CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries

Revised to include a section on e-books!
(See page 49)

Revised and Updated by:
Jeanette Larson

Texas State Library and Archives Commission
Austin, Texas — 2012

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This document is available online at: www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/pubs/crew/index.html

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"I know no rules for discarding that eliminate possibility of error. We all make mistakes but most of these mistakes I am convinced stand on the shelves."

Gladys Allison, *Suggestions on Discarding* (December 1938)

"...Weeding out requires more knowledge, forethought and power of discrimination than is ordinarily brought to bear in the selection of books."

Thomas Aldred, *Book Selection and Rejection* (March 1901)

"Next to emptying the outdoor bookdrop on cold and snowy days, weeding is the most undesirable job in the library. It is also one of the most important."

Will Manley, "The Manley Arts," *Booklist* (March 1, 1996)

"A good library collection is like a good haircut. It's not what you cut—it's what you leave."

Anne Felix, Grand Prairie (Texas) Public Library System

Introduction

For more than 30 years, *The CREW Method* has provided guidance to librarians and staff in small and medium sized public libraries about how to cull outdated and no longer useful materials from their collections. Since its inception in 1976, *The CREW Method* has become the benchmark tool for weeding library collections. It has been more than a decade since the first revised edition brought technology and online catalogs into the process. This new edition, called *CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries*, builds on the work of Joseph P. Segal and Belinda Boon. Although much of the basic information remains the same, the impact of changes in technology and its effect on library collections has been taken into consideration. The CREW guidelines by Dewey Class have been expanded even further and updated to reflect current practices. New sections have been added that explain in more detail the MUSTIE factors and types of disposal. The bibliography has been updated to include current editions of standard works, contemporary selections, and expanded online resources.

Although it is written primarily with the needs of small and medium sized public libraries in mind, it has proven to be useful to libraries of all types and sizes. Since the release of the first revised edition in 1995, we have seen many changes in library operations. Almost universal access to the Internet has affected every aspect of library public service by providing instantaneous access to information sources heretofore unknown. Many standard reference tools and nonfiction works that were available only in print form ten years ago are now available in electronic formats, either through free or fee-based subscription services. *CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries* takes this into consideration, as well as changes in selection and withdrawal practices in specific areas such as reference and nonfiction materials.

As with the previous editions, this manual is designed for use primarily by librarians and staff in smaller community libraries and branches of larger systems. We know that the CREW method is used by librarians in many other states and we beg your indulgence when the manual refers to Texas-specific resources and statewide projects.

While no librarian has enough time, space, or budget to ignore the need to weed, *CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries* strives to make the process easier for staff that may have the most difficulty finding ways to keep the collection current and vital. The justification for weeding—to maintain a collection that is vital, relevant, and useful—and the criteria for weeding a library—physical condition, relevance of the subject, currency of the information—remain basically unchanged. However, libraries are experiencing increasing scrutiny from the public and funding sources, and may be required to justify their discard practices in more detail. Access to online library catalogs and direct requests for interlibrary loan may cause some librarians to hold on even more tightly to materials that should be discarded because 'someone' may request the item. The current edition addresses these concerns and incorporates suggestions offered by practicing librarians in public, academic, and school libraries during workshops conducted by the author and from various

discussion lists. The support and input of these librarians—you know who you are—is greatly appreciated and has served to make *CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries* an even richer resource for librarians around the world.

Although it has become easier in many ways for staff in small community libraries to obtain continuing education and training through workshops brought to their area by the Texas State Library & Archives Commission and regional systems, more training is available online and through alternative venues. However, new staff and volunteers are continually entering the profession and there is an ongoing need for information on how to effectively weed the collection. Staff and volunteers also must understand why and how materials that have passed their useful life are removed from the collection. They also should be able to articulate that understanding to others in the community who may view discarding of books as tantamount to 'book burning' or wasting tax dollars.

CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries attempts to describe clearly, practically, and in a step-by-step fashion a now tried-and-true method of carrying out the five processes of 'reverse selection:' inventory, collection evaluation, collection maintenance, weeding, and discarding. Keep in mind that no single process will serve the needs of all libraries. *CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries* offers guidelines, and attempts to explain the reasons behind the guidelines, but every library should consider the needs of their particular community and adjust the guidelines accordingly. For example, if budgets are quite tight and expected to be tight for many years, it may be necessary to lengthen the age factors a bit in favor of removing only books that are in poor condition. CREW continues to caution, however, that lack of funds to replace outdated or worn items is *never* an excuse for not weeding. Any extensive weeding will enhance the value of the collection so librarians are urged to **use professional judgment at all times**. I also welcome questions and feedback about situations that may not appear to be served by CREW and your best practices.

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Before We Start the Process

Library work is an intricate mix of programs, services, and materials. It is important to recognize that weeding is but one part of the collection development process, which in turn is a part of the totality of work that we do to make the library an important part of the community. The library's collection is the most tangible part of any library's service.

The basis of the library's collection, as well as how it is developed and maintained, rests within its mission and the service priorities it has established through a formal or informal planning process. Many libraries use the Public Library Association's (PLA) planning process and, at least to some extent, subscribe to that process's concept of 'service responses.' Although the names of the service responses advanced by PLA were revised in 2007, the concepts behind those labels remain very similar to the older ones that may be more familiar to library staff. Whether the library describes one of its primary service responses as 'Get Facts Fast,' the new label, or the older 'General Information,' the materials in the collection will need to support the services and needs that go into the service priority. A library that strives to provide current reading resources and general information must have a collection that is up-to-date and easy to use.

Good library management principles begin with a planning process and an analysis of the needs of the community being served by the library. Whether you use a process like the Public Library Association's Planning for Results[1] or another planning process, knowing where the library is and where you want it to go is the first step in weeding. Even if you do not have a formal planning process, it is likely that you have some idea of what the community wants from the library and know what you need to do to accomplish that mission. As you make decisions about the budget, look for additional sources of funds (such as grants and gifts), and select material to add to the collection, you must also keep in mind what is already in the collection and, perhaps of equal or greater importance, what needs to be culled from the collection. As good library managers, we have a responsibility to maintain a collection that is free from outdated, obsolete, shabby, or no longer useful items. It's a little like Newton's Third Law of Motion: For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. For every item we put on the library shelves, we should at least be considering whether there are items that need to be removed.

Many of us work in libraries because we love books and information. We may need to overcome our own sentiments that hold us back from weeding. "In too many libraries, collection development is actually based on the book as an object. Public libraries should not be in the business of accumulating physical objects. The purpose should be to provide the content that is needed and used by the public."[2] Even if we

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[1] *The New Planning for Results,* http://www.elearnlibraries.com/courses/the_new_planning_for_results/index.html

[2] "Commentary on weeding". Library Administrator's Digest. Feb 1999. FindArticles.com. 13 May. 2008. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3858/is_199902/ai_n8843523

understand that it is the information contained within the book that is important, we may have to address concerns and excuses presented by others who insist that we hold on to every item in the collection.

However, if you look at the place of the collection within the library's mission and how a poorly maintained collection negatively impacts the ability to meet that mission, it should become clear that weeding is an important part of the process. Although they should be broadened to include all types of materials, keep in mind Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science[3]:

1. Books are for use.
2. Every reader his book.
3. Every book its reader.
4. Save the time of the reader.
5. A library is a growing organism.

The Cycle of Service: Where CREW Fits In

Collection development is clearly an important part of library service. It can be easy, however, to view only one or two parts of the process, focusing only on getting materials into the collection or getting them into the hands of our patrons.

The diagram below represents the flow of both direct and indirect library services; it is circular because each process leads to the next and involves ongoing routines, procedures, and practices that continuously add to, remove from, evaluate, and adjust the collection to fit the current and future needs of the library's users and potential users.

SA is the **S**election (usually through reading reviews, perusing catalogs, and considering patron requests) and the **A**cquisition (ordering and paying for) of the library's materials.

CP is the **C**ataloging (including classification) and **P**rocessing (property stamping, bar coding, entering into the online catalog, etc.) of the same materials.

CR is the **C**irculation and **R**eference step, in which the prepared materials are out on the shelves being used both in-house and through borrowing by patrons and the reference staff.

The method called CREW (**C**ontinuous **R**eview, **E**valuation, and **W**eeding) integrates all the processes into one smooth, streamlined, and ongoing routine that assures that *all the necessary indirect services* are accomplished in an effective way. This method makes it easier to routinely remove outdated and unused materials from the collection while also learning where the collection has gaps or needs new items.

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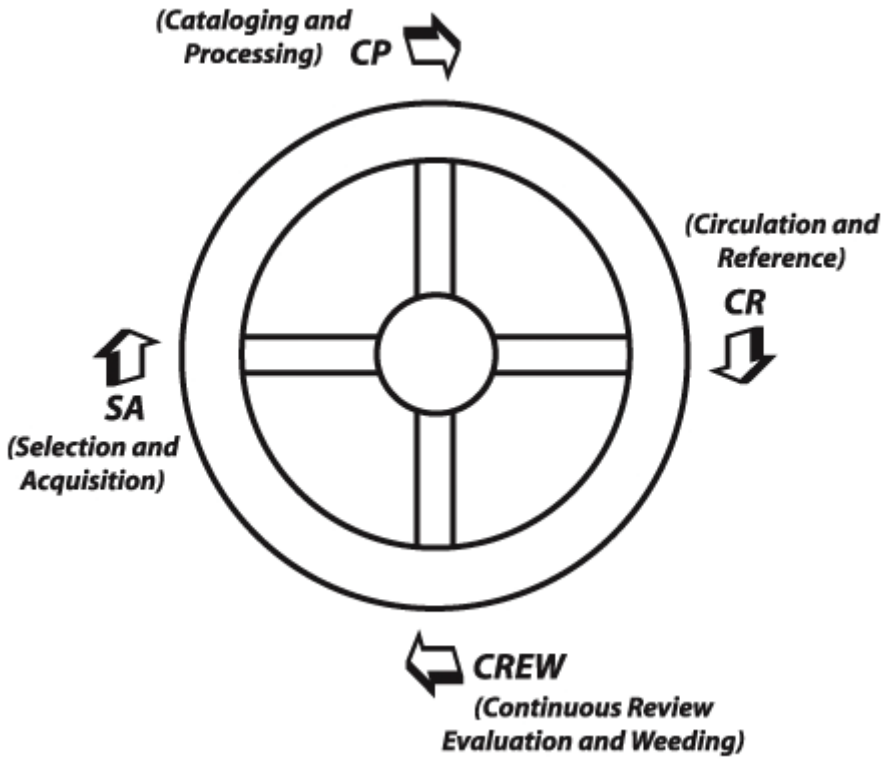
[3] Ranganathan, Shiyali Ramamrita. *The Five Laws of Library Science*, Asia Pub. House, 1963.



Immediately after entering Circulation and Reference (CR) use, the library materials enter the CREW processes of inventory and maintenance. Every item has a useful life cycle. Often a new item will be very popular at first, circulating frequently in a short period of time. Then the item may sit on the shelf, going out only occasionally. Eventually, in many cases, the item becomes worn, the information becomes outdated or is superseded by new information, or the topic or the treatment of the topic simply is no longer of interest to many users. When, through evaluation and the intentional process of weeding, the librarian discovers that the material's useful life is over, the item is retired by removal from the collection. Meanwhile, CREW is generating information on the current strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and saturation points of the collection that the librarian can use for another round of Selection and Acquisition (SA).

At each step, the library professional uses special knowledge of library science and library materials, as well as information about the particular community being served, to meet the needs and demands of the library's users and potential users. CREW is a vital part of good library service. A library that does not evaluate, weed, or discard is like a cart wheel with a fourth of its rim missing (see illustration above). Is your library having a rough ride on such a broken wheel? CREW to get back on track!

Why Weed? Why CREW?

Why are these CREW functions so vital for a dynamic, useful community library? Don't many community libraries do just fine without weeding? Isn't CREW simply a fancy name for throwing away books and impeding a library's growth? Aren't we censoring when we throw out books that someone might want to read? What if we make a mistake?

If you are asking these questions, you are not the first librarian to do so. CREW addresses these concerns and others but let us focus first on the benefits that are derived when you have a well-weeded collection.

The Six Benefits of Weeding

There are six major benefits of weeding the collection.

1. **YOU SAVE SPACE**. Shelf space costs money in a variety of ways, not the least of which is the actual cost to buy additional shelving to house more and more materials. A well-maintained collection saves the cost of dusting books that no one is using and of shifting materials to make room for more items. Patrons lose patience trying to find items that are crammed onto overcrowded shelves. The library staff will not need to fill the bottom shelves or pile books on top of the stacks, and the library will be more attractive and easier to use. Good practice says that shelves should never be more than 85% full (and 75% is even better). In addition, retaining unused material takes up shelf space that could be used to display recent items. The online catalog uses database space that may precipitate the need for more computer memory. Not having to add more shelving ranges may even allow the library to provide, or retain, space for tables and chairs for in-house study or for additional computers. Weeding allows you to maintain the open, friendly appearance that is the hallmark of a good community library.

2. **YOU SAVE THE TIME** of patrons, staff, and best of all, yourself. Shelves crowded with ragged books with illegible markings cost time. Patrons looking for a particular book have to sort through items that are clearly not of use or that they don't want to touch. Staff trying to shelve returned items has to shift and reshift books to make space. The librarian trying to use the collection for reference or reader's advisory services must peruse outdated items to find the correct, current information. An excess of citations from the online catalog that lead to outdated or unusable materials slows searching and frustrates users. Library housekeeping, from dusting to shifting sections, is impeded and made more backbreaking by an overload of useless books and other materials.

3. **YOU MAKE THE COLLECTION MORE APPEALING** by replacing ragged, smudged books and unattractive rebinds with attractive new books. Even perennial favorites and classics benefit from being replaced by clean copies with updated covers. Circulation can be increased by simply making the shelves look more attractive and user-friendly, even if there are actually fewer

books. It is better to have fresh air and empty space on the shelves than to have musty old books that discourage investigation. Many libraries report that patrons assumed they had purchased a lot of new books when all that was done was to weed vigorously.

4. **YOU WILL ENHANCE YOUR LIBRARY'S REPUTATION** for reliability and currency and build public trust. Patrons expect that library materials are selected by experts and that the information is up-to-date and reliable. For many users, especially younger people, the mere fact that a book is in the library lends authority to it. A section of astronomy books that include many pre-Hubble space exploration books or books that include Pluto as a planet create a credibility gap of astronomical dimensions! Nothing will discourage a student as much as writing a paper based on research performed with library materials that provided obsolete or erroneous information. The public counts on the library providing accurate information. Patrons quickly decide that the library has 'nothing' of value if they sort through a lot of outdated material.

5. **YOU WILL KEEP UP WITH COLLECTION NEEDS** because the CREW method provides a **CONTINUOUS CHECK** on the need for mending or binding, alerts the library staff to lost or stolen books in need of replacement, and guarantees a more accurate volume count. This process also allows for both on-going weeding, where shabby items, superseded items, or unused items can be removed almost without effort, and scheduled weeding where you look at specific areas of the collection on a regular basis. Library staff that weed continuously have greater knowledge of the collection.

6. **YOU HAVE CONSTANT FEEDBACK ON THE COLLECTION'S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**. This information can be helpful when soliciting donations and making decisions about purchases. For example, knowing that the business books are out-of-date, the librarian can approach an organized group or an individual and request specific assistance in building an area of special interest and usefulness to them. CREW keeps the present shape of the collection clearly in mind and helps in planning future directions for it. CREW helps the librarian see the cohesion of every task performed in the library and the purpose of every task in relation to the patrons and the collection.

These advantages of weeding, and in particular of using CREW, point out the truth of the old adage: Less is more!

How Much Do I Weed and When?

The CREW method calls for systematic and continuous weeding of the collection, but what do these terms mean? Staff may think that it is not possible to weed a little bit every day, but in fact with a little practice, that is exactly what we can do. If staff and volunteers are trained to look for shabby and outdated items, these materials can be pulled for review by the appropriate person on a weekly basis. Reports can be generated from the online catalog on a quarterly basis to identify items that are 'shelf

sitters' and haven't circulated within a reasonable period of time. Volunteers can do a lot even if they only spend an hour a week looking for these items, as well as identifying duplicates that may no longer be needed. Monthly targets should be established for looking at specific areas of the collection and *intentionally* weeding a small area.

It's not enough to weed every couple of years or only when space is getting tight. A vital, viable library collection is reviewed on an on-going basis. *Texas Public Library Standards* [4] includes goals for collection age and frequency of weeding the entire collection. Regardless of size, the entire collection should be reviewed and weeded if necessary, at least once every five years.

But how much is enough? Can we weed too much? That is a question that has to be answered locally. In general, you should weed about the same amount as you are adding to the collection unless you are in a developing mode, such as when a library first opens or has expanded. Your available shelf space establishes the upper parameter of the collection size and every item in the collection should be useful to the community being served. Once the collection has matured, it will remain fairly stable until something changes—such as adding on to the building.

A rule of thumb held by many library professionals is that about 5% of the collection be weeded every year.[5] This allows for turnover of the collection every twenty years. While this doesn't literally mean that no book that exists in the collection in the year 2000 will still be there in 2020, even classic literature and perennially useful materials will generally become worn and tattered after twenty years of use and need to be replaced with a fresh copy. More important than raw numbers, however, is the librarian's commitment to making weeding part of the regular duties and responsibilities that are addressed every week.

