

De-Selection Guidance Document for Liaison Librarians

Setting the stage:

“There are two aspects to weeding. The first is the writing of a collection development or selection policy that is appropriate for your community; this will serve as a guideline as you make decisions about your collection. The second is applying that policy as you make decisions about the materials in your collection.” [From *Weeding Library Collections: A Selected Annotated Bibliography for Library Collection Evaluation*. ALA Library Fact Sheet Number 15]

Reasons to de-select materials:

- Increase overall usability and quality of the collection
- Encourage productive browsing
- Space constraints
- Cost of retaining and preserving rarely used volumes that are available through Interlibrary Loan
- Danger of providing misinformation [balance with the need to provide historical perspective]

Working with faculty:

Although the final decision rests with the library, liaison librarians are encouraged to work with departmental faculty on a de-selection process that creates avenues for departmental faculty to share feedback on specific titles. This process should suit both the liaison librarian and the department's library liaison, and may include any or all of the following options:

- Liaison librarian generates lists of titles to send to departmental liaison for evaluation;
- Liaison librarian notifies departmental liaison when a group of books is available for review in person;
- Faculty members specializing in various sub-disciplines work together with liaison librarian to review items.

Factors to consider when making de-selection decisions for monographs:

This list is meant to help provide you with a framework for informed decision making.

1. Scope

- a. How appropriate is the item for our collection?
- b. Does it meet the general collection development policy or a subject-specific collection development policy?
- c. If someone donated the item to the library today, would you add it to the collection?
- d. Is the item of particular relevance to the ECU curriculum?

2. Inclusion in selection guides, for instance

- a. *Best Books for University Libraries* (Joyner Ref Z1035 B547)
- b. *Resources for College Libraries* (Available online)
- c. *Choice's Outstanding Academic Titles* (Joyner Ref Z1035 C56)
- d. Standard bibliographies that cover the subject area
- e. Bibliographies used by accrediting agencies in the subject area or department

3. Use and physical condition

- a. How many times has the item been checked out since December 1993 (the earliest date captured in our Integrated Library System)?
- b. When was the last time it was checked out?
- c. Are there noticeable signs of damage? These may include:
 - i. Water damage
 - ii. Loose, torn, or missing pages
 - iii. Extensive underlining or other marks
- d. Is the paper acidic (yellow and/or brittle)?
- e. Is the binding detached, torn, or warped?
- f. Are there signs of mold and mildew?
- g. If damaged, is the value of the content worth replacing?
- h. If damaged, is the value of the physical item worth repairing?

4. Subject area considerations

- a. Does the item continue to have research value for its subject area?
- b. Is the content of this item redundant? Is there adequate coverage of the field without this title?
- c. Do we have other/better sources for the same information? ("better" can mean more current, more reliable, easier to use, etc.)
- d. How old is the item?
- e. Is this a field in which historical research, perspective, thought, etc., is important, or where up-to-the-minute information is most important?
- f. Is the item's information content obsolete, or has it been superseded by more timely, accurate information?

5. Edition / Copies

- a. Do we have more than one copy of the item?
- b. Do we have a more recent edition of the same work?
- c. Is there anything special or important about this particular edition (including but not limited to the publisher, the illustrations, the foreword, the introduction, or the appendices)?
- d. Does the discipline have a special interest in or need for superseded or revised texts?

6. Language

- a. Is the work written in English?
- b. If not, is the language appropriate to the subject or content of the material?
- c. If not, is it written in a language taught at ECU?
- d. Is the work a translation?
- e. If so, is it translated from the original language or from another language?
- f. (typically, the closer to the source, the better)

Strong candidates for monographic de-selection include:

- Superseded textbooks
- Primers, "introduction to," and other basic materials whose content is dated
- Older materials on non-academic topics, or popular approaches to topics of academic interest
- Duplicate copies of low use materials

Factors to consider when making de-selection decisions for bound serials

This list is meant to help provide you with a framework for informed decision making.

