Introduction

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IN RECENT YEARS, collection development—the process of assessing the strengths and weaknesses in a library's collection with the idea of maintaining those strengths while redressing the weaknesses to make a better and more effective collection for the user—has changed both its emphasis and its title. For many, the words *collection management* have come to mean that process (combined with others) which stresses not the selection and choice in collection development but rather the maintenance and management of an existing collection. In the days when federal monies and other grants were readily available for library resources, selection of materials was the starting point for most programs of collection development. Little time and energy was spent on the management of that collection and even less time was spent on the evaluation of the materials that formed that collection once they were selected for inclusion.

Times have changed, and now emphasis is on maintaining the collection as well as building it. Since budgets have become so crucial, the selection of new material becomes much more difficult. Equally important is the idea that assessment of such items does not stop with their selection for the collection, but continues to be the focus of considerable effort even after the materials are in the library. Just as it has become increasingly urgent for us, as professionals, to evaluate all of the processes we go through in our daily work lives, evaluation of the

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collection also takes on enormous importance to all of us and to the profession as a whole.

Writers of the literature of collection development and management have clearly indicated these are a series of processes that the library and its professionals go through when materials enter and again when they leave the collection. The use of the term *collection management* as the overarching one, including all the processes involved, vies in the literature with the use of the term *collection development*. Which term should take precedence in the hierarchy and which should be subsumed under it, as far as can be determined by examination of published articles and other information sources, depends on one's frame of reference. In technical services parlance (i.e., the American Library Association's Resources and Technical Services Division committee in this area), the term *collection management* seems to be primary; while among reference and public services personnel, the term *collection development* seems to subsume all the individual selection, maintenance and management processes. However, it appears in the literature that both groups agree there is need for evaluation as part of the entire area. Although the importance of the process of evaluation is agreed upon by most of the field, what it entails, what is to be evaluated, when the evaluation is to take place, who is to do it, how it is to be done, and exactly what it means, are not so clear. Evaluation can apply to many things and as the papers in this issue will show, the ramifications of those questions are not limited by format, user, library, or method.

This issue originated during a debate on a summer vacation in the Berkshires, concerning the inherent importance of technical services (for the other side of the debate read "public services") in the process of collection development (management or what have you). We went on to discuss the methodologies and other contributions these two groups could bring to the field in general and collection evaluation specifically. After a few hours of boring those around us with our discussions, we decided to write companion pieces setting out the role of public services (read also "technical services") in collection evaluation. Soon we were discussing the publication of our articles. We wanted them to be together in a periodical which would also give room to the opinions of others in the field as well as discussing other topics in the area of collection evaluation. An issue of *Library Trends* devoted entirely to the subject seemed to provide the ideal vehicle; hence, the issue at hand. As is true of the companion pieces at the end of the issue setting out the differences in the roles of public services and technical services librarians to the process of collection evaluation, there are other bifurcations

within the field that will be immediately recognizable within the context of the papers in this issue and other ideas never before given formal presentation.

One of the first problems facing us was whether we should have articles about procedures of collection evaluation to illustrate the dichotomies of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Instead of articles on one or the other or both of these methods of evaluating library collections, we decided to let the individual authors decide on their particular affinity to a type of methodology, hoping that in the end there would be a fair distribution of papers dealing with both. And so there are. We have papers concerned with both the theory as well as the practice, and the literature already written as well as research and experimentation. In other words, something for everyone and perhaps something new for each of us.

The first article sets the tone for the issue by focusing on theoretical concepts of collection evaluation. It is titled "Collection Evaluation—Theory and the Search for Structure" by William E. McGrath. McGrath sets the stage for a searing indictment of the lack of theory in our field, and the need to search, if not for immutable laws governing the area, at least some structure on which we can rely as we carry on research. Rose Mary Magrill provides an in-depth look at "Evaluation by Type of Library" with a full literature search on the articles and research that have been done. Within each category, i.e., academic, public, school, and special, there are analyses of appropriate ways to do collection evaluation.

Highlighting "new" formats that libraries have begun to collect, there are two articles, the first by Barbara Rice, who reviews the literature concerning online databases and where they truly belong in the library. Here is a debate over the use of databases in reference as another tool to answer queries, or in the collection as one more item in the subject for patron use. Her article, "Evaluation of Online Databases and Their Use in Collections," is a thorough analysis of what has been done to date in this new field of study within the area of evaluation of materials. The second, by Jane Anne Hannigan, contains research into the evaluation and use of microcomputer software. A survey of practitioners to determine their approach to this medium and the depth of their involvement with it is reported in "The Evaluation of Microcomputer Software."

Tony Stankus also undertook a research study—an analysis of a sampling of reviews of monographic and journal literature in one of our primary selection tools—to see if there was a difference in evalua-

tors' criticisms of materials based on their format. In his article, "Looking for Tutors and Brokers: Comparing the Expectations of Book and Journal Evaluators," he reports the difference in treatment of these two formats by reviewers for *Choice*, and interprets the data to determine the reason.

Bill Katz, in "A Way of Looking At Things," sees the area of collection evaluation as an opportunity to give the most attention to the users of the collection. Lee Ash writes how he, as a reviewer of library material, executes the practical process of evaluation in his article "Old Dog; No Tricks: Perspectives in the Qualitative Analysis of Book Collections."

The issue closes with the companion pieces on the role of professional librarians in the collection evaluation process. Elizabeth Futas describes contributions from public service librarians in her article "The Role of Public Services in Collection Evaluation," and Sheila S. Intner does the same for technical service librarians in "Responsibilities of Technical Service Librarians to the Process of Collection Evaluation."