Before You Weed

Materials selection and deselection are similar activities. First, they are both necessary parts in an effective collection development program; and second, both require the same type of decision-making criteria. The same factors that lead to the decision to add an item can also lead to a decision to remove that item sometime later.

Before implementing any kind of weeding plan, carefully evaluate the library's collection development policy and goals for the collection. If you don't have a collection development policy or it is outdated and has not been reviewed in recent memory, now is the time to rectify that situation. Goals are based on the roles that the library plays in the community and the service responses or priorities that have been selected for the library. Although the mission of the library may remain constant over a long period, the goals may change from time to time. The mission, goals, and

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[4] Texas Library Association. *Texas Public Library Standards*, 2004. http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/plstandards/

[5] Slote, Stanley J. *Weeding Library Collections*. Libraries Unlimited, 1997. p. 14.

selection policy help to determine the weeding policy. With these factors in mind, a collection-centered evaluation will give a better idea of what the collection consists of and identify specific classes of materials that offer likely candidates for weeding.

The collection development policy (also sometimes called the materials selection policy) should provide criteria to follow for depth, coverage, and selection of the overall collection. The scope of the policy should be broad enough to include all of the materials in the collection and may include subsections, such as reference, nonprint, juvenile, large print, and adult. The policy should specify how gifts will be handled and indicate when and how to retire outdated materials. It should also list appropriate means of disposal. When developing or revising a collection development policy, keep in mind that the individual needs of the library and its users must be considered in making all policy decisions. While it is appropriate to review collection development policies developed for other libraries, it is not acceptable to simply adopt another library's policy as your own. A quick Internet search will provide many examples and books, including *The Public Library Policy Writer: a Guidebook with Model Policies on CD-ROM* by Jeanette Larson and Herman L. Totten, offer assistance in the development of a collection development policy.

Criteria for Weeding

Several factors must be considered during the weeding process. These factors include:

- The library's selected service responses and resultant goals
- The needs and demands of the library's community of users
- The availability of more suitable material
- The ability of the budget to provide funds to purchase more satisfactory items
- The relationship of a particular item to others on that subject
- Cooperative agreements with other libraries and the ability for patrons to use other libraries in the area
- The degree to which the library serves as an archive or local history center
- The possible future usefulness of a particular item
- The availability of more current information on the Internet
- The ability of the library to borrow the item through interlibrary loan

During the weeding process, you may also wish to check the library's holdings against any centralized databases (union catalogs) to which the library belongs. It may be easier to weed titles that are not circulating if they can be easily obtained from another library through interlibrary loan. Also, consult standard bibliographic aids when evaluating the quality of a particular item if you are uncertain about its value to your collection. See the Bibliography for a list of standard collection aids, as well as subject specific guides that may help you make decisions.

What to Weed: General Guidelines

More detail will be offered about weeding specific areas of the collection, types of materials, and Dewey areas later in this manual, but some general guidelines pertain to the entire collection. Some criteria are objective, but most include some degree of subjectivity that will require the professional knowledge of the librarian in making the final decision about a particular item. Keep in mind that these criteria can be used as a 'rule of thumb,' but for some criteria, recent use may be an important factor in deciding to retain an item that you might otherwise remove from the collection. If the item is outdated or contains erroneous information, weed the item and replace it with a newer title on the same subject.

For all items, consider the following problem categories and related issues:

Poor Content:

- **Outdated and obsolete information** (especially on subjects that change quickly or require absolute currency, such as computers, law, science, space, health and medicine, technology, travel)
- **Trivial subject matter**, including topics that are no longer of interest or that were dealt with superficially due to their popularity at a specific point in time, as well as titles related to outdated popular culture
- **Mediocre writing style**, especially material that was written quickly to meet popular interest that has passed
- **Inaccurate or false information**, including outdated information and sources that have been superseded by new titles or editions
- **Unused sets of books** (although you may keep specific volumes if they meet local needs and are used)
- **Repetitious series**, especially series that are no longer popular or that were published to meet a popular demand that no longer exists
- **Superseded editions** (in general, it is unnecessary to keep more than one previous edition, discarding as new editions are added)
- **Resources that are not on standard lists** or that were never reviewed in standard review sources
- **Material that contains biased, racist, or sexist terminology or views**
- **Unneeded duplicates**, especially if they are worn or tattered
- **Self-published or small press materials that are not circulating**, especially if they were added as gifts

Materials/Books of Poor Appearance:

- **Worn out, ragged items**
- **Poorly bound or poorly printed editions**
- **Rebound editions that are worn** and shabby or have torn pages

- **Items that are dirty**, shabby, warped, bug infested, or otherwise marked up, mutilated, or 'edited' by patrons
- **Books with very small print or poor quality pictures**
- **Scratched CDs or DVDs**, brittle film or magnetic tape (in the case of video and audiocassettes)
- **Media that is beaten up** from wear or has broken or missing parts
- **Books with yellowed, brittle, torn, taped, or missing pages**
- **Books with dust jackets or cover art that is dated**, especially on children's and young adult books

Unused Materials:

- **Items that have not circulated within the past 3-5 years** and not actually used for reference or in-house research
- **Duplicate copies** that are no longer needed, regardless of condition
- **Periodicals that are not indexed**
- **Periodicals that are available** in full-text databases
- **Unused volumes** in sets or series
- **Unneeded titles** in subject areas that are less frequently used
- **Materials on the 'hot topics' that were popular more than five years ago**
- **More books than are needed** on any single subject
- **Formats that are no longer popular** in your community, especially if the technology needed to use the format is no longer owned by people in the community
- **Material that is no longer important** to the collection because of changes in local demographics, school curricula, or other factors

Checklist of Weeding Factors

For all materials, consider:

- **Date**—when was the item published? When was it added to the collection?
- **Author**—is the author still read or likely to be read in the future? Is the book a lesser work?
- **Publisher**—was the book self-published or published by an 'instant' press that may not have taken care in editing and printing?
- **Physical condition**—are there any factors that make the item unattractive?
- **Additional copies**—are more copies available that may be in better condition?
- **Other books on the same subject in the collection**—if this book is discarded, what else is available?

- **Expense of replacement**—can the item be replaced? Was this an expensive item that might benefit from rebinding or refurbishing rather than replacement?
- **Shelf-time**—how long has the item sat on the shelf without circulating?
- **Relevance of the subject to the community**—is the material of interest to anyone in the community?

For juvenile and young adult materials, also consider:

- **Format**—paperbacks are preferred by many young adults; board books get a lot of wear in tiny hands.
- **Reading level**—is the level too high or too easy for young patrons who would be interested in the item?
- **Current interest in the subject matter**—are young people interested in the subject? Is the treatment of the subject engaging?
- **Visual appeal**—are the illustrations in color? Are photographs clear? Is the layout of the book open (white space) and inviting?
- **Jacket art (contemporary vs. outmoded)**—does the book look like something your great-grandmother read?
- **Use in school curricula**—are books available for the grade level where the subject is studied? Are teachers assigning specific titles?

For periodicals, consider:

- **Current use**—few periodicals are used five years after the publication date
- **Interest in circulating older issues**—does the library permit older issues to be borrowed? Does the community want to borrow older issues?
- **Indexing available**—is the periodical included in standard indexes?
- **Full-text availability in online databases**—will patrons find the articles needed for research in the library's online databases?
- **Space available**—does the library have space to store older issues that are not used on a regular basis?

Retain local history except when the item is shabby and beyond repair. Retain writings by local authors during their lifetime and materials with local settings unless they have not circulated within the previous five years (or if a major milestone celebration is coming up that would allow for these items to be put in the spotlight).

Sets and series often have one or two volumes of special merit or that are regularly used even when other volumes are not. Retain these volumes even though the rest of the set is discarded. Some older reference volumes, such as quotation books, should be kept unless they are in poor condition, because later editions augment rather than supersede prior editions.

It is a good idea to include in the selection policy a list of items that should not be weeded without careful consideration and deliberation (e.g., genealogy, local authors,

Caldecott and Newbery Book Award prize winners, etc.). Except in very special situations, usually related more to public relations than to collection development, there are very few books or other items that should be retained if not used by library patrons.

If you can't bear to let go of a beautiful book that is in good condition, consider whether it is classified properly. Browsers might be missing an item because it is in the wrong Dewey area. Perhaps the subject headings are not correct so it is not being found during catalog searches. It is perfectly acceptable to recatalog a book to make it more accessible to patrons.

Remember that **guidelines are not intended to act as a substitute for professional judgment calls and common sense**. For example, a sixty-year-old National Book Award Prize winner that has not circulated in more than ten years is simply taking up valuable space and should be discarded even though the library policy may encourage the retention of books that have won awards. (It will be available through ILL if someone wants it, or it will be released in a new paperback edition if Oprah or some other book club discovers it or it is made into a movie.)

Beginning the Process

It is by far easier to add materials to the collection than to withdraw them. Every librarian can imagine a potential use for the items selected for inclusion; otherwise we wouldn't buy them. Because we can imagine users, even potential ones, it can be difficult to discard an item that is outdated or hasn't been used in recent memory.

Even though they may recognize the necessity for weeding, many librarians are uneasy about actually doing it because the weeding process seems unstructured, subjective, and even a little arbitrary—all factors which cause them to procrastinate indefinitely or to weed sporadically or indecisively. It is, of course, also difficult to find time to do everything we need to do in a day; therefore, it is easy to put off weeding while we focus on adding materials to the collection, sorting through gifts, or helping patrons find materials. To help structure the weeding process, and to help librarians and library staff feel more confident doing it, the process can be broken down into manageable steps.

The actual methodology of CREW is intentionally simple. The original procedures established in the first edition have been streamlined through field tests and careful discussions of actual situations in real community libraries. Top priority in a community library is appropriately focused on direct service with a human touch. To cut the time and effort required for indirect services, such as weeding, the CREW method has been streamlined into ten steps, in four time groups, with allowance for stopping this work to attend to patrons and administrative tasks. As you will see, the first step need only be done once, at the beginning of the process (although all library policies are subject to revision when necessary); the other nine steps form an ongoing process that may be continued forever.

Weeding Responsibility

One frequently asked question is: Should weeding be done only by the head librarian, or may it properly be delegated to other staff? A good rule of thumb is if staff is not taking part in selection of materials - then they should not make a final weeding decision. The primary responsibility in any library must be the purview of staff members who can consider the collection and the library needs from both a broad and long-range perspective. These staff members have developed expertise through many regularly scheduled hours working with and thinking about the collection; they are committed to the principles of library management in accordance with the collection development policy and goals of the library. Rules can be used to help cull materials for consideration, but effective weeding requires using good professional judgment. For example, the rule may state that all children's picture books that have not circulated at least once in the past year will be considered for weeding. However, the children's librarian must still evaluate those books to ensure that materials used for storytimes or in-house programs are not unintentionally withdrawn from the collection.

The librarian should never delegate the weeding *evaluation* function to a volunteer, although volunteers may certainly pull worn and damaged books to be considered for

weeding. It may also be helpful to develop guidelines for volunteers and support staff to follow while shelving so they may pull potential weeds from the shelving cart. In addition to checking publication and circulation dates, volunteers and clerical staff may also pull from the stacks (1) any book with a copy number greater than two, if more than two copies are on the shelf; (2) any book superseded by more than one later edition—again, only if the later editions are on the shelf; and (3) any books in ragged or poor condition that may be candidates for mending, binding, or withdrawal. Several librarians have, in fact, suggested that volunteers and aides can help by pulling books based on a technical processing factor that provides a date for the book. For example, if the library switched from using Cutter numbers[6] to using the first three letters of the author's name on spine labels in 1999, you can ask a volunteer or aide to pull all books that still have Cutter numbers on the spine label. The type of barcode used or the shape of the barcode may also indicate books that were in the collection as of a specific year. The items will still need to be reviewed by the librarian before a final decision is made, but quickly identifying books that are ten years old is a big help.

The librarian may also wish to recruit the talents of local experts for particular subject areas (e.g., high school English teachers or college instructors can evaluate the literature section, while area math and science teachers can assess the value of items in those parts of the collection) or languages (e.g., a Spanish-language instructor can help you assess the quality of translations or the relevancy of the Spanish to your community's readers). Be sure to orient these local experts about the library's mission before they start. Small and medium-sized public libraries are *not* research libraries that need to retain material for historical research.

Team weeding, where several librarians from one area join forces to cull each other's collections, is also an effective method of separating the wheat from the chaff in library holdings. Similar to the old-fashioned barn raising, this can be an invigorating and quick way to weed where many hands (and minds) make the work go faster. In each case, the final weeding decision is left to the professional judgment of the resident librarian.

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[6] A Cutter number is an alphanumeric method for representing the author's name by using one or more letters from the last name followed by one or more numerals that also represent part of the author's name. This combination of letters and numbers follows the Dewey Decimal classification number to achieve alpha-numeric organization of materials. The numbers come from a table developed by Charles Cutter. Because of the extra step needed in processing, many public libraries have dropped this system in favor of simply using the first three letters of the author's last name.

CREW in Ten Steps

Step One

Make weeding a part of policy. Policies define actions and decisions. They also help staff deal with issues that will arise during the course of doing business. Policies are best discussed and set in place before problems occur. A weeding policy should be part of the standard policies for every public library. All policies should be approved by the library's board (whether it is a governing board or advisory board) and by the library's governing authority (if that authority is not a governing board). The approval of a written weeding and discarding policy is a powerful and necessary defense against possible controversy. If a selection policy (a highly recommended item) already exists, the weeding policy could form an amendment or appendix to it or it may be written as a separate policy statement. Policy development also allows for discussion of issues related to weeding library materials.

Check for legal regulations that may impact how discarded materials are handled. Some town charters or city codes contain rules about disposal of public property, including library materials. If a selection policy does not already exist, take the time to develop one and have it approved by the library board, city council, or other governing body. See Bibliography – Further Readings for books on issues related to the development of these policies, and many examples are also available online. While a policy from another library may serve as a model or template for your library's policy, you must still carefully consider the issues and develop a policy to meet your library's needs and fit your community.

As part of the materials selection policy, a gift policy should be established that allows the library director to accept, decline, and dispose of gift books and other items according to the collection development needs of the library. In addition to helping the library make decisions about which donated items to add to the collection, a good gift policy stipulates that items received as gifts are subject to the same decisions as items purchased with library funds. This avoids hard feelings when a donated book is later weeded.

Library staff is not usually qualified to appraise items and should not set values for tax purposes. A sentence stating that the library will not make any attempt to appraise values of donated materials for tax purposes may also be included in the gift policy. For guidance, refer patrons to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Publication 561, *Determining the Value of Donated Property*, http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p561.pdf and also the online guide from the ACRL Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the American Library Association, *Your Old Books*, http://www.rbms.info/yob.shtml which lists resources for the evaluation and appraisal of books, questions and answers on what makes a book rare, and suggested organizations that welcome book donations.

The Fair Market Value (FMV) of an item may be taken as a tax deduction, but it is up to the donor to establish that value. An old book is not necessarily a valuable book, and if it were a valuable, rare book, it probably doesn't belong in the library

collection. IRS rules now also stipulate that household goods must be 'in good used condition or better' in order to take a deduction. Therefore, some libraries now decline to accept, or at least to give a receipt for, old moldy books that will most likely be immediately discarded.

Following are sample statements that can be added to the library's selection policy regarding acceptance of gift books and weeding:

WEEDING: Materials that no longer meet the stated objectives of the library (including items that have become damaged or obsolete) will be systematically withdrawn according to the accepted professional practices described in the publication, *CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries*. Disposal of withdrawn library materials will be at the discretion of the library director, subject to all relevant provisions of the Charter of the Town of _____ and the statutes of the State of Texas.

DONATIONS: The _____ Library is pleased to accept gifts and/or memorial gifts from patrons. Gifts are gratefully and willingly accepted as long as no restriction is placed upon their use and disposition. Acceptance of gifts (of books and other library materials) will be determined by the library director on the basis of their suitability to the library's purposes and needs in accordance with the library's stated materials selection policy. Use of all gift materials will be determined by the library director or a designated agent. The library has the right to discard any gifts that are in poor physical condition (e.g. brittle paper, water or mildew damage, torn and/or missing pages). Values will not be placed on donated items for income tax purposes but receipts will be provided for items in good or better condition.

Step Two

Gather usage statistics of your library's collection. Reports allow you to analyze and document areas of greatest usage and most need. This can be very helpful when setting budgets or looking for grant funds. If you know that the books on health and fitness circulate an average of four times per year, you know that you will need to update and replace titles more frequently than you will for another area with materials that only circulate an average of once a year.

Your circulation statistics should break down borrowing usage by classification of topic areas as well as by types and levels of materials. For example, you should be able to run a report that tells you which juvenile fiction books have not circulated in the past year. Many circulation systems also allow you to limit your query to only books that have been added to the collection prior to a certain date so that you don't generate a list of new books that have not had time to circulate. If you are not sure what reports are available from your integrated library system (ILS), check with the vendor. You may be surprised at the depth and breadth of information that is readily available to you.

