence, Audrey Powers, Megan Sheffield, Maureen James, Donna K. Rose, Carol I. Macheak, and John R. Warrick

Wasted Words?: Current Trends in Collection Development Policies: Part 1

Matt Torrence, Assistant Librarian, Business and Engineering, University of South Florida, Tampa Library
Audrey Powers, Associate Librarian, Arts, University of South Florida, Tampa Library
Megan Sheffield, Assistant Librarian, Natural Sciences, University of South Florida, Tampa Library

Abstract

The transition to electronic resources and the changing role of the collection development librarian are having a tremendous impact on the manner by which libraries select and acquire new materials. The goal of this research project was to further elucidate the current trends of collection development policies in members of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) as well as gauge current use and future efficacy. The survey was designed and sent to librarians responsible for collection development at university-affiliated ARL libraries in order to obtain a current picture of academic collection development policies, and how they are changing due to the abundance of electronic resources and new methods of data-driven acquisitions.

The goals of the survey are to

- Measure the continued use of CD policies as major collection-building tools;

- Assess the frequency of updates to collection development policies;

- Determine the availability of collection development policies;

- Measure and compare the amount of time available to librarians to review and select new materials;

- Determine if print materials are being reviewed in new and innovative ways or if they receive the same assessment as electronically formatted materials;

- Measure the employment of data or patron-driven acquisition methods.

The findings will require additional assessment, but the data does seem to indicate a time of change in the way academic libraries complete and assess their primary collection development activities. This survey was created, at least in part, with the hope of setting a starting point for continued evaluation and longitudinal measurement. If our survey participants are as actively helpful in future years, these dreams of cyclical assessment may well come to fruition.

Survey Planning and Dissemination

The major goals and elements of this survey, as well as the resulting data, stem from previous research by this group of authors. The initial work was presented at the 2011 Charleston Conference and appears in the proceedings as "Something's Gotta Give: Is There a Future for the Collection Development Policy?" With this effort, the focus was the examination of the environment and landscape of collection development/ management, with special attention to the primary questions mentioned in the abstract. Following a thorough review of the literature and various best practices, the time arrived to collect original data on these topics. Following the presentation in November of 2011, the researchers set forth to expand the project.

The Association of Research Libraries appeared the logical place to set the bar, and their collection of 125 research libraries proved an attractive target. The authors decided, however, that the focus of this initial survey would be only those libraries associated with the 112 public and private colleges and universities, excluding other library-type members (Smithsonian Institution Libraries, New York Public Library, National Library

of Medicine, etc.). With this respondent population in mind, the survey design was initiated. The 27 items that form the survey are roughly broken up into six basic question types:

- Demographic & Quantitative—(questions 1–11)

- Organizational—(questions 12–13)

- Collection Policies & Management—(questions 14–23)

- Assessment Inquiries—(questions 24–26)

- Qualitative Response—(question 27)

The following important items have been copied directly from the 2011 work, but help to set the tone and keep in mind the important motivating factors of this effort:

The conspectus model, long the standard of proactive and well-planned collection building, may not apply directly to the other important facets of developing and maintaining a research-rich library. To put it more succinctly, is there a future for the collection development policy? A few moments pondering this question leads to other discussion points related to this exploration:

- Do the changes in format and economics require policies that address these shifts?

- If policies remain integral to building collections, does the continued effective use of this type of document require minor tweaks, or massive changes?

- Is the conspectus model relevant/upgradeable?

- Can we use new and other tools to supplement, or replace current policy formats (i.e., comparative tools, such as *WorldCat Collection Analysis* and *GoldRush*)?

- What types of policies or methods are needed for balanced collections? For collections of distinction?

As libraries budget with increasing care and forward planning, the collection development policy will continue to have value. As demonstrated by the literature, however, wholesale changes in other parts of the environment certainly require another look at updating or replacing the conspectus model. Some universities, such as Vanderbilt University Medical Center, the University of Virginia Health System, and the Northwestern University Health Sciences Library have moved to collection "philosophies." What makes these documents different (and does it make them better)? Many libraries, including University of South Florida, have also developed overall collection development policies that espouse the overall goals and guidelines for all elements of the collection. Perhaps the value of these documents will increase as crossover and package deals rise in popularity.