1. Duplication in electronic format:

- a. Does the library own the electronic holdings, through any of the following:
 - i. JSTOR, Periodicals Archive Online, or other aggregated ownership package; or
 - ii. Backfiles purchased from the publisher
- b. Does the library have a reasonable certainty of permanent ownership and access through a electronic archive initiative such as Portico or LOCKSS?
- c. Is the title available in multiple aggregators, such as Academic Search Premier, Business Source Premier, and Hospitality and Tourism Complete, etc.?
- d. Is all relevant content available online?
- e. Are images or other special content faithfully reproduced in the online version?

2. Completeness of holdings:

- a. Is this a long, complete run, or only a few volumes/issues?
- b. Are there many missing issues in the library's holdings?

3. Access to articles:

- a. Where is this journal indexed?
- b. How completely is the journal indexed?

4. Subject area considerations

- a. Is this title considered “core” for its subject area? That is, is it referred to in:
 - i. Standard bibliographies that cover the subject area
 - ii. Bibliographies used by accrediting agencies in the subject area or department
 - iii. Journal Citation Reports or other authoritative rankings?
- b. Does the title continue to have research value for ECU’s curricula and/or faculty research?
- c. Is there adequate coverage of the field without this title?
- d. Do we have other/better sources for the same information? (“better” can mean more current, more reliable, easier to use, etc.)
- e. Is this a field in which historical research, perspective, thought, etc., is important, or where up-to-the-minute information is most important?

5. Physical condition:

- a. Are there noticeable signs of damage? These may include:
 - i. Water damage
 - ii. Loose, torn, or missing pages
 - iii. Extensive underlining or other marks
- b. Is the paper acidic (yellow and/or brittle)?
- c. Is the binding detached, torn, or warped?
- d. Are there signs of mold and mildew?
- e. If damaged, is the value of the content worth replacing?
- f. If damaged, is the value of the physical item worth repairing?

Selected Readings:

Banks, Julie. "Weeding Book Collections in the Age of the Internet." *Collection Building*. 21, no. 3 (2002): 113-119. Available online in Proquest Research Library.

"The weeding project at Southeast Missouri State University presented an opportunity to identify different variables, i.e. shelf level, book jackets, added entries, and untraced series, that impacted a book’s circulation behavior and to consider the relationship between circulation and the Internet/online database activity. ... 61 percent of the political science collection either circulated only once or never circulated. It is argued that because of the pressures the Internet and electronic reference databases are placing on book collections and their use it is more important than ever to identify new collection development strategies to pinpoint which titles will be used."

Farber, Evan. “Weeding the Collection—Painful But Necessary.” *Library Issues: Briefings for Faculty and Administrators*. 19, no. 2 (1998): 1-3. URL: <http://www.libraryissues.com/sub/L19811.asp>

Written for administrators, this article reviews the reasons why weeding is necessary, but also acknowledges the pressures that may be working against it. Also discusses remote storage as an alternative.

Metz, Paul and Caryl Gray. "Perspectives on ... Public Relations and Library Weeding." *Journal of Academic Librarianship*. 31, no. 3 (2005) 273-279. URL: [doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2005.01.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2005.01.005)

Beginning in 1995, the University Libraries of Virginia Tech embarked on a major shelf-load reduction/storage project. Every effort was made to communicate the scope of the project to the teaching/research faculty of the university. This article presents an overview of the project, with emphasis on ways in which sensible criteria, advance publicity, and demonstrations of flexibility and good will can help the library retain the trust of its public. Potential pitfalls are also identified.

Parsons, Kathy A. *Weeding Upon the Horizon*. Presentation at November 8, 2005 CODI Conference.

Description of a weeding program at Iowa State University Library that used Horizon queries to identify monographs published prior to 1990 that had not circulated for 10 years. Program identified and focused on areas of the collection with the most pressing space needs.

Slote, Stanley J. *Weeding Library Collections: Library Weeding Methods*. 4th ed. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1997. Stacks Z703.6 S55 1997. Also available in NetLibrary.

As stated by the publisher: "Slote shows you how to identify the core collections versus the weedable items. After reviewing current weeding practices and standards, he discusses a variety of traditional and computer-assisted methods for weeding."

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