Statistics on reference collection use and data on types of questions being asked in your community should also be kept on an ongoing basis or gathered through regular sampling. It is also good practice to regularly sample in-house use of materials to gather data on items that may never be checked out, although they are used in the library.

Step Three

Build weeding into the year's work calendar. Set priorities and schedule the time when you will weed the collection. Those specific areas of the collection that are most in need of weeding or those that will be handled for a specific reason, such as barcoding or relocating, should be weeded first.

In a perfect world, one CREWing of an entire collection would take approximately a year, although the first, most thorough CREWing may well take longer, especially if the collection is older and has not been weeded in years. That does not mean that you physically handle every book in that year, but some thought is given to each area and, at the very least, older, worn books are removed. Some standards, including *Texas Public Library Standards*, 2004, recommend a thorough weeding every three to five years.

Allow plenty of time for the CREWing. If done in a careful manner, weeding can be a slow process requiring thought and judgment. If there is a peak season for one type of book (e.g., the 500's are heavily used just before the school science fair is held), schedule that section well before or well after that time to make the inventory more accurate. While it would be ideal to do the weeding during slack hours and slow seasons when there will be minimal distractions, in reality, few libraries experience these times. The librarian who is waiting for a slow period to weed will be waiting a very long time. Setting aside specific times to weed makes it part of your routine. Scheduling tasks also allows you to use volunteers and aides to help.

Step Four

Gather the following materials on a book truck at the shelves to be analyzed:

- A computer printout of the section being reviewed
- A blank note pad and sticky notes (like Post-It Notes™)
- A pen and/or colored pencils
- A shelf marker
- This manual (or a copy of the *Overview Chart of CREW Formulas* found in Appendix)
- An empty book cart
- Supply of disposal slips (see Appendix)

Ideally, before working on a specific section, shelves should be read to ensure proper item order. You may also want to schedule volunteers to cull shabby books and extra multiple copies. This will make the process easier and more accurate and reduce the urge to reshelve misplaced items or get distracted from weeding.

Step Five

Study the area you will be weeding as a whole. Examine each item in turn, checking for physical condition, last circulation date, copyright date, and appropriateness for your collection. Allow time for breaks to stay alert. Do not do so much at one time that you lose concentration and good judgment. Refer to the CREW Guidelines by Dewey Class in this manual, to learn general subject considerations. Do feel free to alter the formulas to fit your particular needs, using your experience and knowledge of your community. Take the time to record any guideline alterations in the margins of this manual to maintain local consistency.

If you are uncertain about your decision, check the library's holdings, any union catalogs to which the library belongs, and bibliographic aids (see Bibliography). Remember that some subjects are classified in other Dewey areas. If you are undecided about a marginal title, also check the holdings of other branches or nearby libraries. If it is readily available elsewhere, you can feel more secure about your decision to discard it.

Place a Post-it Note™ on those books needing attention or discard (marking the category of handling needed), and reshelve the books that are fine 'as is.' If you stop the work temporarily, mark the stopping point with the shelf marker and mark the last entry on the printout. As a double check, you may want to note the call number of the last book on your pad. You may also wish to make notes as you proceed for displays, booklists, or locally prepared indexes (e.g., an index to short story anthologies owned by the library).

Step Six

Inventory the library's holdings. While you are weeding, you may also choose to take inventory. When examining a book for weeding, make a check mark with a colored pencil on the verso of its title page or in any consistent spot unlikely to be noticed and erased by patrons (for example, the upper right hand corner of the title page). Make a corresponding mark on the printout for that book next to the barcode number for that copy or in a column you have added for this purpose (see CREWing with Computers for additional information).

Do not consider books that are not physically on hand, unless you have included loaned items in your print out (in which case the books that are on loan, but not overdue, can be inventoried with other titles in the area on which you are working). If a book is not on loan and is not on the shelf, highlight that item for further searching at a later time. If the item is not checked out and cannot be located within a reasonable period of time, consider it to be lost or stolen and withdraw it from the collection.

In all other cases, mark all books returned after you have weeded an area, or that are located at a later time, that lack the appropriate inventory check on their title page versos and their printout entries prior to placing them back on the open shelf. Any book still unchecked on the printout six months after that area has been inventoried may safely be presumed lost or stolen, unless you know it to be at the bindery or long

overdue and in the process of being retrieved. To ensure an accurate collection count, mark these books 'missing' and delete the entry from the online catalog.

Step Seven

Check the pulled books against any standard indexes and bibliographic resources in the library's reference collection or in databases available to patrons. If you are unsure about discarding a book or replacing it if shabby, this process will alert you to an item that might be used a lot by the reference staff. If paper indexes owned by the library, like *Short Story Index*, will continually be directing patrons and staff to the book you are considering discarding, its inclusion in the index might suggest exemption from the general rules of weeding. If the book is physically worn, then replacement, repair, or a change to non-circulating status may be warranted.

Check online databases to see if the title you are considering for discard is indexed there. Especially for poetry and literary criticism, works that are available online in full-text may make it easier to discard a book. However, keep in mind that even though some databases include full-text entries for poetry, short stories, etc., patrons may still want to borrow print copies of indexed material to browse and use at home. Even if the library subscribes to the electronic version of *Short Story Index* and the retrospective index, which includes full-text for more than 4,000 stories, consider keeping the collections that contain the original text unless the book is in such poor condition that it cannot be saved or is of minimal interest to your community.

Volunteers, interns, and clerical staff can help with this part of the weeding process. If the title is not in the index or bibliographic aid then it can continue through the discard process. If the title is included, then the librarian or a designated staff person would need to make the final decision.

In addition, standard indexes will often include lists of possible new titles to purchase. Often, these lists are available at the website of the index's publisher. For example, H.W. Wilson lists the dozen or so titles selected for inclusion in the January 2008 update of *Short Story Index*.

Step Eight

Disposal Slip

Book Title or Call Number: _____

- ❑ Bindery
- ❑ Mend/Preserve
- ❑ Promote
- ❑ Donate to: _____
- ❑ Sent To: _____
- ❑ Check Database for other locations of this title: _____
- ❑ Discard
- ❑ Book Sale
- ❑ Replacement/New Edition

Other locations of this title: _____

Title to replace this volume: _____

Authorizing Agent: _____

Treat the books according to their slips.

1. **Bindery:** Prepare bindery forms for books needing binding and store them for periodic bindery pickup or mailout. We'll discuss binding later, but in general, use this option very sparingly.

2. **Mending:** Do the required mending or put the books aside for a clerk or volunteer to mend. Be conservative about mending. If mending takes more than about 10 minutes, consider replacing the item with a newer copy. Be careful about mending outdated items. While a new Mylar jacket can give new life to a shabby cover, no one wants to read a book that is filled with tape and glue.

3. **Discard:** Process the discards by removing or marking through all labels or stamps identifying the library; removing copy information from the online catalog; and, tearing off book pockets, old circulation cards and barcodes, stamping an appropriate designation such as 'discard,' 'withdrawn' or 'obsolete' on the inside of the front and back covers. Put the discards aside for the booksale, store them for an annual sale or donation to another library, or box them for garbage pickup or the pulp dealer. Remember to remove or cover any barcodes or identifying marks before disposing of any materials to prevent their being returned to the library by misguided but goodhearted souls who, for instance, may have bought them at a garage sale.

4. **Replacement:** Place aside for careful consideration each book needing replacement by a new copy, new edition, or better title on the same subject.

5. **Recycling:** The library should already be a scheduled stop on any recycling pickup program for newspapers, periodicals, and other recyclable materials. If recycling a much larger amount of material than usual, let the service know ahead of time so they can plan for the extra room needed in their pickup vehicle. Use volunteers to process any items that need to have covers removed, plastic coils stripped off, etc., before recycling. Keep in mind that books may not be accepted by local recyclers unless the covers are removed. You may need to arrange for a specialty company to pick them up. Also consider recycling by allowing patrons to scavenge discards that would otherwise be placed in the trash. (See also, What to do with Weeded Books: Types of Disposal.)

Step Nine

Replacement checking and ordering. At the conclusion of your work in a specific area, select and order replacements. Compare the weeded books that were set aside for replacement with titles in recent editions of collection bibliographies and indexes for possible newer titles.

Further, if the library's collection does not contain any recommended titles in a specific area, consider using collection bibliographies to locate appropriate recommended titles, unless there is little demand for that particular subject. Standard collection bibliographies, recommended lists, indexes, databases and further readings are provided at the end of this manual.

It may also be helpful to consult lists of award-winning books such as Pulitzer Prize Books, National Book Awards, Best Books for Young Adults (ALA), Notable Books (ALA), Newbery and Caldecott award winners and honor books, Bluebonnet and Lone Star reading lists (Texas Library Association awards), and Coretta Scott King Award winners, as well as bibliographies in *Library Journal*, *School Library Journal*, and *Booklist*. For children's and young adult books, as well as classics, consult local school and college reading lists. Also consider media attention, such as Oprah's Book Club picks, for titles that may enjoy a resurgence of interest for a period of time.

Check reviews of new books for the last year. Many review sources, such as *Booklist,* can be accessed in full-text through TexShare databases.[7] *Books in Print* lists replacement or supplementary titles and new editions. Pencil in a star or some other symbol on the flyleaf of each book slated for replacement before reshelving it and mark 'TBR' (To Be Replaced) on the computer printout. This step will alert you to pull the book when the replacement comes in. Prepare the orders for the replacements with the note, 'Repl. (call number)' as another signal to pull the older book when the new copy is received.

Step Ten

Set up displays for low circulating, high quality books that would benefit from exposure. Plan the displays to be colorful and relevant to current community concerns and interests or simply to provide an attractive and enticing display. If the book still does not circulate while on display, consider it as a candidate for trade or donation with another library or for discard due to lack of interest. Try placing displays in unexpected locations, such as near the checkout desk, where patrons might be tempted to take an extra book out or pick up a book for their child.

If done routinely every day, or even every week, this review of the collection will expand your knowledge of the library's holdings, give you a pool of possible reference sources, and prepare you for informed selection of new materials on the basis of actual usage and the real strengths and weaknesses of the collection. You may even want to coordinate selection of new science books to coincide with CREWing of the 500's. In this way, the relationship between the present collection, its use, and future directions will be strong and direct. Selection by subject grouping also makes it easier to evenly allocate purchases for each area of major demand, as opposed to random selection based on casually scanning issues of journals that carry reviews of books and nonprint materials.

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[7] EBSCO Academic Search Complete and MasterFILE Premier – *Booklist* Full-text; 1/1/2002 to present with a 14-day delay.

CREWing Children's Materials

Juvenile collections are as different from adult collections as children are from adults, and require different considerations for selection and deselection. To begin with, children as patrons often require an adult 'go-between' to find what they need for research and pleasure reading. A child browsing through the nonfiction collection may be completely lost unless he or she has been shown, and understands, how to find the materials needed. Children are even less likely than their adult counterparts to note the publication date and double check facts against other sources. They are particularly susceptible to outdated or inaccurate information since they do not always have the knowledge base to distinguish it, assuming that if it's in the library, it must be both true and current. This alone makes it critical to regularly weed outdated material from the collection regardless of how recently it last circulated. Parents often pick up everything on a topic for their child to use at home and children will take a book without considering that the information may be outdated and erroneous.

Inexperienced users of the juvenile collections can be easily misled and adult criteria cannot be applied in all cases. For example, an item may have been on the shelf for well over a year, completely ignored and unused, but if a skilled librarian matches the book to the right child, it becomes both useful and valuable to the collection. This is what makes individual guidance, use in story times, displays, and book talks so important for making materials accessible: they are what cause seemingly 'dead' collections to spring to life. Many books in the children's collection continue to be popular for decades but need to be replaced because of wear and tear.

The basic guidelines of weeding can be applied to both adult and juvenile collections. Naturally, the person who selects the materials should be the person overseeing the culling of the collection and making the final weeding decisions. As in adult collections, a weeding process that strengthens the entire collection, both in appearance and content, requires the judgment of a person who knows children's literature, as well as the audience the collection serves. The review of the collection should be **continuous**, with one full cycle ideally completed annually. In evaluating the collection, standard lists and review sources should be consulted.

General Guidelines

Juvenile Fiction

Be ruthless in weeding juvenile fiction. While many titles are used for class reading assignments, most fiction is leisure reading. Popular interest is the primary criteria for this section. Weed duplicate copies of past bestsellers if interest has waned, beginning by discarding the most worn copies.

Consider discarding older fiction especially when it has not circulated in the past two or three years. Also look for books that contain stereotyping, including stereotypical images and views of people with disabilities and the elderly, or gender and racial biases.

Replace worn editions of classics and award winners only if they are still in demand and can be replaced with attractive new editions. Unless your library serves a school of education or a library school, there may be little or no demand for decades-old award winners. Discard fiction books with drab, coarse, or heavy bindings that have dull covers, especially re-binds that replaced jackets with plain or patterned covers; they will not 'sell' to young readers. Purchase library editions sparingly; the bindings may last well beyond interest in the book.

Young Adult Fiction

Paperbacks are often the preferred reading format for teens. This section is almost entirely leisure reading and should be kept as current as possible. Anything older than five years should be kept only if it is circulating well; classics should be replaced with newer hardback or paperback editions.

Picture Books

Picture books receive heavy use and often are discarded due to poor condition, especially smudged or dirty pages. The content should be evaluated on the merit of the stories and illustrations. Given the wide range of possibilities to choose from in today's children's literature market, there is no reason this section should be anything less than the highest quality items, although it may also include lesser quality books of temporary popularity. Books of ephemeral interest, including those that feature trademarked characters and characters from television shows, should be withdrawn as soon as the popularity wanes. Be wary of donated books with weak bindings that do not stand up to constant use and abuse. Board books and books with moveable parts will need to be replaced more frequently, the former because they are chewed on and become soiled, the latter because the flaps, folds, and pop-ups wear out and tear.

Replace worn copies of classics and perennial favorites. Remember that parents and caregivers will visit the library, lists in hand, to find books for their children. If they don't find something after checking five or six titles, they will assume that the library has 'nothing to offer.' Purchase multiple copies of very popular books and standard titles. Use resources like the New York Public Library's "100 Picture Books Everyone Should Know," http://kids.nypl.org/reading/recommended2.cfm?ListID=61 for guidance.

Nonfiction

This is the area where many collections face the most difficulty. The misguided belief that 'anything is better than nothing' has perpetuated the retention of many outdated and inaccurate nonfiction items, often to the detriment of the child. At best, providing a student with information that is no longer current can result in a lower grade on an assignment. Outdated information also provides a warped and inaccurate view of the subject and results in a lowered regard for the expertise of the librarian. Parents, teachers, and children will then question the validity of the collection. It is better to lack enough information on a topic than to have erroneous information. In fact, the

need for more current titles on a particular topic can be a powerful leverage tool to make the case for more funding. Use the same general criteria for each area that is provided in the *CREW Guidelines by Dewey Class*, being especially attentive to weeding material that has not been used in several years or has been superseded by new editions.

Other Considerations

Simplified Classics also known as 'abridgements,' should be evaluated carefully. Although some may be useful for reluctant readers or adult beginning readers, they are often hackneyed, drab, and lifeless. Some exceptions include a few retellings of classics, like *Shakespeare's Stories* and Eric Kimmel's *The Hero Beowulf***,** have received high praise and retain the spirit of the original while simplifying the text. If in doubt, check standard review sources, keeping only titles that were positively reviewed. Replace other titles with new hardcover or paperback editions of the full text.

Series Books may be well written and of high quality or be poorly written and without literary merit. Kids read series books for pleasure and, with guidance, often move on to better quality series and single titles. Replace low-quality series with newer editions of series favorites like the Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew, Chet Gecko, the Magic Treehouse and Junie B. Jones.

Be aware of whether the books are a series or if books are sequels or prequels to other titles. Replace missing titles in popular series if titles don't stand alone. Check resources like Mid-Continent Public Library's Juvenile Series and Sequels website, http://www.mcpl.lib.mo.us/readers/series/juv/title.cfm. Remember also that there can be series in most genres, including beginning readers and nonfiction.

Older Titles with shabby bindings, outdated illustrations, or torn pages should be discarded. Replace award books, such as Newbery or Caldecott, with newer editions if the books are still being read. Discard nondescript titles that were popular fifteen or so years ago in favor of newer titles with updated illustrations addressing contemporary issues.

Older Editions printed on thin paper with fine print or unattractive illustrations should be discarded in favor of newer titles. Old, worn classics should be replaced with new hardback or bright, attractive paperback editions. Be especially careful about keeping older titles for sentimental reasons, "But I loved that book as a child!" If children today are not reading the book, either bring it to their attention through book talks and displays or discard it.

Geography titles more than five years old are misleading and inaccurate and should be pulled. The older the title, the more inaccurate the content will be. Imagine how useless a title published before either of the World Wars

is to a student today working on a research paper topic from the 20th century! Although they may be interesting from an historical point of view, books on countries and states are of no value for contemporary social studies projects.

Science, Medicine, Inventions and other topics that change rapidly should be reviewed and updated every five years. Items more than ten years old should almost always be discarded. As in the adult collection, erroneous information about science, technology or medicine is potentially harmful to the patron who may attempt to follow instructions no longer considered safe.

