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# Reducing the Print, Repositioning the Electronic

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# **Reducing the Print; Repositioning the Electronic**

**Monique Andrews,**

**Mike Hawthorne,**

**Rhonda McGinnis**

**Wayne State University Library System**

# Fresh Look with a Fresh Outlook

## **The Purdy/Kresge Library Carpet Project:**

- Replace old, grungy carpet on first floor of P/K
- Everything must move for installation
- Opportunity to re-envision the public areas
  - More study space—individual & group
  - More open space—more light & better sight lines
  - Better service for microforms

# Before



# After



# Just an Ordinary Day at the Office

## **The Reference Collection Weeding Project**

- Wanted to reduce the footprint of the collection by at least several (4-6) ranges
  - Improve traffic flow
  - Improve visibility to & from Reference Desk
- Wanted to create room for some continued growth
- Wanted to improve quality of collection
- Needed to be accomplished in ~4 months

# Just-in-Case & Just-Because

## **The Purdy/Kresge Reference Collection:**

- Typical for a Research Library
- ~25 shelving ranges and more than 13,500 items
- Lacking a single focus
  - Each selector bought for their fields
  - No dedicated funds → feast or famine
- Uncoordinated Mix:
  - Research materials & ready reference sources
  - Academic & public library sources
  - Up-to-date & sorely out-of date
- Weeded from time to time with mixed success

# We'll Just Start with the A's . . .

## **The Initial Process:**

- Two Reference Coordinators alternating call letters
- Place unwanted volumes on carts
- Check catalog
- Determine new location
- Selectors review decisions
- Full, completed carts go to Materials Processing



# Here, There, & Everywhere

## **The Location Choices:**

- Circulating Collection
  - Better access for patrons
  - Available for MELCat & ILL
- “Building Use Only”
  - Mostly Multivolume sets
- Storage
  - Filled with Medical Library Collection
- Discard

# Snip, Snip, Snip

## Rules to Weed Reference Collections by:

- If the country no longer exists, its books are not Reference
- It doesn't matter if it's the latest edition we've got if the information is so old it REEKS!
- If it doesn't look like a Reference book, it isn't
- You can lead a patron to a print index but you can't make them search it.

There's a WHAT in my  
Reference Collection?!?!?

# Getting More Bang for the Buck

## **Removing the Large Sets:**

- Completed A through H
- Backlog of carts waiting for selectors approval
- Materials Processing looking for projects
- Generated spreadsheet for Reference Collection
- Identified multivolume sets throughout the collection to be removed
- E-mailed list to selectors for approval
- Materials Processing used approved list to pull sets at their own pace

# Seemed to be a Good Idea at the Time

## **First Significant Change in the Project:**

- Shiffman Medical Library being remodeled
- “Shopped” there for furniture for P/K
- Decided to integrate some short shelves into the Reference area along with the current tall ones
- BUT this meant that we needed to weed even more than originally intended

**So, went back to the A’s and started over**

# Shopping Trip



# Chop, Chop, Chop

## **A Few (More) Good Rules:**

- If one is good, 2 (or 3 or 4 . . . or 10) is NOT better
- If E-, why print?
- Who's Who? Who Cares!
- One Collection; One Language
- If it hasn't been used in the last 10 years, what makes you think its going to used in the next?

# The Other Shoe Drops

## **The Project Grows as the Shelving Shrinks:**

- Redesign Team presents its report to Dean Yee
- Favorable but wants more
  - Move all journals off of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor
  - Reduce number of Microform cabinets on 1<sup>st</sup> floor
  - Use nothing but short shelves in Reference
- Very limited number of them available
- Must weed yet another 50%
- Collection now moving into its temporary location

# Catching Our Breath

## Status as collection moved to temporary location:

- A through H—Three increasingly deep passes; looking really good
- J through L—One good pass & large sets removed; definitely more could be done
- M, N & P—Once over lightly & some large sets removed
- Q through W—Very limited collection to begin with & just the large sets removed
- The Dreaded Z's—Avoided like the plague except for large sets



# The Clock is Ticking

## **Time to develop a new weeding process:**

- Running out of time
- Running out of trucks & backlog of full ones in the Librarians' Office
- Selectors willing to trust coordinators decisions
- New Process:
  - Inserted colored flags to designate location & status
  - Left books on shelves
  - Books collected by Materials Processing using oversize custom built trucks

# Built Tough



# The Light Dawns

- The A's through the H's were as tight as they were going to get based on normal weeding practices & the present vision of the collection
- Just weeding J-Z to that level was not going to meet the allotted space
- Cutting deeper required a re-envisioning of the collection and its purpose
- Based on their experiences at Reference in various library setting & teaching in the LIS Program, the coordinators came to the realization that:

**Research is not Reference!!!!**

# The Scholar & His Tower

## **Scholarly Research has changed over recent years:**

- Fewer disciplines rely heavily on book or manuscripts
- More reliance on online indexes & full-text
- More research work done at home or in office
  - More copying of articles or book passages
  - Greater desire to check out books
  - More use of Interlibrary Loan/Document delivery
- Less need to visit distant libraries or special collections
- More self-reliance & less dependence on librarians

# The Information Superhighway

## **The Internet just does some things better:**

- Finding Books & Articles—Catalogs & Indexes
- Finding People, Places, & Things—Directories,
- Finding Facts & Figures—Almanacs & Data sets

