

LIS: INVESTIGATIONS

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Collection development: An update for the digital world

FROM OUR COLLECTION:

Corrall, S. (2011) "The concept of collection development in the digital world" in Fieldhouse, M. & Marshall, A. (2011) *Collection Development in the Digital Age* London: Facet. (Distributed in the United States by Neal-Schuman, 2012). www.facetpublishing.co.uk/downloads/file/fieldhouse-ch1.pdf

Fieldhouse, M. & Marshall, A. (2011) *Collection Development in the Digital Age* London: Facet. (Distributed in the United States by Neal-Schuman, 2012).

Holley, R. (2013) Review: Collection development in the Digital Age *Library Resources & Technical Services* 57 (1): 68-69.

The theme of this issue is collection development. In volunteering for this column I thought a lot has probably happened in this space since I last actively thought about collection development in 2004 and it would be good to update. I was interested to see how much the increasing use of digital technologies may have changed the work of collection development, so I searched the ALIA/ProQuest member's database under the terms 'collection development' and 'digital'.

One of the many interesting findings was a review of a book by Maggie Fieldhouse and Audrey Marshall titled *Collection development in the digital age* (Holley 2013) that looks well worth a read. Holley's review talks about the value of the book for those involved in collection development. For those such as me needing either an introduction or overview, Holley recommends the opening chapter, *The concept of collection development in the digital world* (Corrall 2011). This chapter builds on research and case studies about collection development so I will now focus on summarising some of the issues raised in the chapter, available to ALIA members via open access.

Corrall begins by emphasising the relatedness of the terms 'library' and

'collection' and teases out how our understanding of the term 'collection development' has changed over time. While the term has always included a planning component and selection, acquisition and maintenance were key concepts, as resource sharing and the provision of access to resources beyond the library in the networked environment became increasingly common, some have argued for replacing the term 'collection development' with 'collection management' – although as Corrall points out, there are some differences still between what we see as development and what we see as management.

The chapter provides an excellent summary of how the increasing development and use of digital technologies have played out in libraries from the late 60s to early 70s, when libraries "introduced computers to improve the efficiency of day-to-day operations, particularly cataloguing and circulation", through to more innovative and 'transformative' computer-based services, the associated shift from the concept of ownership to that of access, and the need to find a balance between access and collection.

Corrall then builds on Lynch's (2000 in Corrall 2011) framework, illustrating the shift over the last 50 years from local collections of predominantly print-based materials to networked electronically

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delivered content. More recently Web or Library 2.0 content associated with social media and user-generated content, has seen libraries use collections not just for supporting current and future user information needs, but also for building communities.

At the same time, libraries and publishers were developing collections by digitising their own content. Commercial aggregators were emerging and scholarly organisations began capturing and preserving their own research output (and increasingly other assets) in institutional repositories. However the resources which may form a part of collections were, and are, continuing to change and include web pages, listservs, chat, blogs and wikis, where not only is there no print equivalent, but where the content may be user-generated and is being continually revised and edited – changed.

As collections became more complex, library management systems, digital asset (or object) management systems, institutional repositories, and hybrids of all of these became more complex to manage. As we consider how collection development will continue to evolve, we then ask the question, what do libraries, via these systems, try to achieve through their collections? Building on Buckland (1989; 1995 in Corrall 2011) and others, Corrall discusses the role of collections as archival (retention and preservation), dispensing (availability and access), bibliographic (organisation and identification), and symbolic (based on value) resources. Corrall suggests that, while format and location of material

continues to change, the principle of developing and managing collections for current and future users needs remains relevant.

Whatever we think of the changes in library collection development and management as discussed in this chapter, it is clear that the components of library collections, the ways we develop and manage them, and how we think about them are evolving and continuing to evolve. Thus those of us responsible for collections need to be alert to technological changes and the needs of current and future users so we can,

as Corrall says, prepare for "dealing with the collections of tomorrow".

Mary Anne Kennan
School of Information Studies
Charles Sturt University
mkennan@csu.edu.au