Textbooks and material written specifically for curriculum purposes in public or private schools should be discarded, unless there is a strong demand from the community and they are updated every few years as the curriculum changes. If there is a substantial homeschooled population in the community and older textbooks are of interest to them, one alternative may be to locate textbooks in a separate section where they will be readily accessible.

Systematic CREWing of the children's collection is a necessary part of public library work, and should be done with a thorough knowledge of the collection and the literature. Children are less likely to grow up as library users and supporters if the collection holds little or nothing of interest to them or is perceived as being full of outdated stuff. When weeding is done in tandem with a strong, well-balanced book selection and purchase policy, the collection will enhance the overall library program and enrich the lives of the children and young adults it serves.

Two ideas for small libraries to keep in mind when judging the effectiveness of a juvenile collection are the 'boutique' theory and the 'bubble up' theory. A superstore-like atmosphere that offers 'everything under the sun' may be too overwhelming for young readers, especially if they have to cull through a lot of uninteresting material to find the 'good stuff.' A smaller, boutique-like selection of quality books will serve them better.

Multiple copies of high quality, popular books are more worthwhile than having single copies of many books that are not being used. It is also better to have several copies of a book like Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, which is perennially popular, than to have single copies of books on monsters that no one is reading. Additionally, superior literature, like the proverbial cream, will 'bubble up' to the top, appearing on recommended book lists, award lists and the like. Libraries with limited collection development funds may prefer to wait for annual best books lists to choose blue-ribbon titles for their juvenile collections.

CREWing The Reference Collection

In most libraries, reference service is one of the most visible expressions of the library's mission and is key to many of the roles or service priorities selected during long range planning processes. In spite of the pervasiveness of the Internet, reference service remains vital in many libraries. Patrons find that they are frustrated by the amount of material returned in an Internet search and are often unable to determine the veracity of the information. Therefore, they turn to the public library reference staff and the collection. The community being served and the parameters of the reference service offered help to define the breadth and depth of the reference collection.

Reference collections have changed dramatically in the past decade because of the prevalence of online resources. Many reference titles that were standard in the past are no longer available in print formats or are supplemented by an online subscription that comes with the print version. Many libraries find that their reference collection is shrinking rapidly; however, a good ready-reference collection continues to be a vital component of good service. Still, "the paradox of the print reference collection is that it must be close at hand and yet openly available to users."[8] Without intervention by the librarian, many patrons don't know about the resources available.

The reference collection is an area of the collection where observation of patron use and cooperative collection development between libraries plays a role in your weeding decisions. Having ready access to reliable resources is more important than having a lot of electronic resources available that take time to access. Indeed, older titles, especially some that may be described as 'eccentric,' may be of more value than newer titles, the Internet, or electronic databases.[9] Therefore, it is vital that the reference collection be viable and useful, with outdated, inaccurate resources culled to make it easier to find useful information. This will require annual or even semi-annual evaluation of the collection.

The two basic tenets of CREWing reference collections continue to hold today: the automatic deselection of older editions that have been superseded and periodic evaluation by the librarian. Following your evaluation of how the reference tools are being used, you may determine that some items should be replaced more frequently than others or that you will retain specific types of tools longer than others. For example, if you have access to an online database that includes a good almanac, you may not need to replace the paper copy every year. Even though reliable dictionaries are now available online, you may want to purchase a new hardcover dictionary every three or four years to ensure that new words are included, transferring the older edition to the circulating collection if appropriate. Some of these items that should be updated yearly, or as new editions become available, are most useful for ready

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[8] Lampasone, Lauren. "A Time to Weed." *Library Journal*, May 1, 2008, p. 100.

[9] Wickens, Andy. "The Need to Weed," *American Libraries*, November 2005, p. 41.

reference services. If in doubt, consult resources like *Recommended Reference Books for Small and Medium-Sized Libraries and Media Centers* by Shannon Graff Hysell.

It is recommended that the library have a written collection development policy for the reference collection that outlines standards for selection and depth of coverage. Be sure to include information about foreign language reference materials, as more language dictionaries and other resources are being published each year. The policy should include criteria for the removal of outdated reference sources, which may involve keeping an older edition for a specific length of time, transferring the material to the circulating collection, putting it in storage, or discarding the item. This policy should also include information about exceptions to the general guidelines. For example, local history items may be retained forever regardless of condition or recent use. Many reference titles are more expensive than other books; a good policy helps the library avoid criticism for discarding expensive items.

Library reference collections now include websites linked from the library's home page, such as directories, government resources, and other popular ready-reference tools. While there is no 'cost' for acquiring these reference tools, be sure to check them regularly and weed out the ones that no longer work or are of limited value to patrons. Check the annual Reference Supplement to Library Journal, issued each Fall. This Supplement includes "Subject Listings,"[10] a round-up of recent and forthcoming titles in various formats that might serve patrons better. Also, each spring, *Booklist* provides updated information on current, recommended world atlases and dictionaries. Within each issue is the Reference Books Bulletin section that provides reviews of new reference resources.

Types of Resources

Regardless of the resources that are available electronically or via the Internet, some categories of reference resources remain important to most collections.

Encyclopedias

General comprehensive encyclopedias are quickly being replaced by online subscriptions and free encyclopedias like *Wikipedia*. Especially in smaller libraries, a set of print encyclopedias will allow multiple users to access information when all computers are in use. Generally retain at least one print encyclopedia, replacing it every five years. Texas public libraries have access to *Encyclopedia Britannica* through TexShare K-12 databases.

Subject encyclopedias, like *The Encyclopedia of Holidays and Celebrations: A Country-by-Country Guide*, should be updated when new editions become available or replaced by a similar resource every ten years.

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[10] "Subject Listings." In Reference 2008 Supplement to *Library Journal* v.132 no. 19 (November 15, 2007) pp. 13-58.

Almanacs

Almanacs are by definition published annually and generally include information arranged in tabular format or in subject fields arranged chronologically. While it is tempting to think that the Internet might have replaced print almanacs, that is not happening, and almanacs remain a staple on the ready reference shelf. Although almanacs may contain historical information, timeliness is critical and they are rarely useful after two years. Specialization and ease of use are key factors for these ready reference tools. Generally, almanacs should be updated annually, with older editions transferred to the circulating collection and then discarded the next year.

Regional almanacs may be retained for historic research, depending on the needs of the community. With few exceptions, there is no reason to retain outdated copies of almanacs, including books like *Chase's Calendar of Events.* Exceptions to this include older editions of the *Texas Almanac*, which may be retained indefinitely since each contains unique features that are not found in succeeding volumes, and specialized almanacs like *The Old Farmer's Almanac*, if local interest warrants and they are used regularly. For example, the 1994 edition of *The Texas Almanac* includes a list of major motion pictures filmed around the state since 1970 and the 2008-2009 edition includes a history of minor league baseball in Texas. Be sure, however, that the spine label includes the year as part of the call number so that the date is obvious to users. Even this exception may not be valid as more information is being put on the Internet. Many of the history features are now provided on the Texas Almanac online at http://www.texasalmanac.com. If the print editions are not being used regularly, discard them or move them to the Texana or local history collection.

Dictionaries

Unabridged dictionaries and general desk dictionaries should be updated regularly. Check to see if new words, usually mentioned in news articles each year, are included. For example, some of the new words included in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, Sixth Edition* released in 2007, include 'carbon-neutral,' 'splitsville' and 'goody bag'.

Specialized dictionaries, such as those for abbreviations, slang, and acronyms, should be updated regularly. Older editions may be retained and added to the circulating collection, but watch to ensure that they are not sitting on the shelf unused. In general, biographical dictionaries can be retained until superseded by a newer edition. If the publisher stops publishing the print version of the dictionary, then find a more current resource. Biographical dictionaries that focus on a specific period of time can be retained indefinitely. For example, *Shapers of the Great Debate at the Constitutional Convention of 1787: a Biographical Dictionary*.

Foreign language dictionaries should be retained until a new edition is available unless they are unused. Update commonly used languages, such as Spanish and French, at least once every five years. Older editions can be moved to the circulating collection until they become shabby or cease to circulate. Be aware of changes in the needs of your community; as new ethnic groups move to town, purchase appropriate language materials.

Directories

Directories are normally discarded when newer editions arrive, although several years' worth may be retained if space permits and usage warrants. Keep in mind that some directories, like *The Statesman's Yearbook,* include a subscription to the online service with the print version. This contains archival information and may allow older copies to be discarded without loss of historical data. Telephone and directory information is now online. If you have city directories and local telephone books, which are useful for genealogical research, keep indefinitely as space permits. Older editions should be housed separately from the current editions; many of these resources are also available on CD-ROM.

Atlases

More maps are being made available online but good up-to-date print atlases allow patrons to peruse geographical elements or compare components of several maps. Usually revised every five years, comprehensive geographical atlases (*Oxford Atlas of the World*) should be replaced when updated. Although published in 1999, *The Times Atlas of the World* is still considered 'the pinnacle of atlases"[11] and should be retained until a new edition is available. Relatively inexpensive road atlases can be replaced every couple of years. Oversized atlases may require special handling to keep bindings intact.

Retrospective or historical atlases, such as *The Routledge Historical Atlas of Religion in America,* may be kept indefinitely as this information is unlikely to change, although new editions or recent publications may update interpretations of events or provide new information. Map books, including local street guides and atlases that deal with local areas and regions may be kept indefinitely. However, these are more appropriately placed in the local history collection, since patrons may not check copyright dates before using them.

Handbooks

Handbooks include a wide variety of resources that pull together a compendium of information on a specific subject or technique. Designed to be easily consulted, handbooks provide quick access to information. Issues such as ease of use, indexing, and other features are frequently the decision maker in weeding questionable handbooks. Many handbooks are updated regularly, and whenever possible, the collection should include the most recent editions.

Resources that deal with health issues, such as *The Physicians' Desk Reference*, must be replaced as soon as a new edition is available. Be cautious about adding older editions to the circulating collection, as outdated information may be dangerous.

Subjects in the humanities (music, art, literature) may be retained indefinitely based on usefulness, supplemented by newer texts. Social science reference tools are

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[11] "World Atlas and Dictionary Roundup." *Booklist*. http://www.ala.org/ala/booklist/speciallists/speciallistsandfeatures3/worldatlas.cfm

considered outdated after ten years, by which time outmoded theories and practices are usually revised. Notable exceptions are handbooks that contain significant historical data. If local interest warrants, keep the most recent price guide for collectibles and antiques in the reference collection, moving the previous one or two editions to the circulating collection. Very rarely is there a reason to keep older price guides.

Science resources are generally outdated in five years, although texts on botany and natural history, especially those covering local areas such as *Little Big Bend: Common, Uncommon, and Rare Plants of Big Bend National Park* may be retained for longer periods. The most recent automotive repair manuals may be kept in the reference collection; older manuals should be moved to the circulating collection.

Indexes

Many general and subject specific indexes are being replaced by electronic databases. Still, a few important and useful works are provided only in paper format at this time. The library may want to retain older indexes, like *Song Finder*, that index material not included in online indexes. In general, paper indexes should be kept only as long as the library retains the materials cited, unless the index will be used to assist in interlibrary loan. In most cases, researchers needing historical information will use a university or large public library. Do not keep older indexes as a fall back in case the database is cancelled! In general, if an index has not been used within the past three years, it is highly unlikely to be used in the next three years.

Older editions of *Granger's Index to Poetry* may be kept if they index out of print volumes that have been retained by the library. Others, such as *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* may also be kept, since newer editions delete some items while adding others.

Legal Forms and Information

Most libraries find that demand remains high for legal forms and sample documents in spite of the availability of materials in electronic formats. However, it is essential that these documents be up-to-date. Review annually for new editions of titles like *How to Do Your Own Divorce in Texas* (Nolo Press), titles that deal with bankruptcy and estate planning, and, of course, books on tax preparation. Older editions should be discarded as they contain too much outdated information and serve little or no purpose. If space permits and there is strong local need, keep tax preparation guides for three years to accommodate the needs of those with filing extensions, amended returns, or late filings.

CREWing Nonprint Media

It's a given that libraries today house more than just books and periodicals. In fact, our periodical section may be decreasing in size as our media collections are increasing. Even the smallest libraries have at least a modest nonprint collection that may include some or all of the following: DVDs, videocassettes, Blu-Ray, CDs, audiocassettes, Playaways®[12], book and media kits, art prints, phonograph records, and computer or gaming software.

The CREW method is just as effective in keeping nonprint collections accurate, up-to-date, and attractive as it is for traditional print media. Items in nonprint collections, particularly audio and film formats may still be thought of as 'special,' or somehow more valuable than printed materials, primarily because their initial cost may be higher and the collection may be limited. Evidence of this is often seen in shorter circulation periods, higher fines for overdue media and/or restrictions on lending nonprint media to young people.

Keep in mind that the physical format of the item is less important than its usefulness as a source of information or entertainment. The availability of hardware or other technology with which to use nonprint materials is a major question to consider when weeding the nonprint collection. It is important to know your community and the saturation or dissolution of the hardware needed to use nonprint materials. Don't keep a collection of vinyl records if very few people have a turntable available for use! Many libraries provide equipment for in-house use or to check out; be sure that the community is still interested in the format so that you are not simply taking up space for a format that has dissipated. Conduct a quick survey using a tool like Survey Monkey, www.surveymonkey.com, or Zoomerang, www.zoomerang.com, to determine local interest in formats.

Although the same general principles apply to weeding AV materials as those outlined previously for print materials, there are some marked differences that present challenges in the multimedia deselection process. There are still few standard lists of recommended multimedia titles by format, and those that are available quickly become dated. There are, however, some award lists that can be consulted. Only a relatively small percentage of the multimedia titles published every year are reviewed, and in some formats, there may not be any reviews available.

If the materials were selected primarily for entertainment value, weeding decisions will be based primarily on use, popularity, and wear. If withdrawal and replacement decisions will be based on content or subject coverage, rather than simply by usage and condition, then your decisions should be based on the specific goals of the collection. For example, even though they are used a lot less than other formats, Austin Public Library retains a large collection of vinyl records due to the local music industry. It can be more difficult to review nonprint items for relevance of content and to check for wear since their formats require that someone view or listen to them.

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[12] Playaway is a self-contained digital audiobook, which requires no additional equipment for use.

This review can also include loading software onto computers or game players. Decisions will often be made based on a visual examination, length of time the item has been in the collection, number of circulations, or a patron's complaint about the condition of an item.

One criterion to keep in mind while evaluating nonprint media for discard is that many libraries, as a regular part of their policies, will not loan or borrow audiovisual materials through interlibrary loan. Therefore, needed audiovisual materials will not always be available through this source. Other considerations are: physical condition, factual accuracy, visual and sound quality, instructional usefulness, and inappropriate or obsolete format (e.g., 16-mm film, 35mm slide sets, microfiche, Beta video). While many nonprint formats have passed from library collections, they may still be offered to the library as gifts.

Common Nonprint Materials

DVDs/Other Digital Video Disc Formats

DVDs replaced VHS videos several years ago and Blu-Ray may move to the forefront quickly. There are no real standards for the lifespan of various media. Under ideal conditions, theoretically, any medium could last forever. However, library use is not 'normal' use. Variations in the quality of playback equipment and handling can mean that some media will not hold up well with even minimal use. Each media format has its own idiosyncrasies for cleaning and handling. Library staff may, for example, be able to buff or clean away minor scratches on a DVD, but Blu-Ray discs require different handling as their hard coat can easily be buffed away, destroying the data. It is generally not worth a lot of effort to clean and repair media. Good equipment that may actually repair damage is expensive and requires a great deal of time (approximately 10-20 minutes per DVD, for example). Review Jim Scholtz's article in *Library Journal*, "To Repair or Not to Repair[13]" for an overview of the technology and a comparison of disc repair machines if you are considering trying to clean and repair discs.

Videocassettes

Fewer videocassettes are available for purchase and many libraries are only adding videos received as donations. Libraries struggling to maintain a collection in this rapidly disappearing format may be tempted to keep any videocassette regardless of interest, quality, or condition. Any video that has not circulated within the past year should be discarded regardless of its condition.

Although there are exceptions, it is probably not reasonable to expect that even under the best circumstances a videocassette can survive more than about 200 to 250 plays before experiencing problems from wear and tear. Some distributors use lower quality videotape, thus reducing the price of their titles, but ensuring a shorter tape life.

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[13] Scholtz, James. "To Repair or Not to Repair." *Library Journal*, May 15, 2004, p22-25 [AudioVideo supplement]

While many libraries rely on patrons to let them know when a videocassette has problems, it is wise to visually examine them for condition at least every 50 circulations. If you are evaluating for content, rely on patron circulation for all entertainment videos. For nonfiction or documentary videos, consider currency of the treatment of the topic; content accuracy; relevance of themes; fairness of racial, cultural, or sex role depiction; and the continuing relevance of the material within the library's overall collection development plan.

When examining the media collection to weed, break it down into smaller subject areas that can be easily evaluated. Clearly, any video that has not circulated in the past year should be considered for weeding, especially in the entertainment and feature film categories. However, travel videos and documentaries may circulate less often, and you may want to retain titles that have enduring value but are used less frequently. Keep in mind, however, that if a title hasn't circulated in two or three years, it is unlikely to be requested in the next two years.