With these tenets in mind and the above organization of the survey, the next step involved was the relatively simple (but amazingly time consuming) goal of finding the name, title, and contact information for the appropriate collection development person(s) at each of the recipient institutions. While collecting this information, decisions were made regarding language for initial distribution of the survey, as well as preceding invitations (one issued) and follow-up reminders (two were sent). The survey itself, attached hereto as "Appendix A", includes much of the standard language meant to educate the hopeful respondents about our affiliation and our goals.

The survey was eventually distributed on July 17, 2012. Reminders were distributed on August 9, 2012, and August 29, 2012. It was closed on August 31, 2012, and the authors began an immediate review of the data. Of the 112 libraries invited to participate, 53 (47.3%) completed the survey. The following paragraphs outline the statistical, anecdotal, and other findings. In many cases, these results will be framed by their relationship to the use of collection policies, the maintenance of these documents, and the motivation for their creation and upkeep.

Summary of Demographic and Quantitative Findings

Of the institutions surveyed, 77.4% were public and 22.6% were private. The fall 2011 FTE enrollment was over 10,000 for 92.5% of these, which puts them in the Carnegie classification for large four-year institutions. As might be expected, libraries at large campuses, most (86.8%, Q4) have collections budgets over $6 million.

The general setup of collection development at these universities seems to use subject specialists (Q7, 86.5%) with a general CD policy (Q5, 84.6%) that each spend a minority of their time on development activities (Q8, 32.1% spend 1–20% of their time on CD; 35.8% spend 20–40% of their

respondents with one library having two dedicated librarians conducting collection development 80–100% of their time.

Summary of Organizational, Policy, and Assessment Findings

A majority of the data was useful and educational, but Figure 1 shows some of the highlights from this portion of the survey results.

It appears that many libraries still engage in the traditional activities, but patron-driven acquisitions (PDA) and demand-driven acquisitions (DDA) are also part of the new norm (Q12).
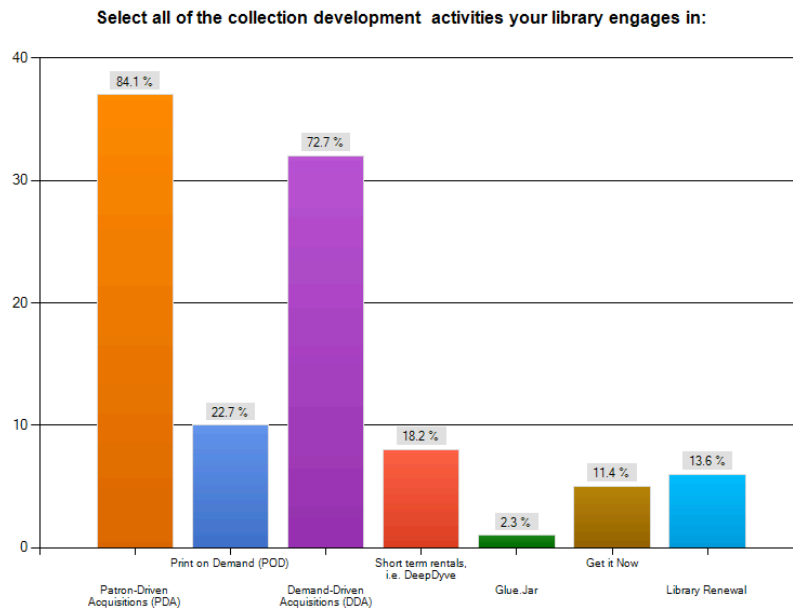

Select all of the collection development activities your library engages in:

Figure 1. Collection Development Activities

time on CD). They generally do not have consortia CD policies (Q6, 69.2%). Of their general-use CD policies, most review it every 1–5 years (Q9, 20.8%) or every 5–10 years (13.2%). About half (Q11, 54.7%) of these policies are available to the public online, with the other half being split between internal use only, available on request, or only partial CD policies available to the public.

