

SLQ: CLS Collections Forum
2007

Best Practice Collection Management



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

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Collections – why do we buy what we buy?

- It is essential to give library customers the collection they want, rather than what librarians perceive they want.
- Collection balance is subjective - sometimes it is based on what the selector/librarian thinks the customers SHOULD be borrowing rather than what they WANT to borrow or do borrow.
- Sometimes, selectors buy for THEIR own interests, not their customers' interests!

Work out the 'why'; then work out the 'what'

Ask the customers!

Demographic analysis

Collections analysis

Analysis of loans

Current trends and potential future demand

Define what you don't want to buy



After working out 'why' and 'what'; now work out 'how', 'who' and 'when'.

Three typical models in public libraries:

1. The library does all selection, cataloguing and processing in-house, often with very customised processing.

Economies of scale are not realised.

Delays before new titles are available.

2. The library fully outsources acquisition and supply of shelf-ready library material.

The library gains economies of scale

Pre-publication ordering - New titles go on shelf quickly.

Staff moved into customer facing positions.

3. The library purchases using a combination of the above.

The library gains some economies of scale, but may lose other benefits due to the retention of some in-house functions and processing requirements.



Library Collections Research

UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport, together with the Museums, Libraries, Archives Council – Reports

Public libraries: efficiency and stock supply chain review 2005

Better Stock, Better Libraries: transforming library stock procurement 2006

- Supplier selection
- Standardised processing
- Flat management structure within Library Services - more staff for customer facing roles
- One cataloguing system (National bibliographic database)
- Libraries purchasing books together

Statewide Collections Audit and Blueprint Project – Victoria 2006

- Collection development and management is often based on anecdotal evidence and intuition
- Strategic management of collections can only be accountable and viable with intelligent use of statistical evidence
- Strong encouragement for library services to consider library resource procurement through outsourcing and consortia arrangements



Brisbane's model since 1999: Shelf-ready Procurement

THEN

- Cataloguers
- Selectors
- Dispatchers/sorters
- Manual batch orders - paper based
- Outsourced covering
over 15 staff

NOW

- Contracted suppliers do:
profile selection,
catalogue, cover and
deliver direct to
libraries shelf ready.
- Online ordering of
customer selections
1.5 staff



Quality Procurement

Libraries for a world class city that thrives on information, learning, recreation, and culture.

KPIs

Delivery of books 'shelf ready'

- ✓ WAS 12 weeks NOW 5 days - 99%
- ✓ International best practice

Partnerships

- ✓ 10 suppliers
- ✓ Use suppliers' business knowledge to add value to our business
- ✓ Customer Service Agreements rather than contracts (those they do exist)
- ✓ Library Services had to develop suppliers' skills and recognise their expertise



How is selection done?

- The relationship between suppliers & Library Services is a partnership, with customer needs as the #1 focus
- Continual communication is the key
- Quality Assurance is also a factor

All information is updated annually by Library Services

- Branch profiles
- Nonfiction & Fiction specifications & prioritisation
- Standing Orders
- CD, DVD, CD-ROM, Large Print/Audio Books specifications
- Allocation plans

Floating collection



Customer focus

- Quality Assurance Officer
- Collections teams
- Customer purchase requests
- Annual collections audits with staff
- Staff & customer engagement
- Data Analysis
- Consistency in processing - floating collection
- Citywide outlook

Value has moved from staff orientation to the customer end of the value chain, enabling more programming



BCCLS Documents for Collection Management

- Collection Development Guidelines
- Asset Strategic Plan (Collections)
- Tender & Contracts
- Standing Orders
- Selection Specifications & Guidelines
- Branch Profiles
- Customer Service Agreements
- Finance Reports
- Customer Purchase Request Manual
- Local Studies Manual
- Stock Assessment Framework



Collection Management

Customer-focussed collection – our floating collection enables customers to participate in building the collection at their local branch – every library is different and is subject to different change variables

Demand driven Collection Management – this does not preclude a ‘quality’ collection

Objectively assessing your collection

- Regular statistical analysis
- Turnover - What is an acceptable turnover rate?
- Collections audit
- Age of collection
- What are the patterns of use? How are they changing?
- ‘Just in time’ rather than ‘just in case’ (why would you hide books away in a stack?), but remember the ‘long tail’.



Deselection/Weeding

Weeding criteria

■ Low use/high use material

M - Misleading (and /or inaccurate)

U - Ugly (worn and beyond repair)

S - Superseded (by a new edition or a better book on the subject)

T - Trivial (poor literary or scientific merit)

Y - Your collection has no need for this book (irrelevant to the current or future customer)

■ Stock Assessment Framework, incorporating deselection guidelines

- Retain
- Repair
- Relocate
- Replace
- Remove



The Future

- New tender - Dec 2007
- Publishing world continues to change, especially with POD and other digital content
 - Print and digital likely to exist side-by-side
- Standardisation of cataloguing & processing
- Joint procurement – economies of scale
- Amalgamation opportunities

- For more information on outsourcing:
 - Click06 paper: Strategic Procurement of library collections
<http://conferences.alia.org.au/alia2006/>

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