For help in selecting replacement videos or in judging whether to keep a marginal item, refer to the *Video Round Table's Notable Videos* list at http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/vrt/initiatives/notablevideos/index.cfm. The titles on this list are the best of the non-feature films (that is, they are educational, documentary, or how-to films) released during the previous and current calendar year.

DVDs

In general, the same criteria can be used in evaluating DVDs. Minor scratches may not impair usage and patrons will generally let you know if there are problems. Deep scratches usually cannot be easily repaired; the time and equipment needed to effect repairs don't make sense economically for small and medium-sized public libraries.

Discard entertainment and feature film DVDs that have not circulated at least once during the past year. There is either something wrong with the unit or patrons have lost interest in the title. Nonfiction DVDs may circulate less frequently, although certainly titles like Ken Burns' *Jazz* or The Discovery Channel's *Meerkat Manor* may rival circulation of feature films. Foreign films and films in languages other than English may also have limited circulation. However, certain communities may have more of a population of non-native English speakers. Keep items in languages used in your community if interest warrants.

Audiocassettes

Audiocassettes are rapidly disappearing from collections as producers are moving away from them. Music is almost impossible to find in this format and audiobook producers often charge more for audiocassettes than for compact discs. For younger children, new learners, and language courses, the format is popular because they are easier to back up and replay than other discs. If the format is still moving in your community, donations and aftermarket sellers (such as eBay) may be the only sources for acquiring items.

Content may include popular music recordings, language courses, or audiobooks and spoken word. Items in this format are somewhat fragile and easily damaged, but no

more so than other formats. If a tape comes off a reel or breaks, there may be no way to repair it if the cassette casing is hermetically sealed. While many audiocassettes can be opened with small screwdrivers, it is not worth the time required to repair audiocassettes. Tape that has been mangled or twisted should be considered damaged and the cassette discarded. Although many publishers of unabridged audiobooks are no longer producing new titles in cassette format, they often will replace a damaged tape that is part of a set free of charge or for a nominal fee. Although you may not be able to replace them in audiocassette, sets with missing or defective language cassettes and manuals should be replaced if funds allow, regardless of the number of cassettes in the set or whether the entire set must be reordered. Incomplete sets may be included in an annual or ongoing booksale.

Weed music cassettes that have not circulated within the past year or two; CD is generally preferred. Weed audiobooks that have not circulated in the past two years, especially non-fiction titles that would be considered out of date in your book collection. Consider weeding abridged audiobooks, especially those that severely abridge the book, unless they are preferred by a large percentage of the community.

Compact Discs

CDs are the current format of choice for musical recordings, as well as audiobooks. Ideally, the popular collection should reflect all genres, styles, time periods, composers and performers, as well as include a sampling of collections or anthologies, highlights and greatest hits. Information-based CDs should be evaluated on: physical condition, currency of information, use, and duplication of information in another format. Music CDs may be judged by their popularity with library users. Discard them once use decreases. Consider weeding audiobooks that have not circulated within the past two years, especially nonfiction titles that are outdated and would be weeded from the print collection due to copyright date (of the original book) or erroneous information.

CDs are made from the same material used to construct bulletproof windows, polycarbonate plastic. Sources disagree on the actual life span of this medium, and, of course, life span is determined by a number of factors having to do with use and care. Although they will not deteriorate appreciably if stored correctly, circulating CDs sustain damage from mishandling ranging from chips and cracks to deep scratches and warped discs. Light scratches can be polished out, but balance the time spent cleaning and attempting repairs against the replacement cost and continued usefulness of the recording. CDs are also susceptible to temperature extremes, excess humidity, and high intensity UV light. Discs should be regularly checked for signs of damage and discarded. Unabridged audiobooks are expensive; most producers will replace damaged or missing discs at no or low cost.

Book/CD/Tape Sets (Juvenile)

Audiocassettes and compact discs in read-along sets are subject to the same evaluation criteria outlined in the previous sections. Since these items are popular and incur high usage by children, cassettes, CDs and other components are often not returned with the books. Replacements for the audio portion may be available, but be

sure that the accompanying book is also in good condition. If the cassette or CD is not being replaced and the book is in good condition, the book may easily be added to the existing juvenile or picture book collection. Replace companion books when they become worn if the cassette tapes and compact discs are still in good condition.

Video Games

Game playing is extremely popular in many communities and many libraries offer computer or console games, including PlayStation2, Nintendo, Wii, Xbox, etc., for checkout. The major weeding decision factor frequently will have to do with platforms. Once the platform is no longer supported by the hardware companies, interest usually rapidly declines. Of course, when the games are no longer available for purchase, the library's collection may see an increase in use by those who are holding on to the older technology. Look for damaged items or those missing parts and discard them.

While there are few core collection titles, check your collection against the "Top Fifty Gaming Core Collection Titles" from *Young Adult Library Services* online at http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Gaming_Lists_&_Activities#, for a list of popular games that are available for various platforms.

Less Common Nonprint Formats

Computer Software

Because of licensing and format considerations, fewer libraries have a circulating computer software collection. From the standpoint of physical limitations, such as problems caused by exposure to magnetic fields, circulating computer software is not as problematic as it was in the past. The physical limitations of floppy disks are not there with CD-ROMS. However, the software is still subject to damage and there are the labor-intensive chores of checking each returned item for damage. Much of the current software actually involves the purchase of a license and there is nothing, per se, to circulate. Many of the programs require permanent installation on the users' computers or will only run on hard disks. Licensing agreements prohibit multiple installations running at the same time. Be careful about adding outdated software received through donations to the collection. Discard when items are damaged or when they have not circulated within the past year, as this is an indication of lack of need or interest.

Art Prints

Art reproductions are less prevalent now than in the past and many libraries have phased out their collections. Any prints that have not circulated in the past year should be weeded. Prints that are faded, scratched, warped, or otherwise shabby should be weeded, along with those that have worn or separating frames, or mats that are soiled or water stained. In some situations, this may mean eliminating an entire circulating collection. At times, art prints may find new homes in other libraries, or be sold in an annual book sale.

Phonograph Records

Few libraries are purchasing vinyl phonograph records any longer. Indeed, they are nearly impossible to purchase except through second hand markets. In late 2007 Amazon.com launched a separate vinyl record section to handle newly produced recordings. As counter-intuitive as it seems to be, vinyl may make a comeback.[14] Also, some libraries have maintained archival collections or special interest collections due to local demand or for music purists. Easily warped and scratched, records should be discarded if damaged. Except for rare examples of local performers, discard any records that have not circulated within the past two years.

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[14] Van Buskirk, Eliot. "Vinyl May Be Final Nail in CD's Coffin," *Wired* 10/29/07, http://www.wired.com/entertainment/music/commentary/listeningpost/2007/10/listeningpost_1029

CREWing E-Books

They don't take up any shelf space and never get damaged, so why do we need to weed electronic books? The concept of weeding electronic books is very new. In fact, many librarians are taken aback by the idea that an e-book[15] might need to be weeded. As the costs for e-books are dropping (at least on the retail level), and more devices proliferate, demand for content is rapidly increasing. In 2011 the Association of American Publishers declared that the e-book format was the leader in all categories of trade publishing. The market is vastly expanding as more writers are able to self-publish in e-book format and e-book publishers proliferate. The format creates both challenges and opportunities for libraries even as much of the technology is ever changing. Regardless of where your library falls on the e-book spectrum, there is no getting past the reality that e-books are increasing in usage and popularity. In fact, some libraries report that on any day more than 75% of their e-book collection is in circulation. Some libraries have very small collections and want to hold onto every e-book possible to have some critical mass. But things are changing, and at some point good collection management will create the need to remove some electronic items from the collection.

Production and use of electronic materials--downloadable books, audio, and video--is a rapidly growing and continually evolving field. Depending on the sources that were used to acquire e-materials and the business model used by the vendor, it may not currently be possible to "discard" some items. Like the proverbial roach motel, the records for e-materials may check in to the library's integrated library system (ILS), but then never leave. Collections are growing to meet patron demand. It is relatively easy to add the 39,000+ titles from Project Gutenberg, but are all of those free titles relevant to your collection? Are outdated and irrelevant titles cluttering up the catalog and distracting patrons from locating needed items? The answer may be no for libraries that are just building a collection. However, larger public libraries and academic libraries with substantial e-book and downloadable audio materials are already considering how to cull items that are no longer needed.

The advice provided here is based on the volatile e-materials environment, recognizing that the field is redefining itself almost daily. Libraries that are just beginning to add e-materials and are happy to have everything they can possibly obtain may not imagine weeding. Other libraries are working on ways to add only desired records from major e-publishers like Project Gutenberg to the ILS. Some libraries are working with new vendors to purchase e-books in a manner more in line with how libraries select and acquire print books. And vendors, e-publishers, and libraries are working on new models that we cannot currently imagine. Whatever your situation, we can reasonably assume that the specific details on how libraries acquire e-materials, where the files are housed, and the mechanics of adding and removing MARC records from the catalog will change. However, the guidance on

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[15] The term e-book is used as a convenience but we are really talking about all forms of electronic, downloadable files.

how librarians make the intellectual decisions about what to weed should remain more stable.

Libraries are increasingly adding e-books and dealing with a variety of issues related to their acquisition and use such as:

- How much money should be spent on print books and how much on digital content?
- What formats are available for digital content and which are needed in the community?
- Is the library making an outright purchase of the electronic content or is it a license for a specific number of circulations or a period of time?
- Are the e-books included in the online catalog or do patrons go to a vendor database to find e-books?

In addition to issues of acquisition and use, there are also many issues surrounding the administration and management of e-book collections. We have varying degrees of control over many elements of e-book acquisition and management. Some of these aspects are also changing as competition develops within the industry and business models shift to match the needs of publishers and libraries. Whatever we are dealing with today, may very well change next month. How we acquire e-books has an impact on how we weed. Remember that libraries have spent decades building print collections and many years adding various physical media formats. As e-book collections grow, individual e-books will start to reach the limits of their usefulness. It will be just as important to weed e-books as it is the physical collection.

As with weeding physical items, there are two aspects involved in weeding e-books: the intellectual decision that is made regarding the content of the material and the mechanical steps required to remove the item from the library's collection. While librarians have a great deal of control over the first aspect, they may have little or no control of the second. Unlike when we weed physical books, it takes more than the decision to discard the item to actually get an e-book out of sight.

Weeding e-books involves:

1. Intellectual decisions about the content.

2. Mechanics of removing the weeded item from the collection.

With traditional book collections a major impetus for weeding is the need for shelf space. Clearly with e-books, the library's shelf space could be limitless; the e-books and downloadable audio and video materials take up no shelf space. Another major reason for discarding a physical book or other item is disrepair; it's shabby, worn, torn, has pages missing or just looks ugly. Again, e-books don't wear out in any of these ways so there is no "automatic weeding" due to condition. These items also don't get lost; so again, there is no regular attrition to trigger the decision whether the item will be replaced or removed from the catalog.

So why would you want to or need to weed e-books? Regardless of format, you weed in order to keep the collection current and relevant. Librarians weed to separate the wheat from the chaff. We know that patrons have limited patience for looking through large collections of irrelevant material in order to find what they want (recall the 'boutique' theory mentioned on page 32 of this manual). This holds true whether that patron is looking through hundreds of physical books or entering search terms that return hundreds of electronic possibilities, many of which are obscuring the truly relevant material. While an e-book is not taking up physical real estate on a shelf, it does take space on a computer somewhere. Depending on where the electronic file actually resides, it may also take up space on library servers. Even if the file resides in the cloud or on a vendor's server, those servers must be maintained by someone so there are costs, directly or indirectly, involved.

The electronic space used to store e-books may be a non-issue for your library with minimal cost. However, as more e-book records are included in the library's online catalog, we must consider what will show up in search results. Bringing back a list of items that displays a lot of older copyright dates is just as detrimental to the library's reputation and the patron's perception of the library's value as is having shelves that are filled with old, ugly, worn material. Patrons expect that the same care is taken in maintaining our e-book collections. We are wasting the patron's time if we make them sift through entries for e-books that will not serve their needs.

The two major reasons for weeding physical materials remain the two major reasons for weeding e-books:

1. Low use

2. Outdated content

Ideally, the criteria for weeding e-books were established at the same time that the criteria for acquiring them were developed. But of course, in the real world, that probably didn't happen. So take the time now to consider the criteria your library will use in deselecting e-books and other e-materials. If your library is still in the early stages of embracing e-books, you may make decisions now based more on the popularity of items and the interests of the early adopters in your community. You may be in a situation, such as in a consortium, where you have little or no power to weed unless most of the other parties in the consortium agree that the item is no longer useful. But as the use of e-books grows and as more e-books are added to the collection, business models will change. You will want to revisit the criteria and adopt criteria and procedures for weeding that are more similar to, rather than vastly different from, the way you weed physical formats.

Consider these broad points about weeding e-books and other e-materials:

- Is the copyright date for e-books included in the calculation of the collection's average copyright age? Older material that is no longer useful should be culled. Keep in mind that the release date for an e-book is not always the same as the copyright date. Some third party vendors can't readily provide the copyright date unless that information was provided by the original producer of the electronic item so you may need to do some research.
- The library's mission is to provide the best resources possible to meet patron's needs and expectations. Outdated material in e-book format is just as detrimental to the collection as are physical books that have incorrect information or information that is no longer accurate.
- While most e-books won't be weeded due to condition, there are some MUSTIE factors to consider. These are addressed below.
- Are multiple copies of an item available that are no longer needed? Perhaps copies of a very popular book were added when an e-book had a long reserve list or when a book was the subject of an "all city" reading program. Once this number of copies is no longer needed, some formats or versions may be weeded.
- Are there formats in the collection that are no longer compatible with the reading devices that patrons in your community are using? As the popularity of devices shift and new devices are created, some e-books in the collection may only be available in formats that are no longer used by your community. This happened with audio formats as libraries eliminated vinyl records and then audiocassettes; it may not be long before some libraries eliminate CDs in favor of all downloadable materials. It's reasonable to expect that there will be a shift in devices, much like the shakeout between VHS and Beta in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Accuracy of the information and the adequacy of the subject's coverage apply to e-book weeding decisions.

Copyright is as important for e-books as for physical formats. Follow the same CREW formulas (starting on page 49) to remove outdated materials.

MUSTIE is the acronym for six negative factors that make books and other materials prime candidates for weeding. A few of these factors are noted as not relevant for e-books but most can be applied to them.

- **Misleading** (and/or factually inaccurate). Weed outdated editions and books that are no longer accurate. Pay special attention to areas where information has changed recently or where it changes rapidly, like in medicine and travel.

- **Ugly**: Not relevant to e-books.

- **Superseded** (by a truly new edition or by a much better book on the subject). Especially for reference materials, test guides, and travel manuals, weed older editions. Most public libraries don't need to keep older editions for research value.

- **Trivial** (of no discernible literary or scientific merit; usually of ephemeral interest at some time in the past). Weed older titles that were of fleeting interest or are about outdated popular culture.

- **Irrelevant** to the needs and interests of your community. Even e-books should be expected to circulate or be used online at least once every few years. Also weed self-published e-books that are not circulating.

MUSTIE FACTORS

Misleading

Ugly

Superseded

Trivial

Irrelevant

Elsewhere available

- The material or information may be obtained expeditiously **Elsewhere**. Especially for items available at no cost, such as through Project Gutenberg, don't clutter the library catalog with material that is not being used or is out of date. On the other hand, you may decide to weed some physical copies of classic literature that are infrequently used if the books are available through a free e-book source like Project Gutenberg.

Depending on where and how the e-books were acquired, weeding will primarily mean removing the item from the library's online catalog. If the library actually owns the electronic file, as opposed to paying for a subscription, the file may need to be deleted from a server somewhere. It is important to know your vendor's business model when you make purchases so that you also understand if, how, and when titles can be removed from the online catalog.

Items purchased as part of a bundle through vendors like Overdrive may require the help of that vendor to pull the item out of the bundle. If the items are licensed as part of a consortium agreement with other libraries, then you may not be able to weed from those items at all unless the other members agree to the decision.

Purchases made directly or indirectly through the publisher may automatically weed themselves after a set number of circulations, requiring the library to purchase an additional license if you want to retain the e-book. E-book vendors, and their business models, are rapidly changing; expect to see more options for the outright purchase of e-books in the future, along with more licensing for a specific period of time or number of circulations. If you have the option to do so, be cautious about adding MARC records for *every* e-book offered by a service (in essence acquiring that e-book by making it available to your patrons), especially those available through free,

E-book Business Models

Purchased

Licensed

Patron Drive Acquisition (PDA)

Subscription

Short term lease

public domain programs like Project Gutenberg; it may be very easy to add 39,000 e-books to the catalog but difficult to sort through and weed out the ones you don't want any longer. Programs are being developed that allow you to select the e-books you want to add to your catalog. Libraries are demanding more control over content from third party vendors, who often currently bundle content.