The percentage of time allotted for CD activities varies greatly (Q8) from 0–70% for most library

However, the comments indicated that the libraries preferred the use of traditional collection development methodologies such as using approval plans and direct ordering from YBP. This clearly indicates that we are in a transition between using standard methodologies (not willing to let go, yet) and experimenting with new methodologies (PDA, DDA), but not willing or able to truly experiment with everything that is available (Glue.Jar, Get It Now, etc.).

Does your library have a collection development policy for the entire library collection?
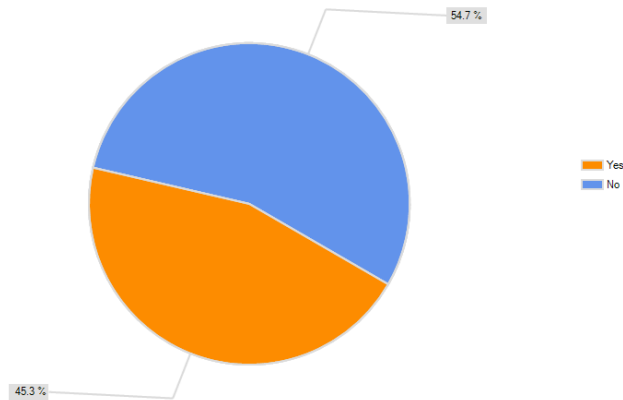

Figure 2. General CD Policy vs. Specialized Policies

As can be seen in Figure 2, responses were evenly split on the topic of policies for the whole collection (Q14). The authors found this even split to be fascinating, and there is reason to hope that future measurements will provide long-term information on this topic and any changes in the general ratio. At the University of South Florida, Tampa Library, there is a general and overarching policy. With increasing bundled and

consortia purchases, tracking the use of umbrella and general policies will be integral to collection management.

ARL members were also split down the middle when it came to having separate policies for each discipline: 48.1% said yes, and 51.9% said no (Q16). The numbers go up, however, for policies related to specific collections. A large majority
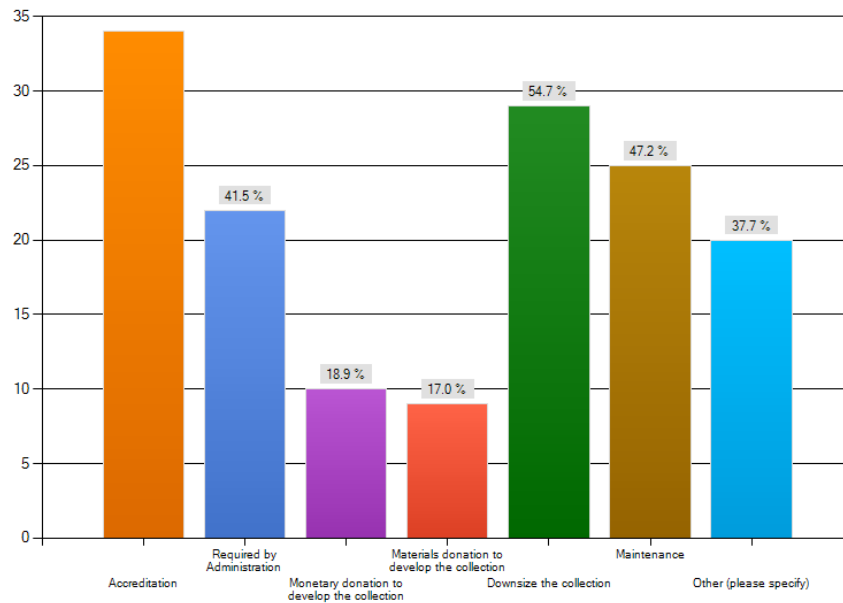

Figure 3. Collection Analysis and Assessment

(76.5%) have subject and collection specific policies (Q17). A large majority of respondents indicated they did not have a separate policy for electronically formatted materials (78.0%, Q19) or for all electronic resources (92.2%, Q20).

