

Collection and User Needs in Academic Libraries

Having a successful collections manager means allows for multiple needs to be met at one time. There is a need to balance the needs of the users while keeping the collections balanced. There are numerous competencies that are helpful for an academic collections manager to have. One of the greatest competencies to have as an academic collections' manager is to be able to assess collections and see how user needs can be met. This competency can be achieved by having a working knowledge of copyright laws, how to digitize a collection, and know how to determine which journals should be bought.

One issue that academic librarians need to be aware of is how copyright laws are used by the university. Not only do copyright laws directly impact the way a library expands its collections, but also what happens to work faculty and academic librarians create. It is important that new academic librarians become familiar with the university's copyright policies. It is also important to know the universities Open Access policy. Copyright law gets tricky quickly due to the special circumstances that published works get put under. Scholarly works often have multiple authors. Joint authors are treated as owning the work equally (Benson, 2018). This means that when a work is going to be republished, the other authors need to be asked in order for that to happen.

Another aspect of copyright law that academic librarians need to know about is the made for hire doctrine. Made for hire doctrine is when an employee creates a work that can be requested to be expanded by the employer. Items that count as made for hire include instructional text, a test, or a contribution to a collective work (Benson, 2018). This means that work created by a

professor or academic librarian counts as made for hire. What becomes complicated is the length of the copyright of the work. The length of the copyright can be either 95 years from the date of publication or 120 years from creation of the work (Benson, 2018). Some universities have a mandate that a copy of the work be made available to the public via a personal website, institutional repository, or open access journal (Benson, 2018). Allowing for the public to see the work is important as it allows access to academic journals to those who would not have it otherwise.

It is also important for a librarian to be able to look the physical copies of materials that have low circulation rate and determine which can be eliminated. The number of active journals has increased greatly and there is a limited amount of space that libraries have to house collections. Library budgets have not been able to keep up with the increase in journals. One library that made the transition from physical journal collections to digital was the Kraemer Family Library (Glazier & Spratt, 2016). After assessing the collection, it was determined that about 50% of the collection could be moved to a digital format and to remove the print duplicate.

Many databases including JSTOR, ProQuest, and Sage give access to journals (Glazier & Spratt, 2016). This would allow students to have access to information without too much difficulty. The process of transitioning the collection to a mostly digital format took about 4 months (Glazier & Spratt, 2016). This is an example of a team of librarians working together to make sure that materials that are not needed are removed while locating resources that will meet the needs of patrons (RUSA 3.2). As a result of this project students and faculty were given more space to learn.

Due to libraries having flat budgets and a greater need to produce materials some librarians are seeing if they can save their library money on journal subscriptions. One way of doing this is

looking at interlibrary loans and see what users' needs are (Barton, Relyea, & Knowlton, 2018). One consideration is to buy anything that puts the library in danger of activating fair use copyright. Seeing which items are constantly being requested is also a consideration of figuring out what to buy.

Much like evaluating print materials, digital materials also need to be looked over to make sure money is not being spent on a source that is not used. Not all journals will be used on a regular basis and some journals may not be used at all. When possible, cancelling subscriptions to journals that were rarely or never used did not increase ILL requests (Barton, Relyea, & Knowlton, 2018). There was also a realization that library users usually find articles by searching in databases. Therefore, a journal could be deleted without missing out on having the necessary content. This would save money on subscriptions while streamlining digital services.

One downside to this is users will have to wait to get the materials they need. As a result, users may not use ILL to its full potential (Barton, Relyea, & Knowlton, 2018). This also means that patrons are more willing to take materials that are readily available to them that may compromise information quality.

Another way ILL can be used to assess collections is to take a look at subjects that are being requested. ILL is a great tool to see which subject areas are lacking and to use that data to build up subject specific collections (Barton, Relyea, & Knowlton, 2018). This is a way of seeing where knowledge gaps are in the collection. This benefits the collection as a whole while being responsive to the users' needs.

Patron-driven acquisitions are already being implemented in some way in academic libraries. Not only is this done by looking at ILL requests and assessing collections, but students and faculty are welcome to make requests based on research needs. Having a fully

integrated patron-driven acquisitions model would mean that patrons would be able to find what they need after searching the catalog. The materials would already be in the library and patrons would not have to wait to have materials to be shipped through ILL (Caminita 2014, 2). Some complications come with patron-driven acquisitions such as abiding by copyright agreements when it comes to sharing e-books through ILL (Caminita, 2014, 2). Another benefit of having PDA is that it would reduce buying items that would never circulate, hypothetically making every purchase count towards circulation.

If PDA was aimed at making e-book collections more affordable and highly used then it could work in academic libraries. E-books cost more than print books. For some PDA programs libraries can have e-book titles listed in the catalog. When a user downloads it the library either then pays a small fee or a short-term loan for the e-book (Caminita, 2014, 5). This could save money on e-books if the e-book collection is used regularly, but lightly. A large and heavily used e-book collection could easily cost the library more money than foreseen.

Having the ability to assess the needs of library users while managing the collections to benefits the users is an important competency. Figuring out which subscriptions or books that can be eliminated without having a negative impact on the users is an important duty of a collection's manager. Cancelling subscriptions will save money for the library to use for other things. Eliminating print collections because they have a digital duplicate means the library has more physical space to work with. These decisions benefit the community of the library while keeping the collections balanced. If buying materials that are frequently requested through ILL means patrons will have immediate access to materials then that is what the collections manager should do. Access to information is a necessary component of libraries and collections.

Sources Cited

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