If they are available, use your integrated library system (ILS) to run reports on the e-books in the collection to help identify items that meet specific criteria for weeding consideration. Keep in mind that you may have to ask the third party vendor to run these reports for you for materials they provide. Also, they may not be able to run every type of report that you would like. For example, you may be able to get a report that shows items that have not circulated in a specific period of time (use the CREW guidelines for various Dewey areas) or that have creation dates before a certain date. You might also look at a list of titles for areas of the collection that need updating due to changes in information, like astronomy (weed books that still include Pluto as a planet) or travel guides (weed books that are more than three years old). The same kind of attention can be paid to areas of the collection that include materials that deal with fads (for example, does the collection really need that e-book on macramé or an e-book on a no longer popular diet?).

Finally, weed the e-book collection in conjunction with physical books. Some libraries may keep an e-book version of a classic or a formerly popular fiction title while weeding physical copies, freeing up shelf space for a title that is more frequently used.

CREWing with Computers

Almost all libraries are now fully automated and the online circulation system can provide wonderful reports that are very beneficial in weeding the collection. Lists of library holdings in specific Dewey areas can be produced that show:

- The latest checkout date for items currently being circulated
- The date each item was added to the collection (accession date)
- Previous checkout dates for items not currently circulating
- Other items the library owns with that call number

Depending on your OPAC system, you may be able to determine how many times the item circulated during a specific time period and the copyright dates for each volume in the collection. Running a report of all books in a specific classification area that have copyright dates before a specified year can make it easier to weed parts of the collection that change rapidly (such as computer technology). A 'dusty books' report lets you easily find shelf sitters, although you must still make a determination about whether the item is used in-house. This type of report also allows you to more quickly see if items in a set or series are missing (which might account for lack of use). Books that haven't circulated in some time may also be missing either because they are misshelved (or have fallen behind a shelf) or have been stolen. Information from these automated reports can be especially useful for a 'quick weeding' that catches some of the easy weeding decisions.

If the reports generated by the integrated library system (ILS) are cumbersome or provide information you don't need, check whether you can export the information into a better format. Many systems also allow you to export a file into Excel or another spreadsheet format. For guidance, consult resources like *Analyzing Library Collection Use With Excel* by Tony Greiner and Bob Cooper.

If the system doesn't export to an Excel file, you may also be able to 'cut and paste' information into Excel. This can allow you to customize the report, adding columns to notate that a book is missing, on the shelf, etc. Take the printed report to the shelf and make notes in the appropriate column to provide the information you need for further review. For example, if the book is missing, search further before deciding whether the book is lost forever.

If you are not sure what reports your ILS can produce, or are unclear about the best way to filter the information and format the printout, ask your vendor or another library familiar with your system. Many vendors have tutorials or can field questions by phone or email.

Items That Have Not Circulated in Three Years

Most collections cannot afford to continue housing items that are sitting on the shelf. For most Dewey areas, CREW recommends that you look at any item owned by the library for at least three years but has not circulated in that time period. Begin by printing a report for all these items listed on the computer for a particular Dewey area. If your report function allows it, include the author, title, barcode number, date of publication, last date of circulation, and number of copies for each item on the

printout. Print out only what you can reasonably weed within a four to six week period.

Use these lists to check the shelves, noting those items that are missing and pulling books that are located. Items that have not circulated in three years can then be reviewed for a disposition decision. While probably 80% of the items that have not circulated in three years can be discarded, this is not an automatic process. The librarian must still review the items because some may be used in-house, may be candidates for inclusion in displays that bring the book back into circulation, or would benefit from recataloging to a more appropriate location. Some items may also require replacement by new editions or updated titles.

Missing items, those not located on the shelf but also not checked out, should be searched for at least twice over a period of two to three months. If the item is not located after a reasonable period of time, it can be assumed lost and removed from the library catalog. Occasionally an item will be located on the shelf that is not on the print out. Pull that item to determine whether the item is misidentified, needs a corrected spine label, or has some other problem that needs to be addressed.

Some librarians have suggested that in lean years when budgets are tight, it is possible to extend the time frame a bit in order to leave more books on the shelves. For some areas of the collection, that might be reasonable, although studies have repeatedly shown that an item that hasn't been checked out in the past three years is highly unlikely to be checked out in the next three years. Therefore, to what end is it helpful to leave unwanted, uninteresting, unused items on the shelf simply because the budget is tight?

Items That Have Circulated in Three Years

After completing the first process, use the same system to create a list of all of the items in a Dewey area that **have** circulated in the past three years. Keep in mind that many items that are circulating very nicely may be in poor condition, especially if they have been subject to heavy use. You must go to the shelves to find these shabby items. Additionally, be wary of books that have been in the collection for several years but only circulated once or twice during that time. Your collection could well have books that sat on the shelf until the day before the three-year mark. Although that book will now show up on the list you run of books that have circulated within the past 36 months, use your judgment to determine whether this was a fluke or whether the book is likely to continue to be useful. A book that is in pristine condition after three years may need further evaluation.

Follow the CREWing guidelines until the entire collection has been reviewed and compared with the printouts. While it is possible, of course, to simply go to the shelves and review items that have circulated, using the print outs ensures that you have information, such as last circulation date and number of copies, needed as you make weeding decisions. The process also allows you to easily note where you left off in the process and how long it takes to weed an area. Additionally, by noting on the printout which books are being withdrawn, the physical books can be taken to a disposition area while the printout goes to someone who can remove the entry from the automated catalog system without having to handle the book again.

The CREW Guidelines for Weeding Your Collection

The CREW formulas given here for the various Dewey classes are offered as 'rules of thumb' based on opinions in the professional literature and practical experience.

The formula in each case consists of three parts:

1. The first figure refers to the **years since the book's latest copyright date** (age of material in the book);
2. The second figure refers to the **maximum permissible time without usage** (in terms of years since its last recorded circulation and assuming that the item has been in the library's collection for at least that period of time);
3. The third refers to the presence of various **negative factors**, **called MUSTIE factors**, which will influence the weeding decision.

For example, the formula "8/3/MUSTIE" means: "Consider a book in this class for discard when its latest copyright is more than eight (8) years ago; and/or, when its last circulation or in-house use was more than three (3) years ago; and/or, when it possesses one or more of the MUSTIE factors." Remember that the period of time without use presumes that the book has been in the collection at least that long.

Most formulas include a "3" in the usage category because few libraries can afford to keep items in the collection that have not circulated on been used in-house within a three year period. Exceptions relate mainly to items with local history value. The figure in the age category will vary considerably from subject to subject (and for subcategories within subjects).

Most formulas also include the MUSTIE factors because items that are in poor condition or no longer relevant should not be kept in the collection. If any one of the three parts of the formula is not applicable to a specific subject, the category is filled with an "X". For example, in some categories, like literature or picture books, the copyright date has little influence on the weeding decision.

MUSTIE is an easily remembered acronym for six negative factors that frequently ruin a book's usefulness and make it a prime candidate for weeding:

M = **Misleading** (and/or factually inaccurate)

U = **Ugly** (worn and beyond mending or rebinding)

S = **Superseded** (by a truly new edition or by a much better book on the subject)

T = **Trivial** (of no discernible literary or scientific merit; usually of ephemeral interest at some time in the past)

I = **Irrelevant** to the needs and interests of your community

E = The material or information may be obtained expeditiously **Elsewhere** through interlibrary loan, reciprocal borrowing, or in electronic format.

It is helpful to understand the MUSTIE elements, as these can be the most difficult for library staff to base weeding decisions on.

Misleading refers to information that is factually inaccurate due to new discoveries, revisions in thought, or new information that is now accepted by professionals in the field covered by the subject. Even in fields like physics, that were once thought to be pretty settled, changes occur that radically impact the accuracy and validity of information.

Ugly, like beauty, is often in the eye of the beholder but the physical condition of the collection says a lot about the value we place on our collection. The ugly factor includes most of the elements related to the physical condition of the item—wear, damage, stains, tears, dirt—that make it less attractive to a library patron. Children's books, cookbooks, motor repair manuals, and other 'hands on' materials are especially prone to ugliness. If you don't want to touch the item without wearing gloves, neither will the patron. Or, as one librarian states about the condition of books, "If it's too dirty to read in bed, it's too dirty to be on your shelf.[16]" Also include in this category material that is in perfect condition but covered in dust! If the item has a quarter-inch of dust on it, of course, it also probably hasn't circulated in years. Be very cautious in repairing or rebinding items that are ugly. While a new Mylar jacket or a bit of cleaning may spruce up an item, usually it is not worth spending more than a few minutes repairing an item. Taping a small tear is worth the effort but if there will be more tape than binding after the repair is completed, discard the item. Books that smell are ugly. If the smell can be removed from an otherwise pristine book by closing it up with a bar of deodorant soap for a week, do so and keep it. Otherwise, toss.

Superseded items are those that sit on the shelf right next to newer editions or newer titles that update information. Libraries don't need to keep more than one or two previous editions of almanacs, trivia books (*Guinness Book of World Records*), cookbooks, and other titles that are frequently updated. Be sure to watch for books that are still circulating but include outdated pictures, products, and ingredients. The recipes in the 1975 edition of *The Joy of Cooking* may still be accurate but the photographs and brand names on ingredients have certainly been replaced many times over in later editions.

Triviality implies that the material included in the item was popular for a brief period of time but interest has largely waned. Books are published, often seemingly overnight, when there is a new fad, or when a new celebrity hits the scene. Biographies of pop culture performers, games and consumer products, television shows, diets, and fiction series come and go very quickly. The interest may last a few years but usually fades fast. Many of the books are published in paperback to hit the market while the iron is hot, but when interest cools, library shelves are left full of books that hold little appeal for

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[16] John Sandstrom, El Paso Public Library

anyone. Even if a fad returns, as happened after two decades with the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, the lapse between periods of intense popularity means that the books from the original fad are outdated. Trivial books can also be published immediately following a major event, such as the death of Princess Diana. For topics that have lasting interest, better written books come out a year or so later and the 'instant' books that may trivialize the subject can be discarded.

Irrelevant means that the interests and needs of your community may have changed over time. Perhaps an issue, such as xeriscaping, mass transportation, or solar power, was very popular for a period of time but demand in your community has waned. Frequently, we purchase multiple copies of a book or a wide variety of books on a topic to meet intense local interest, only to have that interest dissipate after a few years. CREW doesn't recommend that you eliminate all items on any topic from a collection; if a particular topic is no longer as relevant to the community as it was at another time, the collection may have too many items just sitting on the shelf. Even though the last use time period may not have passed, these irrelevant items are prime candidates for weeding.

Elsewhere reminds us that no library is an island! We are not alone out there in the vast information wilderness. It can be difficult to let go of items that are still in good condition even though the information covered is trivial or irrelevant. Many librarians hesitate to discard an item because 'someone might need it someday.' True, many of us have had the experience of discarding an item only to have someone request it the next month. However, you can feel more secure about discarding an item if the information contained within is available elsewhere. Interlibrary loan and reciprocal borrowing are ubiquitous. Also, many books are now available online through services like NetLibrary. With the exception of local history and regional documents, almost everything is available someplace else. The Internet has reliable information on many topics; prepare bookmarks and pathfinders for your patrons on frequently used topics such as law or medicine.

CREW Guidelines by Dewey Class

On the following pages are the CREW guidelines arranged by Dewey classifications. *An Overview Chart of the CREW Formulas*, that you may copy and bring to the shelves with you, is included in the Appendix of this manual.

In all cases, weeding decisions are ultimately based on the professional judgments of the library staff responsible for the selection of materials. While the CREW formula may be used as a guide in making weeding decisions, these guidelines can and should be adjusted to meet the needs of the specific library. Feel free to substitute numbers that reflect the library's mission and goals. For example, a library that focuses on popular materials as a major part of its mission may need to discard fiction books and entertainment films after a shorter period without use in order to keep the collection very up-to-date.

Carefully consider all the factors involved in the weeding process, rather than automatically discarding an item with an older copyright date.

000 (Generalities)

This is a very broad category and often requires cross weeding with other Dewey areas. For example, books on running a consulting business may be classified in 001 (knowledge) or in 650 (management).

004 (Computers)

3/X/MUSTIE

Works on computers are seldom useful after three years. Works on hardware and software have an even shorter life span (1-2 years), but may be kept on hand longer if there is strong community demand. Weed based on community interests and prevailing computer applications used locally. Retain manuals for software packages (Microsoft Word, Excel, etc.) at least one release back to accommodate people who didn't update their software immediately.

Series like the 'Dummies' and 'Idiot's Guide' are more useful to general computer users than in-depth tomes. Discard thick books with few illustrations in favor of slimmer volumes with color illustrations and screen images. Programming languages evolve more slowly and may be retained longer, up to ten years, if the language is still used. Consider what courses are offered at local community colleges and universities.

010 (Bibliography)

10/3/MUSTIE

Bibliographies and reader's advisory tools maintain their usefulness as long as the items indexed remain relevant. Many of these items will be in the reference collection, but older editions may be moved to the circulating collection. In the

circulating collection, consider discarding if not used within three years. Discard most bibliographies ten years from the date of copyright or when superseded by a new edition unless the bibliography remains well used either in-house or through circulation.

020 (Library Science)

10/3/MUSTIE *Discard all that do not conform to current, acceptable practice. Also weed previous editions of library science textbooks and titles that deal with obsolete services and material types or outdated library technology.*

030 (General Encyclopedias)

5/X/MUSTIE *The most current encyclopedia is probably the one available online through TexShare or through your state's shared database resources, if applicable. For print encyclopedias, keep the most current one in the reference collection, moving older editions to circulate. Stagger replacement sets over a three to five year period. Older sets may be sold or circulated, but withdraw circulating sets once the copyright is more than eight years old.*

Other 000's

5/X/MUSTIE *Except for trivia books, which may be kept indefinitely or until no longer considered useful or interesting. Books of oddities, controversial knowledge, and the unexplained, including books on UFOS, should be weeded based on interest and MUSTIE factors more than copyright date. Quotation books (080) may be kept as long as they are useful, replacing or adding new titles to maintain currency. Directories for writers (Guide to Literary Agents or The Writer's Market, for example) should be kept no longer than two years as information becomes dated quickly.*

100 (Philosophy and Psychology)

This category focuses on philosophy, psychology, parapsychology, ethics, and logic. Some topics won't date quickly but others, like paranormal phenomena, may be trivial or focus on quickly fading fads.

101 (Philosophy)

15/5/MUSTIE *Most philosophy books do not become outdated and low circulation may be of limited value in weeding decisions. Weed based on interest and use, but maintain a range of titles that explore Western and Asian philosophies. Remove scholarly treatments that have limited use unless they are part of a local*

community college or university curriculum. Weed books that explain philosophies and introductory books that are not included in standard lists after three years without use.

133 (Paranormal Phenomena)

10/3/MUSTIE

Books on the paranormal generally receive high use and should be kept until worn. It will be necessary to replace lost and stolen titles regularly since this category includes the popular topics of witchcraft, fortune telling, dream interpretation, and astrology. High use and wear generally ensures that a fresh supply of books is available.

150 (Psychology)

10/3/MUSTIE

Other than classics of psychology that may be used in community college and university courses, most titles in this category may be weeded based on popularity and use. Replace worn classics with new editions. Replace works on clinical, comparative, and developmental psychology within five to eight years.

Review self-help books (158s) and discard titles that are no longer popular or of current interest or that have outdated ideas. Also consider weeding self-help books that have a copyright older than five years. Keep up with television psychology gurus and weed their books when no longer popular or on TV.

160 (Logic) & 170 (Ethics and Morality)

10/3/MUSTIE

Replace worn classics with attractive trade paperback editions. Discard if no longer of interest. Be especially aware of outdated philosophies on ethics and moral values and 'hot button' topics, such as euthanasia, genetic engineering, and sexuality.

200 (Religion and Mythology)

Spiritual and devotional materials, the Bible and other sacred texts, and introductions to the world's religions are timeless. New interpretations of religion keep patrons reading and current editions of spiritual materials encourage use.

10/3/MUSTIE or
5/3/MUSTIE

Try to have something up-to-date on each religion represented by a church, synagogue, or other assembly in the community or region, as well as something on the well-known modern sects such as Scientology. Include timely and comprehensive information on the six major international religions:

Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Taoism.

Use 10/3/MUSTIE except for areas of rapid change, which are 5/3/MUSTIE. This area can be difficult to weed because (a) many of the items are donated and librarians fear criticism from the donors, and (b) religious works SEEM like they should never go out-of-date. However, the language becomes dated, especially in books of sermons and religious thought. Keep classics by famous theologians as long as they are popular and in good condition. Weed superseded editions.

300 (Social Sciences)

This area includes a wide variety of topics, including sociology, folklore, culture, crime, and education. The collection should include information that represents various viewpoints on controversial issues and is current, accurate, and fair.

306 (Culture & Institutions)

5/2/MUSTIE

This section includes books on marriage, family life, and sexuality. Discard as interest in the author or title wanes. Unless a book has an historical approach, the topic is usually outdated within five years.

310 (General Statistics)

2/X/MUSTIE

Almanacs and statistical handbooks are seldom of much use after two years; keep only the current volume and one or two previous editions except for historical handbooks. Keep the most current copy in the reference collection, transferring superseded copies to the circulating collection. ***All*** *public libraries in Texas should have at least one general almanac and the Texas Almanac. Current census information is available online but print on demand copies and print copies of related demographic information should be discarded when new decennial census data is available. It's tempting to keep statistical data that is in electronic format, such as compact disk, but unless historical use is heavy, discard when new information is available.*

320 (Political Science)

5/3/MUSTIE

For books on current political topics, weed within five years of publication.

