

Modern Collection Development Services and Practices

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ABSTRACT

Collection development is a fundamental function of libraries and information centers, aimed at building, maintaining, and providing access to relevant information resources. With the rapid growth of digital technologies, scholarly communication, and user expectations, collection development has undergone a significant transformation. The shift from print-based collections to hybrid and digital collections has redefined traditional practices, giving rise to innovative service models such as demand-driven acquisition, collaborative collection development, and digital curation. This paper examines the evolution, principles, modern practices, and emerging trends in collection development services. It highlights the role of technology, user-centric approaches, and data-driven decision-making in shaping contemporary collection strategies. The study also discusses challenges such as budget constraints, licensing issues, and sustainability, along with future directions in the context of open access and artificial intelligence.

KEYWORDS: Collection Development, Digital Libraries, E-resources, Demand-Driven Acquisition, Library Services, Information Management.

1. INTRODUCTION

Collection development is the backbone of library services, as it directly influences the quality and relevance of information resources available to users. Traditionally, libraries focused on acquiring printed materials such as books, journals, and reports. However, the emergence of digital technologies has transformed the landscape of information access and delivery.

Modern libraries are no longer repositories of physical materials alone but are evolving into dynamic information hubs offering digital, hybrid, and networked resources. The concept of collection development has shifted from ownership to access, emphasizing user needs and timely availability of resources.

The increasing availability of electronic resources, open access materials, and digital repositories has necessitated new strategies and practices in collection development. Libraries now adopt flexible, data-driven approaches to ensure that collections remain relevant, cost-effective, and aligned with institutional goals.

2. CONCEPT AND DEFINITION OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Collection development refers to the systematic process of selecting, acquiring, evaluating, and maintaining library resources to meet the information needs of users. It includes activities such as:

- Selection and acquisition
- Evaluation and weeding
- Policy formulation
- Resource sharing

According to modern perspectives, collection development is not limited to building collections but also includes managing access to digital content, licensing electronic resources, and facilitating information discovery.

The core objective remains unchanged: to provide the right information to the right user at the right time.

3. EVOLUTION OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

3.1 Traditional Collection Development

Traditional practices were based on:

- Print-oriented acquisitions
- Ownership-based collection models
- Librarian-centered selection
- Long-term preservation

Libraries focused on building comprehensive collections in anticipation of user needs, known as the “just-in-case” model.

3.2 Transition to Digital Era

The introduction of computers, the internet, and digital publishing revolutionized collection development. Libraries began to include:

- E-books
- E-journals
- Databases
- Multimedia resources

This shift required changes in policies, budgeting, and technical infrastructure.

3.3 Modern Paradigm Shift

Modern collection development emphasizes:

- Access over ownership
- User-driven acquisition
- Digital and hybrid collections
- Collaborative and shared resources

The transition from traditional to modern practices reflects the changing nature of information consumption and technological advancements.

4. COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICIES (CDP)

A Collection Development Policy (CDP) serves as a guiding framework for selecting and managing resources. It ensures consistency, transparency, and accountability in decision-making.

4.1 Objectives of CDP

- Align collections with institutional goals
- Define selection criteria
- Manage budget allocation
- Support diversity and inclusivity

4.2 Components of CDP

- Selection criteria
- Acquisition procedures
- Evaluation methods
- Weeding policies
- Resource sharing guidelines

A well-defined CDP is essential for maintaining balanced and relevant collections.

5. MODERN COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT MODELS

5.1 Just-in-Time (JIT) Model

The JIT model focuses on acquiring resources when they are needed rather than in advance. This approach ensures cost-effectiveness and relevance.

The Access-Based Collection Development (ABCD) model emphasizes flexibility, sustainability, and evidence-based decision-making.

5.2 Demand-Driven Acquisition (DDA)

DDA allows users to trigger the purchase of resources based on their usage. This model:

- Reduces unnecessary acquisitions
- Aligns collections with user needs
- Improves resource utilization

5.3 Patron-Driven Acquisition (PDA)

Similar to DDA, PDA involves users directly influencing the selection of materials. It enhances user satisfaction and ensures relevance.

