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Imagine More Space in Your Library! Weeding Bound Periodicals

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Background

What do you do when your library is running out of space, you need room for an ambitious new information commons, other departments are taking over library real estate at a rapid rate, and study dens are popping up like mushrooms? Not to mention, bound periodicals were already running out of space, and all of these things were going to be located on the prime real estate of the first floor, the current home of the bound periodicals.

Our answer at Texas A&M University-Commerce Libraries was to weed the bound periodical collection, but how to start? About two years prior to the project detailed in this paper, the Library weeded journals in packages with archival coverage, including JSTOR and ScienceDirect. This was a relatively easy pilot weeding project that highlighted steps needed for a future full-scale weed. For that pilot, a list was created based on the titles held by the library in JSTOR and ScienceDirect. Using this list, dates were then compared to ensure that no periodicals were weeded where we did not

have full electronic coverage. It was a very rudimentary deselection, and we realized that if we were going to go ahead with an in-depth weed of the collection, we had to have a formal process in place.

Process

There were several things to consider going into the more in-depth project. The primary areas were:

- What criteria to use to determine whether a title should be retained or not?
- Who makes these choices?
- From where do we get the data (both titles and usage)?
- How do we indicate which titles are chosen for deselection?
- Who pulls them, and how do they document them for statistics?
- What to do with the bound volumes that are deselected?

Title	Report	Keep	Compact	Weed	Gone	Gov doc	Check on	Notes
AASA journal of scholarship practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	LYO
AASA professor a quarterly publication of the American Association of	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
AAU news	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
AAUP bulletin quarterly publication of the American Association of Ur	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
AAUW journal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ABA banking journal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	compact 2
ABA journal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Abacus Sydney N S W	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ABCA bulletin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ABCA journal of business communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	microform
Academe Washington D C 1979	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Academic therapy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Academic therapy quarterly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Academy of Management executive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Academy of Management executive 1993	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Academy of Management journal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Academy of Management review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Academy of Management, Journal of the	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Accent a quarterly of new literature	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Access Research Triangle Park N C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Accessibility and computing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ACM
Accession bulletin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gov Doc
Accountancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Accountant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Accountants digest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Accountants magazine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Accounting and business research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Accounting forum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Figure 1. Microsoft Access List with Examples of Fields Used

The first step was to create a master list of periodicals from our integrated library system (ILS), which was then Sirsi Unicorn. Periodical data including title, publication information, publication year, and author was exported from Unicorn. These data were then imported into Microsoft Access, which would make later checklists and reports very easy to work with. Fields that would be useful for the project were added as needed.

The next step was to determine usage of the titles. Fortunately, we had over ten years of usage statistics to work with. From 1999–2009, we tracked usage with dot stickers placed on the spines when reshelled. To make it possible to know the currency of the usage, the color and/or shape of the dots changed every 2 years. For example, from September 1999 to August 2001, small blue dots were used; from September 2001 to August 2003, small pink dots were used; and so on.

This went on until 2009 when we began to create generic bound volume records in the ILS, one record per title, and counted all use on that record. This continued until 2010 when we changed to a new ILS, ILL Millennium, which had three in-house usage fields which we customized to indicate:

- In-house or internal use
- ILL for our patrons (document delivery)
- ILL for other libraries

At this time, we also began entering individual item records for volumes as they were bound and/or as they were reshelled and counted which

type of use (in-house, document delivery, or ILL) before reshelling.

After usage, we identified:

- Titles with archival online access including JSTOR (picking up new titles and volumes that were now covered), MUSE, and titles in our consortial deals with the A&M System
- Titles with online access that were available in three or more reliable full-text, full-coverage databases, preferably from different providers
- Titles that were not indexed and, therefore, not findable which reflected in usage

At this point we developed the following criteria for weeding (deselection, if you would rather):

- Archival online access
 - Deselect
- Usage
 - No usage—Deselect
 - Low usage—Deselect or compact
 - Three or more uses—Keep
 - If all use was ILL (other libraries)—Deselect
- Online access
 - Three or more sources—Deselect
- Core titles or accreditation titles
 - Keep or compact

Periodicals weed N-O

Title	PubYr	Pulled From Stacks	# pulled	Years pulled	Offered out	Notes
New Zealand journal of geology and geophysics	1958	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	
News and Views		<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	
News Notes		<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	
News notes bulletin of the Texas Library Association	1924	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	
News notes of the board of directors	1944	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	May have already been weeded
News notes of the executive board	1947	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	May have already been weeded
Newsletter on intellectual freedom	1952	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Figure 2. Sample of Pull List

Once we had identified a process and weeding criteria, we wrote an executive summary detailing our plans, and our Library Director presented it to the Dean's Council for approval. This was an important step as we then had something to fall back on if a challenge occurred.

Actual Weed of Titles

Armed with a process to follow and criteria to use, the Acquisitions Librarian, who is in charge of weeding projects in the library, and the Serials Librarian took the list and visited the bound volumes and made initial decisions. Based on these decisions, a weed report was generated which was checked in the ILS for currency of use and type of use. At this point, final decisions were made, and the final pull list was created and sent to Circulation for pulling. Circulation staff was designated to pull and document the deselected volumes because part of their job is stacks maintenance and this falls under that purview. As bound volumes were removed from the shelves, Circulation staff noted on the pull list the number of volumes deselected for statistical purposes. Initially the weeded volumes were offered out to other libraries via exchange listservs, but due to time and manpower constraints, this was switched to recycling the volumes. After the volumes were gone, the Serials department cleaned up the records in the ILS and in OCLC (union list).

Problems

With any project, there are always a number of problems that arise, and this was no exception. Problems included:

- Using stickers to indicate usage
 - Stickers fell off (or wound up on long hair or clothes)
 - Shelvers forgot to adhere stickers to volumes
 - When and where stickers were applied on the volumes
- Offering out
 - Had a shrinking time frame, and offering out took too much time and manpower
- Old cataloging rules made the list problematic
 - For example, Bulletin of the American was shelved as American...Bulletin
- Recycling
 - Recycling boxes take up a great deal of space, and recyclers work in bulk—plan in advance for this
 - Can be difficult to find a recycler for books

What Would We Do Differently?

In hindsight, there are some things that we would like to have done differently given time or opportunity. The Serials Librarian would have liked to have offered out titles with high ILL usage. Obviously someone out there wanted them. Do not use a list that someone else created. The Acquisitions Librarian had many issues with the master list but did not realize it until it was too late in the process to make a change.

Recommendations

Finally, here are the things we did and absolutely recommend for anyone about to undertake this type of project:

- Collect usage information (when and what type)
 - Make it as detailed as possible
 - Instructing faculty and students not to reshelv volumes may be necessary, which is not as easy a task as you would think
- Do have two people deselection
 - It helps to have two viewpoints (and someone else to blame)

- If there is time and you have their cooperation, please give your subject librarians a chance to veto weeds
- Do check online availability and archival access
- Try to be as objective and unemotional as possible (and remember there is always ILL)

Final Notes

This weeding/deselection project took place on and off from 2009–2011. Our final statistics are:

- Number of volumes pulled for this project:
 - 43,000

- Total number of volumes pulled including pilot weed project (JSTOR and ScienceDirect):
 - 55,112

An outcome of this weeding project is that it afforded us the ability to accommodate a new information commons, several study dens, and new offices for a University training center. If deselection has to occur, make sure to spend some advance time creating a well thought out process that you would be able to show to any faculty member with questions.