General guides to the political process and the electoral system may be kept longer and are judged more on the basis of use

rather than copyright date. Retain titles on the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights regardless of circulation as these may be used more in-house. Replace as needed based on MUSTIE factors.

Books of local political history may be kept indefinitely.

Be aware of changes in political rhetoric and discard books with outdated ideas. Be aware also of how books in this classification area interrelate with titles in other areas, such as history. Discard books that compare democracy with political systems in countries that no longer exist (ex. USSR).

Weed books that focus on past presidential elections when they deal with issues that are no longer relevant to current campaigns.

323 (Immigration & Citizenship)

5/3/MUSTIE

Immigration issues change although the collection may also include books that look at historical elements. Remember that study guides for citizenship and ESL tests are available through the database, LearningExpress; in Texas check with your Library System to see if you have access.

Update items about how to obtain citizenship and study guides for citizenship tests as new editions become available. Retain histories of immigration to the US as long as interest warrants but be cautious about discarding primary source materials and guides that may be useful for genealogical research.

Weed biased or unbalanced and inflammatory items.

330 (Economics)

3/3/MUSTIE

Currency of information is the most critical factor in this area; patrons want to know what is happening today when it comes to finances. Money management guides and books on personal finance and real estate investing date quickly. Books on tax return preparation and estate planning must be current to account for changes in laws. Books on careers and job hunting should be updated frequently to ensure that requirements are current, although salary information will most likely always be outdated. Weed career guides with gender, racial, or ethnic bias. Even careers that seem fairly stable have experienced significant changes in the past decade.

Update items available in revised editions. Be aware of major changes in state and federal statutes and regulations, or changes in the general climate for a particular type of

investment. Classic books by well-known authors who are no longer writing, especially those that deal with principles and philosophies of economics, may be kept as long as interest exists or until MUSTIE factors prevail.

Weed books that offer advice on 'how to survive' past economic depressions or how to prosper from 'good times' that occurred in the past. Retain histories that explore and analyze important periods, such as the Great Depression, as long as interest warrants.

340 (Law)

5/2/MUSTIE

Replace when more current material becomes available. ***Never*** *keep superseded editions, even for heavily used topics like divorce or bankruptcy. Keep only the current edition or the edition approved for use in your community of the Uniform Building Code and similar code books for specific areas of construction.*

General guides on finding and working with an attorney or the basics of our legal system may be retained based on use. Study guides for law school should not be kept longer than 3 years; check with publishers to ensure that major changes in the test have not occurred.

Retain books that examine the history of major legal cases (Brown vs. Topeka) as long as interest exists or until MUSTIE factors prevail.

Remember that most government agencies now post the most current legal information, laws, and ordinances on the Internet.

350 (Public Administration)

5/3/MUSTIE

This section includes information about the administration of government, including civil service employment and the military. Standard books, like The US Government Manual, should be replaced as new editions become available. Discard older editions of reference type guides if they are available online unless intense local interest warrants keeping print copies.

Keep up-to-date; replace when state and federal administrations change or constitutional reforms occur. Histories of government agencies and the military may be kept as long as interest remains. Also retain classics (The Art of War by Sun Tzu), replacing when MUSTIE.

Test guides for civil service positions and entrance into the military should be discarded after 3 years or when MUSTIE factors apply.

360 (Social Services)

5/3/MUSTIE

This broad category includes drug and alcohol education, social problems and issues, true crime and criminology, and other social welfare issues.

Titles that deal with popular social issues should be weeded based on age (copyright) and popularity. Watch for social welfare topics that are changing rapidly, such as socialized medicine and end-of-life decisions, environmental issues, and dealing with addictions. Handbooks and guides that deal with interactions with people with disabilities, surviving cancer and other major illnesses, and long-term care needs should be scrutinized for outdated terminology and descriptors, as well as to ensure that treatment and long-term care options are current. Discard memoirs when interest in the person or subject wanes.

Copyright is not relevant for true crime. Classic cases, like In Cold Blood, should be replaced when MUSTIE factors are present. Cases with ephemeral interest can be weeded when circulation decreases significantly. Forensic sciences and criminology should be updated as techniques change or are improved.

370 (Education)

10/3/MUSTIE

Books in this section deal with formal and informal education at all levels, including homeschooling, ESL, and lifelong learning. Remember that current study guides and practice tests are readily available through the Learning Express database. In Texas, check with your Library System to see if you have access.

*Keep historical materials **only if used**. Discard all outdated theories; check with a teacher or principal if in doubt.*

Discard books about getting an education—college guides and entrance examination books—after five years. Most of the information will be outdated. Books about the education system in general and societal issues related to illiteracy and lack of education should be discarded when interest in the writer's theories wane.

Replace books on subject-specific curricula as those fields change. Visual appeal is the primary factor for books that offer ideas for lesson plans and activities.

390 (Customs, Etiquette & Folklore)

390–394 (Costumes, Customs, Holidays)

10/3/MUSTIE

Books of costumes and fashion history won't go out of date but discard books about specific designers or styles of dress as interest fades.

Books about celebrations of life's milestones, wedding planning, and holiday celebrations should be discarded as fashions and customs change. Discard books that lack clear color pictures.

Holiday-specific books may only circulate once or twice a year. Discard books that are MUSTIE or that reflect gender, family, ethnic, or racial bias. Discard books by celebrities after their popularity has waned.

395 (Etiquette)

5/3/MUSTIE

Basic titles can be kept until new editions are available. Discard books for specific situations, such as global etiquette, teen manners, and such, as the illustrations become dated or acceptable practices change.

398 (Folklore)

X/3/MUSTIE

Keep standard works of folklore indefinitely; weed according to use and MUSTIE factors. Folktales never go out of date, so copyright is not a factor. Weed based on the quality of the retelling, especially if racial or ethnic bias is present. Watch for collections that have become MUSTIE or that are not circulating. Replace standard collections with new, attractive editions. Most picture book versions of individual folktales will be classified in the children's collection.

400 (Language)

10/3/MUSTIE

Discard old-fashioned and unsightly textbooks and outdated books of grammar. Books that explore the history of languages and word origins should be discarded when MUSTIE.

Replace stock dictionaries for major foreign languages (e.g., French, Spanish, Italian, German), and any other languages being studied or spoken in the community on a rotating basis to ensure currency.

English language dictionaries should be replaced five years after copyright except for unabridged dictionaries. Update those when new editions are published.

500 (Natural Sciences)

This Dewey classification includes science fair projects and experiments, books on all of the areas of natural science, and books on mathematics. Some areas change rapidly, while others are more static. Recent circulation will not be a good determining factor in high interest areas, such as dinosaurs or science experiments; however, lack of circulation is a good indicator that the book is no longer useful.

5/3/MUSTIE — *Carefully evaluate anything over five years old. Pay particular attention to the physics, environment, and astronomy sections. Keep basic works of significant historical or literary value, such as Charles Darwin's classic Origin of Species, or Michael Faraday's Chemical History of a Candle. Replace worn copies with new editions. Watch for multi-volume sets; if the titles are not indexed individually it may be necessary to weed the entire set, especially if the set is cataloged as a single entry.*

507 (Science Experiments)

10/3/MUSTIE — *Many of the science experiment books may be in the children's collection but collections of experiments for teachers will be in the general collection. While many experiments are considered to be 'classics,' examine books for outdated and unsafe practices.*

510 (Mathematics)

10/3/MUSTIE — *Math does not change as rapidly as other subjects, so weed primarily on MUSTIE factors and lack of use.*

Replace older materials on algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and calculus with revised editions. Discard books that focus on outdated teaching methods and techniques, such as books that feature 'new math' or that focus on slide rules as the primary method for making calculations. Also discard past fads.

Discard workbooks and test study guides that have been written in or that are MUSTIE. Remember that many of these tests are provided through the LearningExpress database. In Texas, check with your Library System to see if you have access.

520 (Space and Astronomy)

5/3/MUSTIE

Major changes have occurred, so weed titles that include Pluto as a planet or that don't include information on the space station and Mars expeditions. Stargazing books may be retained longer but should be attractive and mention relevant technology.

550 (Earth Sciences)

X/3/MUSTIE

This section includes earthquakes, volcanoes, and other geological topics. Weed books that do not reflect current theories and science on geological activities. Also weed books that have outdated information on major disasters, such as the eruption of Mount St. Helens and replace with recent books that examine the long-term aftermath.

Geology books on specific regions, especially Texas, may be kept indefinitely, or until superseded by newer editions.

All general materials should be replaced when new developments occur in the field (e.g., theories about continental drift and plate tectonics have been revised in recent years).

Field guides for amateur fossil, gem, and rock hunters can be kept for up to 10 years if physical condition allows or until circulation drops, unless the area described has changed dramatically through man-made activities or natural events. Replace with up-to-date attractive titles that include clear photographs.

Weed books on meteorology that do not reflect current weather technology or that include historical weather charts that are more than ten years out of date.

560 (Paleontology)

5/2/MUSTIE

Current research has changed the previously more static world of fossils. Discard materials that are not being used, as this is one indicator that the information may be out of date. The popularity of topics like dinosaurs may mean that even outdated books are checked out. Discard most books that lack color illustrations.

Field guides may be kept longer, especially those that cover local regions and the Southwest. Discard older editions as newer ones are received.

570 (Life Sciences)

7/3/MUSTIE

Retain indefinitely classics in the field (Darwin's Origin of Species) replacing with updated editions as wear warrants.

Use 5/2/MUSTIE for books on genetics, genetic engineering, human biology, and evolution due to rapid changes in scientific practices.

Weed titles on ecology that appear dated, even if the information is still accurate. Watch for books that are sensational in tone.

580 (Botanical Sciences)

10/3/MUSTIE

Botany changes less rapidly than some other areas of science. Weed books that lack color illustrations or that appear dated. Be aware of field guides that promote edible or medicinal plants and herbs to ensure that they meet safety guidelines.

600 (Technology, Applied Sciences)

610 (Medicine & Health)

5/3/MUSTIE

Weed ruthlessly when it comes to current medical practices. Patrons rely on up-to-date information and outdated information can be dangerous. Keep only the current year plus the previous year (one reference, one circulating) of Physician's Desk Reference (PDR) and other prescription and over-the-counter drug directories, replacing when new editions become available. Do not keep drug guides that are more than three years old regardless.

Regularly review books on fast changing topics, such as AIDS, fertility, cancer, and genetics to ensure that the information is up-to-date and accurate.

Anatomy and Physiology do not change as rapidly as other topics.

Weed unattractive titles, especially those that lack good illustrations. Retain the current edition of classics, such as Gray's Anatomy in the circulating collection, although historical facsimile editions may be retained in reference indefinitely.

629 (Automobile Repair)

X/2/MUSTIE

Automotive repair manuals don't go out of date, so weed primarily on use and condition. If a repair manual has not circulated in two years, it is no longer of use in your community. They get dirty quickly; discard when they are

beyond hope or are falling apart. Be especially ruthless in weeding if your library has access to online databases, such as Chiltonlibrary.com, that provide repair instructions and schematics.

630 (Agriculture)

5/3/MUSTIE

Keep up-to-date; be sure to collect information on the newest techniques and hybrids if you serve farmers or ranchers. Books with current information will probably include discussion of biotechnology and genetic modification. Regardless of use, discard books with outdated and dangerous ideas, such as pest control using DDT.

635 (Horticulture)

10/3/MUSTIE

General gardening books may be useful for a long time, so circulation is the main weeding criteria. Books about propagation of specific flowers or plants are considered outdated after 10 years. Books that focus on organic gardening and the use of pesticides and chemicals should be reviewed for accuracy and currency of information after five years. Discard books with black-and-white photographs in favor of more colorful illustrations.

636 (Pets)

5/2/MUSTIE

Histories of specific breeds don't necessarily go out of date but the collection should include books with current photographs and recent 'best of show' winners. Discard titles for once-trendy breeds that are no longer popular in your community. Veterinary medicine and animal care has changed significantly in the past ten years. Discard titles that encourage outdated and cruel methods for obedience training and behavior modification.

640 (Home Economics)

5/3/MUSTIE

Be ruthless in weeding old cookbooks. Physical condition is the main criteria as cookbooks that are well used become grungy quickly. Also weed books by celebrity chefs and television cooks once their popularity has waned. Weed cookbooks that are based on popular diets (e.g., The South Beach Diet Quick and Easy Cookbook) once the diet is no longer popular. Replace classic cookbooks, such as The Betty Crocker Cookbook, with new editions when available.

Books on nutrition and food preparation should reflect current scientific practice. Any titles that mention the four basic food

groups should be replaced with titles that discuss the food pyramid.

Discard books on sewing when the styles reflected in the illustrations and projects are dated.

649 (Child Rearing)

5/3/MUSTIE — *Keep abreast of changing trends and new theories; replace standards like Dr. Spock's Baby & Child Care when new editions are available. Weed books that reflect outdated ideas about gender roles in childrearing.*

670 (Manufacturing)

10/3/MUSTIE — *Weed based primarily on use and condition. Keep repair manuals for appliances indefinitely unless the technology is so obsolete that no one in the community is likely to repair the equipment. Some resources may contain information of historical value. Keep works on tools, farm implements, etc. that are still used in your community. Be wary of older books on desktop publishing and printing technology.*

700 (The Arts)

This Dewey area includes a wide range of disciplines, including topics that change rapidly along with historical treatments that remain useful for long periods of time. Often books are oversized and may be used primarily in the library.

709 (Art History)

X/3/MUSTIE — *Art histories often cover major periods and schools or specific regions of the world. While information may not become dated, watch for cultural, racial, and gender biases. Discard scholarly works that are not useful to your community in favor of materials for students and general readers. Discard books that don't include good reproductions of major works of art.*

720 (Architecture)

X/3/MUSTIE — *Histories of architecture may include general surveys or specific time periods and regions. Historical treatments do not date quickly.*

*Books featuring house designs and plans should reflect current building methodologies and current tastes in design. Generally discard home design books after ten years regardless of circulation. Be aware of changes in building codes. Evaluate books on trends (such as feng shui), that feature celebrity designers (*Martha Stewart's New Old House*), or that are*

*based on television shows (*This Old House*) when interest has waned.*

737 (Numismatics) 769 (Stamp collecting)

5/3/MUSTIE

Keep stamp and coin catalogues up-to-date, replacing books that provide market valuations and price guides after 5 years. Keep a current edition and one previous edition of price guides that are updated yearly. Consider keeping the current edition of books like *The Official Blackbook Price Guide to US Postage Stamps* *in reference, circulating the older edition if interest is high. Historical treatments of ancient, foreign, and commemorative coins and stamps may be kept indefinitely as long as interest is maintained. Many books on these topics will be used in-house.*

740 (Drawing & Decorative Arts)

X/3/MUSTIE

Books that feature drawing styles and instruction should be weeded based on use and appeal. Retain basic technique books if well illustrated; replace worn and dated materials. Replace books on cartooning and compilations of popular comic strips (Peanuts, Mutts) as they become worn unless interest in the particular cartoon characters has waned. Consider reclassifying graphic novels not based on comic strips from 741 to a unique classification that gathers them together. Although Dewey indicates that graphic novels be placed in 741.5, many patrons prefer that they be shelved in a separate location.

Keep all materials on the history of interior design that are in acceptable condition. Discard books that feature general home decorating ideas after 5 years in favor of books that review established and distinct decorating styles (Southwestern, Caribbean). Discard books that feature outdated colors and patterns.

Keep books on antiques and collectibles, especially identification and price guides, until new editions are available. Discard books that don't have good photographs or that are simply lists of auction prices without good descriptions.

Skills required for most crafts don't change over time. Discard craft books based on use but watch for outdated styles and materials. Discard books on crafts that are no longer popular (macramé) or that feature gender bias.

770 (Photography)

5/3/MUSTIE *Check closely for outdated techniques, and especially outdated equipment; if in doubt, check with local photography club or buffs. Works about specific photographers, especially historical figures, may be kept as long as there is interest.*

791 (Public Performance)

10/2/MUSTIE *This section can include memoirs of actors and performers writing about their craft and overviews or histories of film genres (e.g., horror film, best western movies). It also includes books of trivia based on popular movies and television shows. Weed based on interest and condition.*

793-796 (Games and Sports)

10/3/MUSTIE *Discard and replace as rules and interests change. Watch for gender and racial bias in sports and athletics. Discard books that have outdated statistics.*

Handbooks on popular electronic games may be difficult to replace; retain as long as the games are played in your community.

800 (Literature)

In most public libraries, general (or popular) fiction is cataloged in a separate area and the 800s are reserved for collections of poetry and prose, literary criticism, and, frequently, works of literature by non-Western authors. See the Fiction section (below) for works of popular fiction.

Copyright is not relevant for literature but older editions that are MUSTIE rarely circulate.

X/3/MUSTIE *Keep basic materials, especially criticism of classic writers. Discard any works of minor writers no longer read in the local schools, unless there is an established demand among the non-student population. Discard older editions of classics that have unappealing covers and yellowing pages, replacing with newer copies or paperback editions. Remember that classics that are being read won't be weeded—don't keep classics just because they are classics!*

Check with local schools and community colleges for assignments or reading lists and check discards against these lists.