Most libraries conduct a collection analysis for accreditation, weeding, or maintenance (Q24). This helped to form additional interest with the researchers regarding the use of and motivation for the modern collection development policy. The major inspirations continue to be the necessity of accreditation and the use of the tool for marketing to faculty and researchers. When performing an analysis of the collection, most libraries rely on reports (83.0%) and the librarians' knowledge of their subject areas (86.8%). About a third of respondents (39.6%) rely on *WorldCat* Collection Analysis reports specifically (Q25). In the comments section, 22 responses of which five libraries indicated they conducted a collection analysis to enhance and improve the collection, five libraries indicated it was used for decision making; two indicated it was for budget constraints, two indicated the librarians choose to do it to increase their knowledge of the collection, three indicated they did it when it was perceived as needed, and three other responses included scholarly statistics, grant proposals and user communication in general (motivation).

In an attempt to understand the organizational structure of collection development in relation to Technical Services, an open-ended question (Q13) queried the respondents about the role of Technical Services in the collection development process. Of the 39 comments received, eight responses indicated that Technical Services and Collection Development function in the same service group/department, 30 responses indicated that Technical Services and Collection Development are separate departments and functions, and two respondents did not answer the question.

Conclusions

Are CD policies being used?

Although the answer to this question might seem very straightforward from the responses to Q5

(Does your library use CD policies, 84.6% yes, 15.4% no), further responses paint a different picture. Although most of the libraries surveyed do have collection development policies, they appear to use them for a wide range of activities such as accreditation and communication, and the policies themselves vary widely in their scope and currency.

When asked about the availability of CD policies (Q11), the respondents were split evenly; some of the policies, or parts of a specific policy, are available externally (on the web) and some are not available externally (discipline specific policies).

Are CD policies being maintained?

It is not clear whether CD policies (as a whole) are being maintained. Certainly there were some survey respondents who indicated their policies were updated (or at least reviewed) annually, and some had specific policies for different subject areas or formats. However, the majority indicated that CD policies were only revisited about once every 5 years, and a majority of the respondents did not have CD policies dedicated to specific formats (e-journals, databases, e-books, etc.). However, this may not be indicative of a lack of maintenance to the CD policies, but rather that libraries are taking a more holistic view of collection development and trying to move beyond format-specific issues. In other words, they are trying to focus on what makes an item suitable for the collection content-wise rather than format-wise.

There seem to be two different ways that CD policies are being used as seen in the responses to Q26 (Figure 4). The first category, which got more responses, is for faculty and administrative communications. This would include such activities as explaining library purchasing decisions to those outside the library. The second use is more internal—policies can be used for collection analysis and weeding. The internal/external split in these uses indicates that CD policies lead a double life: their obvious purpose (guiding the development of the collection) is sometimes secondary to their usefulness as marketing tools.
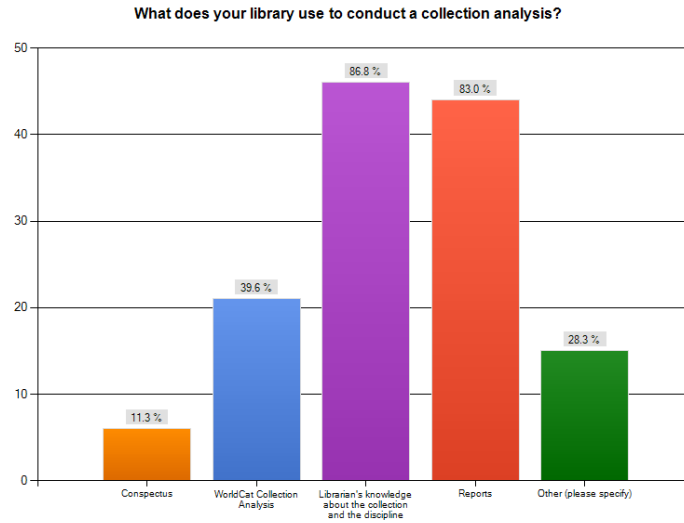
Figure 4. Methods of Conducting Collection Analysis

The results of any data-gathering experience always raise more questions, but a good deal of baseline information has been established on the current use and creation of collection development policies in academic libraries. A majority of the respondents are utilizing these documents and the information contained therein to guide the collections, as well as to market to faculty, satisfy accreditation and reporting requirements, and other standard functions.