## **Well designed & well maintained databases are:**

- Easier to search & manipulate
- More up-to-date
- More Readily Accessible
- Less costly in terms of space

# Phoenix from the Ashes

## **The Print Reference Collection of the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

- Supports brief periods of focused information gathering
- Focused on compact background information
- Comprised of sources that are a step above the generic internet tools
- Used with active assistance by the librarian as well as self directed browsing by the patron
- Overseen by one librarian with dedicated funds

# Turning Weeding on its Head

## **Looked at the Collection with new perspective:**

- Became a matter of almost starting from scratch
- No longer--what were we willing to take out
- What should we put into the collection
  - Good coverage across the disciplines
  - Adequate support for known reference assignments
  - “Cream of the crop” resources
  - Absolutely kept up-to-date
  - Faculty & other requests BUT only when meet the new vision for the REFERENCE Collection
- Actually became EASIER to let things go

# Slash, Slash, Slash

Books were practically FLYING off the shelves:

- Handbooks & companions in History & Literature
- Volumes of composer/instrument repertoires
- Art identification & collection tools
- Classic in-depth foreign language dictionaries
- Bilingual dictionaries of less common languages
- Resources w/very narrow or esoteric focuses
- Anything out-of-date even if it left the discipline completely uncovered



# The Fly in the Ointment

## **What to do with the sets of literary criticism?**

- CLC, TCLC, 19thCLC, DLB, CA, SatA, etc.
- Some parts online through Gale LRC but not all
- Volumes in Reference PLUS several other locations
- Oversize Collection & P ranges filled to capacity

## **Created new Literature Research Collection**

- United all volumes of each series in one location
- United all LitCrit Reference Tools in one location

# The Dreaded Z's

## **A working Reference Collection not an Outdated LIS laboratory**

- Banished the last of the obscure indexes & bibliographies to the stacks
- Got rid of the out-of-date ready reference sources
- Weeded out info on publishing industry & book trade
- Removed the DDC & Sear's Handbooks
- Relocated Reader's Advisory materials to stacks
- Discarded our last print edition of Books-in-Print
- Still needs some work

# Murphy's Law

## **Time to move the Collection back to its new shelves:**

- New Shelving units only hold 2 reference book sized shelves not the 3 that we were planning for
- Intended to feature a few sets on top of the units
- Now had to use the tops more aggressively
- Found a couple of other creative solutions to house the special reference collections

# Hey, the Dean Was Right!

## **The short shelves greatly improved the look & functionality of the space**

- Project turned out WAY better than anyone expected
- Librarians were very pleased with the new collection
- Much more usable by patrons & librarians
- Librarians rediscovered the joys of print reference materials—makes for an attractive setting
- Could really see the individual resources
- Could see the gaps in the collection
- Got end-of-the-year money to address the gaps

## By the Numbers--

- Initially, envisioned as a 4 month project
- Ended up taking 8 months
- Started with 13,320 items and 60+ doubled-sided, full-size shelving units plus 10 double-sided, half-sized units
- Finished with 2525 items and ~20 double-sided, half-size units
- Total reduction of the collection of 81%

# Success Breeds Success

## **The Microform Collection**

- Moved ~1/2 into the Reference Area—better service
- Moved ~1/2 into closed room to be paged
- Sea of large black cabinets overwhelmed in the area
- Purchased several historical newspapers online

## **The Reference Area Redesign**

- New Funds found for brand new Reference Desk & patron terminal furniture

# Picking up the Pace

## **Increased purchases of e-reference materials**

- With newly focused Reference Collection received new monies to purchase online Reference tools
- This was a new focus for our online databases
- Impressed with new purchasing model available from vendor
- Bought new items based on:
  - Gaps uncovered in weeding
  - Absolutely up-to-date volumes
  - Did not replace a current print volume

# The Next Thorny Issue

Mishmash of electronic reference tools finding aides

- Reference Tools Pages
- Subject Guides
- Cataloged Resources
- Articles & Databases Pages
- E-Book Collections
- Free Government Information Sources—Some Cataloged but some not



# Reinventing the E-wheel

Developing a coherent and flexible tool to make e-reference tools visible:

- New “Reference Ebooks Subject Guide”
- Aimed at Librarians and LIS Students
- Arranged by LC Class to enhance browsing
- Good feedback BUT—Some Librarians preferred:
  - Broader Categories
  - Narrower Categories
  - Self-Defined Categories
  - Type of tool Categories

## Subject Guide on Electronic Reference Books

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### B - Philosophy (General)

[Concise Dictionary of Psychology](#)

David Statt

Print version call number BF 31 .S62 1998

[Dictionary of Psychology](#)

Andrew M. Colman

[Dictionary of Superstitions](#)

Iona Opie and Moira Tatem

[Dictionary of Theories, Laws, and Concepts in Psychology](#)

Jon E. Roedelein

Print version call number BF31 .R625 1998

[Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

10 volume set

# This Is Not the End

Continuing efforts to market the e-Collection:

- Position information from e-Reference Guide on discipline-focused Subject Guides
- Encouraging selectors to consider purchasing e-versions of newly released reference tools or to address certain assignment needs
- Promoting these tools in library instruction sessions
- Training for Reference staff
- Teaching these tools in Library Science
- Continue dialogue with vendors of these tools

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