5.4 Evidence-Based Acquisition (EBA)

EBA relies on usage data and analytics to make informed decisions about resource acquisition and retention.

6. DIGITAL COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Types of Digital Resources

- E-books
- E-journals
- Institutional repositories
- Multimedia content
- Open educational resources (OER)

6.2 Digital Curation

Digital curation involves managing digital assets throughout their lifecycle, including:

- Creation
- Storage
- Preservation
- Access

Digital curation services require technological infrastructure and skilled personnel.

6.3 Licensing and Access

Unlike print materials, digital resources are accessed through licenses rather than ownership. Libraries must negotiate:

- Subscription agreements
- Usage rights
- Access restrictions

7. COLLABORATIVE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Collaborative collection development involves partnerships among libraries to share resources and reduce costs.

7.1 Benefits

- Cost efficiency
- Expanded access
- Reduced duplication
- Improved resource sharing

7.2 Resource Sharing Networks

Examples include:

- Interlibrary loan (ILL)
- Consortia agreements
- Shared repositories

Collaborative approaches are increasingly important in addressing budget constraints and expanding access to information.

8. COLLECTION EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

Evaluation ensures that collections remain relevant and useful.

8.1 Methods of Evaluation

- Usage statistics
- User feedback
- Citation analysis
- Collection mapping

8.2 Weeding and Deselection

Weeding involves removing outdated or unused materials to maintain a dynamic and relevant collection.

8.3 Big Deal Analysis

Libraries evaluate large journal subscription packages (“big deals”) to identify cost inefficiencies and optimize expenditures.

9. ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Technology plays a crucial role in modern collection development:

9.1 Integrated Library Systems (ILS)

Automate acquisition, cataloging, and circulation processes.

9.2 Data Analytics

Enable evidence-based decision-making.

9.3 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Supports:

- Recommendation systems
- Predictive analytics
- Automated metadata generation

9.4 Digital Repositories

Facilitate storage and access to institutional research outputs.

10. USER-CENTRIC APPROACHES

Modern collection development is increasingly user-focused.

10.1 User Needs Assessment

Libraries conduct surveys and studies to understand user requirements.

10.2 Personalization

Digital platforms offer personalized recommendations based on user behavior.

10.3 Accessibility and Inclusivity

Ensuring access for diverse user groups, including:

- Persons with disabilities
- Remote users
- Multilingual communities

11. OPEN ACCESS AND SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

Open Access (OA) has significantly impacted collection development.

11.1 Benefits of OA

- Free access to scholarly content
- Increased visibility and impact
- Reduced subscription costs

11.2 Institutional Repositories

Libraries manage repositories to preserve and disseminate research outputs.

11.3 Transformative Agreements

Libraries negotiate agreements with publishers to support OA publishing.

12. Challenges in Modern Collection Development

12.1 Budget Constraints

Limited funding affects resource acquisition and sustainability.

12.2 Licensing Issues

Complex licensing agreements restrict access and usage.

12.3 Rapid Technological Changes

Continuous updates require investment in infrastructure and training.

12.4 Information Overload

The abundance of information makes selection more challenging.

12.5 Preservation of Digital Content

Ensuring long-term access to digital resources is a major concern.

13. TRENDS IN MODERN COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

13.1 Collections as a Service (CaaS)

Libraries are shifting from static collections to dynamic services aligned with user needs.

13.2 Hybrid Collections

Combining print and digital resources to meet diverse user preferences.

13.3 Data-Driven Decision Making

Using analytics to guide acquisitions and resource management.

13.4 Integration of AI and Machine Learning

Enhancing discovery, recommendation, and management processes.

13.5 Sustainability and Green Libraries

Adopting environmentally sustainable practices in collection development.

14. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The future of collection development will be shaped by:

- Increased reliance on digital resources
- Expansion of open access initiatives
- Greater collaboration among libraries
- Integration of advanced technologies

Libraries will continue to evolve as service-oriented institutions, focusing on user engagement and knowledge dissemination.

15. EXAMPLES OF MODERN COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AND PRACTICES

1. Demand-Driven Acquisition (DDA) Example

A university library subscribes to an e-book platform where thousands of titles are made discoverable in the catalog. Instead of purchasing all titles in advance, the system automatically purchases a book only when a user accesses or downloads it beyond a predefined threshold.

Example: An engineering student accesses an advanced robotics e-book multiple times. After the third access, the system triggers automatic purchase, ensuring that only high-demand resources are added permanently to the collection.

2. Patron-Driven Acquisition (PDA) Example

In a postgraduate college library, students and faculty are given the option to recommend books through an online portal. Librarians review and approve these requests based on budget and relevance.

Example: A faculty member in management studies recommends newly published case studies on digital marketing. The library procures the requested materials within a short time, ensuring curriculum alignment.

3. Evidence-Based Acquisition (EBA) Example

A library pays a fixed amount to access a publisher's entire digital collection for one year. At the end of the period, the library selects the most-used titles for permanent purchase based on usage statistics.

Example: Usage analytics show that 60% of access is concentrated on 200 titles. The library purchases those titles permanently while discontinuing low-use materials.

4. Consortium-Based Collection Development Example

Libraries collaborate through consortia to share resources and reduce costs.

Example: A group of academic libraries joins a national consortium (such as e-ShodhSindhu in India) to subscribe to expensive international journals. This enables smaller institutions to access high-quality resources at reduced costs.

5. Digital Repository Development Example

Libraries create institutional repositories to collect, preserve, and disseminate research output.

Example: A university library develops a repository where PhD theses, faculty publications, and conference papers are uploaded. This enhances visibility and supports open access.

6. Open Access Integration Example

Libraries include open access journals and resources in their discovery systems.

Example: A library integrates directories like DOAJ into its catalog so users can access free scholarly articles alongside subscribed content.

7. Collection Weeding (Deselection) Example

Libraries periodically remove outdated or unused materials to maintain relevance.

Example: A medical college library removes old editions of textbooks that have been replaced by updated versions, ensuring that students access current information.

8. Hybrid Collection Development Example

Modern libraries maintain a balance between print and digital resources.

Example: While journals are mostly subscribed in electronic format, core textbooks are retained in print to support students who prefer physical reading.

9. User-Centered Collection Development Example

Libraries conduct surveys and feedback analysis to understand user needs.

Example: A survey reveals that students prefer video-based learning resources. The library responds by subscribing to educational video platforms such as NPTEL or SWAYAM.

10. AI-Based Recommendation Systems Example

Libraries use artificial intelligence tools to recommend resources based on user behavior.

Example: A digital library platform suggests related articles and books based on a user's previous searches and downloads, improving research efficiency.

11. Licensing and Subscription Management Example

Libraries negotiate licenses for e-resources instead of purchasing physical copies.

Example: A university library negotiates multi-user access licenses for e-journals, allowing simultaneous access to multiple students.

12. Collaborative Collection Storage Example

Libraries share storage facilities to reduce space constraints.

Example: Several institutions jointly maintain an off-site storage facility for low-use print materials while providing access through interlibrary loan.

CONCLUSION

Modern collection development services and practices have transformed significantly in response to technological advancements and changing user expectations. The shift from ownership to access, the adoption of user-centric models, and the integration of digital technologies have redefined the role of libraries.

While challenges such as budget constraints and licensing issues persist, innovative approaches such as demand-driven acquisition, collaborative collection development, and digital curation offer effective solutions. The future of collection development lies in adaptability, sustainability, and continuous alignment with user needs.

Libraries must embrace change and leverage technology to remain relevant in the digital age, ensuring that they continue to serve as vital centers of knowledge and information.

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