A majority of the respondents continue to engage in traditional collection development activities, but also appear to be transitioning toward newer models of collection development. Updating collection development policies to reflect these changes appears to be a measured process. As the cost for print and electronic formats continue to rise, library budgets stay the same or decrease, and technology continues to change the collection development landscape. The authors believe that the collection development "philosophy" may be a more holistic response to the changing nature of the collection development environment.

In order to expand and continue this project, the authors intend to produce a more detailed and thorough study of the findings, including an
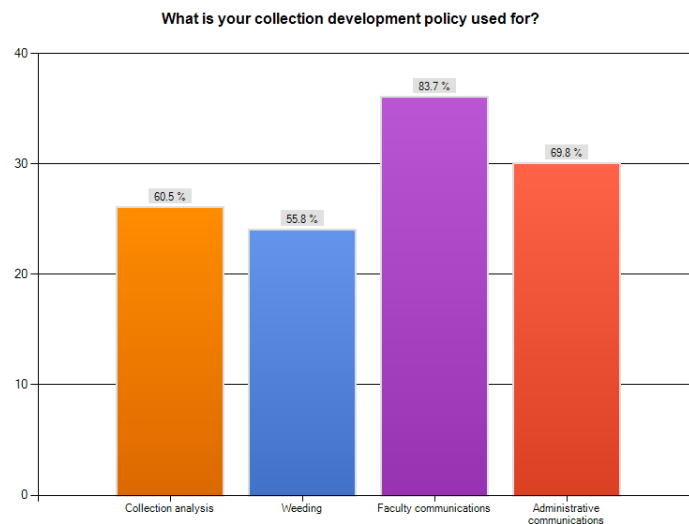

Figure 5. Methods of Conducting Collection Analysis

updated and comprehensive literature review. Also in place are plans for follow-up communication with participant libraries that wish to know more about the data gathered, as well as opportunities for their collaboration and contribution. In addition, the research team will use the further analysis to develop another survey for future distribution and evaluation.

References

Bracke, M. S., Hérubel, J. -P. V. M., & Ward, S. M. (2010). Some thoughts on opportunities for collection development librarians. *Collection Management, 35*(3–4), 255–259.

Douglas, C. S. (2011). Revising a collection development policy in a rapidly changing environment. *Journal of Electronic Resources in Medical Libraries, 8*(1), 15–21.

Eskind Biomedical Library. *Collection development philosophy.* Retrieved from http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/diglib/collections/collectiondevelopment.html

Horava, T. (2010). Challenges and possibilities for collection management in a digital age. *Library Resources & Technical Services, 54*(3), 142–152.

Nabe, J. (2010). What's next for collection management and managers? *Collection Management, 36*(1), 3–16.

Richard, S. (1996). Wasted words: The written collection development policy and the academic library. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 22*(3), 191–194. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0099-1333(96)90057-9

This brief survey is intended to gather information about how ARL libraries are currently conducting collection development activities.

If you would like a copy of the results, please provide an e-mail address at the end of the

survey. Thank you for taking the time to respond to this survey.

1. Is your university a public or private institution?

- Public
- Private

2. What was the fall 2011 FTE enrollment at your institution?

- Fewer than 1,000 degree-seeking students
- 1,000 - 2,999 degree-seeking students
- 3,000 - 9,999 degree-seeking students
- At least 10,000 degree-seeking students

3. What is the total acquisition expenditures for the academic year 2011-2012?

- < 1,000,000.00
- 1,000,000.00 - 2,000,000.00
- 2,000,000.00 - 3,000,000.00
- 3,000,000.00 - 4,000,000.00
- > 4,000,000.00

4. What is the total amount of money allocated for the collections budget?

- Less than 2 million USD
- 2 million - 4 million USD
- 4 million - 6 million USD
- Over 6 million

5. Does your library currently use collection development policies?

- Yes
- No

Academic Library Survey: Collection Development Policies

6. If your library is a member of a consortia, does the consortia have a collection development policy?

- Yes

- No

7. Are the collection developers at your library subject specialists?

- Yes

- No

8. Approximately what percentage of time is allotted for collection development activities for each librarian?

- 0 % - 20 %

- 20 % - 40 %

- 40 % - 60 %

- 60 % - 80 %

- 80 % - 100 %

- Other (please specify)

  [   ]

9. How frequently is your collection development policy reviewed?

- Every year

- 1 - 5 years

- 5 - 10 years

- 10 - 20 years

- As Needed

- Other (please specify)

  [   ]

10. How frequently is your collection development policy updated?

- Annually
- 1 - 5 years
- 5 - 10 years
- 10 - 20 years
- As Needed
- Other (please specify)

    [   ]

11. Is your library's collection development policy available:

- For public access (on the web)
- For internal use only
- Upon request
- N/A
- Other (please specify)

    [   ]

12. Select all of the collection development activities your library engages in:

- Patron-Driven Acquisitions (PDA)
- Print on Demand (POD)
- Demand-Driven Acquisitions (DDA)
- Short term rentals, i.e. DeepDyve
- Glue.Jar
- Get it Now
- Library Renewal

Other (please specify)

[   ]

13. At your library, what is the role of Technical Services in the collection development process?

[   ]

14. Does your library have a collection development policy for the entire library collection?

　Yes

　No

15. Does your library have separate collection development policies for branch libraries?

　Yes

　No

　For some of them

　N/A

16. Does your library have a separate collection development policy for each discipline?

　Yes

　No

17. Does your library have a separate collection development policy for each collection?

　Yes

　No

18. Does your library have a separate collection development policy for each format?

　Yes

　No

19. Does your library have a separate collection development policy for electronic resources?

　Yes

　No

20. Does your library have a separate collection development policy for all electronic resources?

　Yes

　No

21. Does your library have a separate collection development policy for e-Books?

　Yes

　No

Academic Library Survey: Collection Development Policies

22. Does your library have a separate collection development policy for e-Journals?

Yes

No

23. Does your library have a separate collection development policy for databases?

Yes

No

24. Under what circumstances does your library conduct a collection analysis?

Accreditation

Required by Administration

Monetary donation to develop the collection

Materials donation to develop the collection

Downsize the collection

Maintenance

Other (please specify)

25. What does your library use to conduct a collection analysis?

Conspectus

WorldCat Collection Analysis

Librarian's knowledge about the collection and the discipline

Reports

Other (please specify)

26. What is your collection development policy used for?

Collection analysis

Weeding

Faculty communications

Administrative communications

Other (please specify)

Academic Library Survey: Collection Development Policies

27. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

28. If you would like to receive the survey results, please provide an e-mail address.

Wasted Words? Current Trends in Collection Development Policies: Part 2

Maureen James, Collection Development Librarian, University of Arkansas at Little Rock Ottenheimer Library
Donna Rose, Head of Cataloguing, University of Arkansas at Little Rock Ottenheimer Library
Carol I. Macheak, Head of Reference, University of Arkansas at Little Rock Ottenheimer Library
John R. Warrick, Acquisitions, University of Arkansas at Little Rock Ottenheimer Library

The Ottenheimer Library at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) is one academic library that is rewriting and revising its collection development policy. Important factors in the decision to resurrect its policy include: restructuring of the acquisitions and collection development departments, the decentralization of selection responsibilities, and recommendations emerging from strategic planning discussions and projects. The existing document, written 14 years ago, did not address guidelines for collecting electronic resources or for collecting in subject areas. At that time, the library selected few electronic resources and the University catered primarily to undergraduates. Changes in the university's mission and the publishing landscape, along with strategic planning by the library and the university have ignited interest in revisiting the collection development policy. Moreover, the library subscribes to the view that collection development policies "are an effective communication tool for summarizing collection priorities, initiatives, goals, and cooperative agreements" (Pickett, 2011 p. 166).

In November 2011, the library dean appointed the collection development policy group, a subcommittee of four librarians and one paraprofessional from cataloguing, collection development, acquisitions, and reference. The group's charge was to develop a series of guidelines that would

- Indicate priorities and establish selection criteria for subject collections,

- Serve as a planning tool,

- Serve as a guide to selectors,

- Serve as a communication tool for internal and external audiences.

The decision to rename the collection development documents from policy to guidelines was a result of the University of Arkansas mandate to reserve use of the word policy for official university documents. The group has worked for the last year reviewing the literature on collection development policies, collecting data on the university's degrees and programs, and reviewing other library's policies/guidelines. General themes emerging from the review of the literature include the need to write guidelines that are flexible, will be continuously updated, and that strike a balance between being overly detailed and too general (Johnson, 2009).

Based on the articles read and the sample policies/guidelines identified, the group has drafted seven sections, each addressing a significant aspect of collection development. Prior to writing these policies/guidelines the group engaged in considerable discussion of language, terminology, and the most effective way of communicating collection development activities to library and university faculty, staff, and students. These newly created policies/guidelines are brief, employ a minimum of library lingo, and outline clearly the library's authority and responsibilities for collections. They are designed to be web documents interlinked and easily updated. To view the documents go to http://ualr.edu/library/cd-guidelines/overview.

The next steps will be constructing subject guidelines for departments based on information gathered from UALR's Office of Institutional Research, college catalogs, and other campus documents. So far the group is developing a sample template which selectors will use to create their own subject profiles. Selectors will begin their work in early 2013.

There have been challenges in developing the policies/guidelines. The project is taking longer than expected. Writing the documents has been time consuming, and as with any project there is a delicate balancing act between doing project work and job-related activities.

So far, benefits from the process include:

- Development of an effective, cohesive team from different units in the library;

- Creation of current written CD policy/guidelines for current and future librarians and faculty liaisons;

- Increased knowledge of existing library collections and best practices of other libraries.

In summary, the Ottenheimer Library is firmly in the camp of those libraries that will continue to write policies/guidelines to guide our collection building and inform internal and external users. The task ahead is challenging because the library must continually review and update these documents. Failure to do so will mean that the library has wasted not just words but also time. This is unlikely to happen as the current library administration sees the development and maintenance of these documents as a viable option for librarians to inform each other and the communities they serve of the library's responsibilities and intentions in developing collection.

References

Bullis, D. R., & Smith, L. (2011). Looking back, moving forward in the digital age. *Library Resources and Technical Services, 55*, 205–220.

Corrigan, A. (2005). The collection policy reborn: A practical application of web-based documentation. *Collection Building*, *24*, 65–69. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01604950510592689

Douglas, C. S. (2011). Revising a collection development policy in a rapidly changing environment. *Journal of Electronic Resources in Medical Libraries, 8*(1), 15–21. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15424065.2011.551487

Horava, T. (2010). Challenges and possibilities for collection management in a digital age. *Library Resources & Technical Services*, *54*, 142–152.

Johnson, P. (2009). *Fundamentals of collection development and management*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

Kinner, L., & Crosetto, A. (2009). Balancing act for the future: How the academic library engages in collection development at the local and consortial levels. *Journal of Library Administration*, *49*, 419–437. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01930820902832561

Picket, C., Stephens, J., Kimball, R., Ramirez, D., Thornton, J., & Burford, N. (2011). Revisiting an abandoned practice: The death and resurrection of collection development policies. *Collection Management*, *36*, 165–181. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01462679.2011.580426

Powers, A. (2007). Reconfiguring collection development for the future. *Charleston conference proceedings 2007 (2006)*, 24–33.

Snow, R. (1996). Wasted words: The written collection development policy and the academic library. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, *22*, 191–194.