Discard collections of poetry and short stories that are not being used. Series that collect the 'best' short stories of the

year are rarely read after five years. Also consider weeding collections that are not indexed.

Discard books of wit and humor that are not circulating. Watch for collections that feature gender or nationality bias and outdated interests and sensitivities.

900 (History and Geography)

910 (Geography and Travel)

3/2/MUSTIE

Guidebooks (such as the Fodor series or Mobil travel guides) are outdated within a year or two. Keep no longer than three years. Historical travel guides, especially those that deal with local attractions (books about Route 66, for example), may be kept longer for archival purposes if interest exists.

Watch for changes in country names and for political changes that result in new or reformed countries. (Weed books that still refer to the USSR rather than individual countries, for example.) Atlases should be current, except for historical atlases, and replaced after major changes in political divisions occur.

5/2/MUSTIE

Weed personal travel narratives on use and interest, unless of high literary or historical value.

930-999 (History)

10/3/MUSTIE

Consider demand, accuracy of facts, and fairness of interpretation when reviewing histories. Carefully review histories of countries where major political and geographical changes have occurred. Discard older histories that don't reflect the unification of Germany or Vietnam or the break-up of the Soviet Union, for example.

Consider discarding personal narratives and war memoirs of World War II, the Korean Conflict, and the Vietnam War in favor of broader histories of these conflicts, unless the author is a local person, or the book is cited in a bibliography as having an outstanding style or insight.

Discard dated viewpoints (e.g., the McCarthy Era "World Communist Conspiracy" theory of modern history).

Retain books that collect primary documents or include archival photographs unless the reproductions are of poor quality.

B or 92 and 920 (Biography)

X/3/MUSTIE

Unless the person treated is of permanent interest or importance, such as a U.S. President, discard a biography as soon as demand lessens. Replace biographies of people of ongoing interest with newer titles, at least once a decade, as interpretation of their lives and public perception of their impact will change over time. New information about their activities and accomplishments may be discovered.

Ruthlessly weed ghost written biographies of celebrities and biographies that were published immediately following the person's death or a major scandal. Poor quality biographies of major figures should be replaced with better ones, when available.

Biographies of outstanding literary value, such as Boswell's Life of Johnson*, can be kept until worn.*

Collective biographies usually focus on people from similar disciplines, racial, ethnic, or cultural groups, or geographic areas. Watch for outdated interests and collections that feature gender or race bias.

F (Fiction)

X/2/MUSTIE

For most public libraries, circulation is the primary factor for weeding fiction. Discard works no longer in demand, especially second and third copies of past bestsellers. Retain works that are in demand and/or of high literary merit, but replace worn copies with new editions. Discard lesser works by classic authors if they are not circulating. Consider discarding all titles in a series if you are not able or willing to replace missing titles, especially if the books do not stand alone.

Graphic Novels

X/1/MUSTIE

Graphic novels are a format, not a genre, and can be classified in the adult, young adult, or children's collection depending on content appropriateness. Most are paperbacks but more and more are being released in hardcover editions. Because of their popularity, consider weeding any title that hasn't circulated in the past year. The exception would be classics or milestone titles such as Maus: A Survivor's Tale that might not circulate as heavily but will be discovered by serious graphic novel readers. Popularity is a major factor in selecting graphic novels and shelf-sitters make it harder for readers to find the graphic novels they are seeking.

Condition is also a big factor in weeding. Weed titles that are falling apart, have missing pages, etc., but also consider weeding later titles in a series if you cannot or don't want to replace earlier missing titles.

Periodicals (Also Newspapers)

3/X/X

Libraries used to bind most periodicals but the availability of online databases has made this an unnecessary and, in most cases, a wasteful expense. Keep in mind that most patrons rarely refer to a magazine that is more than three years old. Only bind quality periodicals that are in constant use for research (e.g., National Geographic) and that are unavailable in online databases.

Most popular newspapers are now available online. For the local newspaper, see section, "Local History."

Government Documents

3/2/X

The federal depository library program is currently being studied and may likely change in the future. Already many government documents that were previously available in print format are only available electronically. Libraries that serve as official depositories of federal or state documents are required by law to follow established procedures governing weeding outlined in the agreement that established the depository library.

For non-depository libraries, documents should be discarded when superseded. Also discard documents that are not being used and are available in electronic format on the Internet. If a government document is cataloged in the general collection, weed according to the guidelines for that Dewey area. Refer to The Federal Depository Library Handbook, at http://www.fdlp.gov/handbook/index.html, for its suggested core collection by library type. This document indicates whether basic titles are available in print or electronic format.

Nonprint (Audiovisual) Media

Depending on your collection, nonprint can include a wide variety of formats and the formats are rapidly changing. Except for items of local and regional history and archival materials, most nonprint material can be evaluated on the WORST formula. Current use and condition are more important than copyright date or production date. Although the CREW formula includes copyright criteria, rely more on

condition and circulation. Consider weeding any nonprint item that doesn't circulate several times a year.

WORST — ***W**orn out, **O**ut of date, **R**arely used, **S**upplied elsewhere (available through ILL), or **T**rivial and faddish. Monitor statistics of use for these materials and view/ listen to them periodically to determine their condition. See the section, "CREWing Nonprint Media" for more detail on individual formats.*

Film Formats

(DVD, videocassette, Blu-Ray)

2/1/WORST — *Videocassettes are disappearing from library collections as suppliers have mostly discontinued the format. If local interest exists, the videocassette collection may remain vital through donations. Examine closely after approximately 150 to 200 circulations. Weed videocassettes that are not circulating at least once a year. Replace worn copies of popular titles with DVD, if possible. Relocate children's videos for use in children's programs only if the library has public performance rights.*

DVDs may or may not hold up to wear better than videocassettes. Check for scratches and discard if polishing is unlikely to repair the damage. Don't spend a lot of time trying to fix problems! It is generally not worth the time and effort and it takes special equipment to do a good job.

Be wary of DVDs that were not produced for use in the United States. Few patrons have players that will play DVDs created for other regions of the world.

New formats are developing and as of 2008 Blu-Ray appears to be the winner in the current high definition optical disc format wars. Eventually this format will replace DVDs in library collections although players are backwards compatible so patrons with Blu-Ray players can also use DVDs. Weed based on condition and popularity.

Audio Formats

(Music, audiobooks)

X/2/X — *Music and audiobooks are available in several formats, including vinyl, audiocassette, and compact disc or MP3 disc. Copyright date has little impact on weeding decisions.*

Few libraries currently maintain collections of vinyl recordings. Most vinyl in public libraries is for musical

recordings. If your collection includes them, weed based on use and availability in other formats. Discard when scratched or when the sleeve becomes tattered.

Weed music on audiocassette or compact disc formats based on condition and recent circulations. Any item that has not circulated within the past two years is most likely 'dead.' Do not spend time trying to repair audiocassettes. Compact discs are pretty durable, although they are not as indestructible as originally believed. It's probably a good idea to discard any compact disc that is more than 20 years old. If a compact disc can't be cleaned easily and quickly, then discard. Most cleaning equipment can only remove light scratches.

Audiobooks are available in audiocassettes and compact disc sets, although many libraries are circumventing the format decisions by subscribing to downloadable services. Weed based on circulation and condition. Discard sets if one or more component is missing unless the producer can supply a replacement (many do this free or for a small fee). It is generally not worth the time to try and repair audiocassettes; you will have limited success cleaning more than minor scratches out of compact discs.

Local History

X/X/X

Your library is also the logical archives of the community, and, in many cases, of the county. Retain all books on the history and geography of the city and county unless worn and not repairable. Retain local newspapers for up to five years if they are not available electronically or on microfilm. If the library is the only repository for the local newspaper, consider microfilming past editions. Brittle newspaper or fragments have little value in research. Keep local city directories. Keep most books by local authors (even if of minimal literary value) and genealogies of important local families.

CREW Guidelines for the Children's Collection

Most children's books can be evaluated in part on the guidelines provided above. However, additional considerations must be taken into account and the CREW formula may be different in some cases. Children rarely know what is on the *New York Times* bestseller list and they don't read reviews. Many older titles remain popular through many generations, and of course, parents and caregivers may seek out books that they remember fondly from their own childhood. While we all judge books by their covers, children's books may become MUSTIE more quickly due to heavy use. Unless forced to read a book for a school assignment, most children won't pick up books that look old and stodgy. Teens in particular prefer paperback formats for leisure reading. In addition to the considerations provided above, use the following guidelines when weeding the children's collection.

E (Easy Readers/Picture Books)

X/2/MUSTIE

Evaluate all materials carefully using MUSTIE as a guide. Replace popular titles that are torn and worn or that have been 'loved' too much.

Weed any book that has not circulated in the past two years. Picture books are so heavily used that every title should go out at least once in a two-year period.

Discard any books that are not suitable for library use, including those with inferior bindings. Replace as soon as possible books that have been rebound and don't have attractive covers.

Books that feature popular and commercial characters should be weeded when interest has faded or the television show is no longer shown.

Weed books that reflect racial and gender bias. Consider moving classics that may be used by children's literature classes to the adult 800s.

Use resources like A to Zoo by Carolyn Lima to determine the likelihood of continued usefulness to the collection.

JF (Juvenile Fiction)

X/2/MUSTIE

Evaluate carefully for MUSTIE factors. Copyright is less important than use, but consider weeding anything that hasn't circulated in the past two years.

Weed based primarily on current interest except award books and those on school reading lists (e.g., Newbery Award, Coretta Scott King Award, Bluebonnet lists). Weed older award winners if they have not circulated in three years, or

replace with a newer hardcover or paperback edition with contemporary cover art.

Evaluate closely for outdated styles, artwork, and mores, or biased viewpoints. Discard if format and reading level are not appropriate to the current interest level of the book. Discard topical fiction on dated subjects and cultural fads.

Discard abridged or simplified classics in favor of the original unless the particular abridgement has been very favorably reviewed.

YA (Young Adult) Fiction

3/2/MUSTIE

Keep this section very current. Any item that has not circulated within two years should be considered 'dead' and removed (and anything that hasn't circulated within the past year is suspect and should be evaluated for promotion, relocation, or discard).

Discard YA fiction with outdated illustrations, story lines, or subjects. Classics (such as The Pigman by Paul Zindel or The Chocolate War by Robert Cormier) are not subject to the copyright guideline but should be replaced with newer paperback editions. Check for updated editions of popular classics like Forever by Judy Blume that have had terminology and situations updated for contemporary readers. Discard any YA fiction that has been rebound and lacks attractive cover art.

J and YA Nonfiction

Use adult criteria for each Dewey category, but look especially for inaccuracy and triviality—common faults of over-simplified children's nonfiction. Discard titles that are outdated regardless of condition. Many children's books are purchased in library editions that never fall apart! Do not retain books that have erroneous and dangerous information simply because the book is still in great shape.

See the chapter, CREWing Children's Materials *for additional general criteria.*

What to do with Weeded Books: Types of Disposal

Every library will have its own method for handling books pulled for discard. Some use a printout from the online catalog to record disposition decisions. Others use a preprinted disposal slip that allows other staff to know how to process the discard.

The CREW method is well suited to using a simple, preprinted disposal slip (placed in each book when it is pulled) that indicates whether the book is to be sold, donated, destroyed, mended, transferred, rebound, or replaced. Mend sparingly! Mending should not require longer than fifteen minutes nor be so extensive as to ruin the materials' appearance. Any item that cannot be mended within this time frame should be disposed of and replaced, if use warrants, with a newer copy or edition.

Bind sparingly! Before sending a book to a bindery, determine whether the continued value and use in the collection warrants the time and expenses to bind. Compare the cost of rebinding with the cost of a new copy or edition. Often, a new copy is almost as inexpensive and is more appealing; a rebound volume is not as attractive as a new book. For out-of-print titles and titles of important local interest, rebinding is the best option. You may wish to remove and save the plastic covered dust jacket and/or barcode label from the book before sending it to the bindery, since they might possibly be reused on the rebound volume.

There are five basic ways to dispose of print or nonprint materials:

Sell It: to the public, either at a large annual sale or from a continuous sale rack; or to a used book dealer or pulp dealer, usually in large lots, or through online sales.

Donate It: donate books to a hospital, nursing home, adult or juvenile correctional facility, charitable institution, school district, or to a small library struggling toward system membership.

Trade It: with another library, or with a used book dealer, for a book your library can use.

Recycle It: by using a local contractor, perhaps in cooperation with local government agencies.

Destroy It: by burning in an incinerator or by tossing it into the trash. If the latter method is used, be sure the books won't be seen by someone passing by. Citizens might misunderstand the reasons for destroying 'valuable' books.

Each method of disposal has its advantages and drawbacks, and its own preconditions:

SELLING promotes good public relations and is potentially profitable if the materials have some residual value, and if selling is done with the clear understanding that the items may contain dated information. Mark all discards clearly to avoid donations from well-intentioned, but ill-informed, patrons who return the books to your library. Books that cannot be sold should be recycled, destroyed or sold with other hopeless cases to a pulp dealer (if one is within driving distance).

Keep in mind that your governing authority (city, county, district) probably has rules about selling items that were purchased with taxpayer funds or that were donated to the collection. Be sure that you follow the rules! In some cases, it is a matter of wording the transaction properly to remain within the rules. For example, it may be okay to sell 'surplus' materials or the 'asset' may need to be transferred to a group, such as the Friends of the Library, who can then handle the sale of weeded items.

Most Friends groups hold annual or semi-annual sales that can be great community events. Others may instead, or in addition, hold ongoing sales. Most books are priced at fifty cents or a dollar, although special, collectible books may be individually priced. The idea is to generate as much money as possible without spending too much time sorting and pricing. Book sales also promote goodwill and generate publicity for the library.

Many Friends groups are beginning to use online sellers to make money for the library or donate unsellable books to organizations. No program is perfect, and none is endorsed by the writer of this manual or the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. Research for yourself options offered by each company or program before making a decision. Various online sellers such as Better World Books, http://www.betterworldbooks.com/, Cash 4 Books, http://www.cash4books.net/, and Blogistics, http://www.blogistics.com/, purchase used books directly from libraries. Each company has specific requirements related to condition (ex-library books may not be saleable but you may make money on donations that can't be added to the collection). Friends of Libraries USA (FOLUSA) offers some tips on online selling on their Web site, http://www.folusa.org/resources/selling-books-online.php.

Some governing agencies require, or offer as an option, that old books be sold as surplus through the agency's purchasing department, although rarely does the library benefit from any proceeds of the sale.

As a goodwill gesture, consider giving away books that don't sell at the book sale. If local rules permit, allow interested people to cart off the excess inventory, saving the library the expense of hauling the books to the dump. This also allows the library to avoid public relations issues that may arise if the community perceives the library as 'throwing away perfectly good books.'

DONATING is not a profitable method, but promotes good public relations if only very good discards are disposed of in this way. Giving away junk does not promote good public relations, nor does it help the recipients. A childcare center, for example, will remember kindly your donation of picture books even if the covers are shabby. You may gain a regular customer for your prettier new picture books and a dozen regular patrons for your preschool story hour by sincerely considering the wants and needs of the recipient of your discards. For good quality books that are too technical for your collection, check with local universities to see if they can use the items. Even books that include outdated

information, stereotypes, and such may be useful for a museum or history center that focuses on the population or topic.

If a book depository or branch is planned, you might store discarded second and third copies for such a purpose if they are in good condition and are likely to remain viable in a collection. Consider donating duplicates that are in good condition to a local hospital, literacy program, nursing home, or an adult or juvenile correctional facility (especially paperbacks and large type books). Do not donate books that are in poor condition or that contain dangerously outdated information! You are simply passing your junk on to someone else!

Be wary of patrons who suggest that the library donate used books to projects in other countries or outside your area. Shipping books to Africa is very costly and it does little to help developing areas if what is being shipped is old, in poor condition, and outdated. Some libraries are willing to donate materials to groups that work with such projects as they know what is useful and what is junk. See ALA's Fact Sheet 12, "Sending Books to Needy Libraries: Book Donation Programs" available online at http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/hqops/library/libraryfactsheet/alalibraryfactsheet12.cfm for information on organizations that do want books for specific projects.

TRADING your 'best' discards is both excellent public relations and a shrewd financial move. Trading works with only two specific classes of discard: the high quality (or, at least, well-reviewed) item that is nonetheless of no interest to your community (e.g., a shelf sitter in Del Rio might be dynamite in Pampa, and vice versa); or the occasional donated duplicate of a good book of less than two-copy demand. Inquiries about trades can be made over the phone, by email, by letter, or as part of the business of the Texas Library Association annual conference or regional system meetings. If you are interested in trading, check out the Duplicates Exchange Union, http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alcts/mgrps/ecoms/duplicatesexch/duplicatesexchange.cfm. Membership is free and open to libraries of all types. Members exchange lists of available materials (as well as want lists) electronically. The requesting library pays for mailing items if the cost is above a set amount. Be sure that local ordinances allow the trading of assets that have been purchased with taxpayer funds.

RECYCLING services are now widely available and many communities encourage 'going green.' Recycling not only saves resources and improves the environment; it also helps control the rising costs of new books by holding down paper prices. Many community recycling programs accept the 'slick' paper that most magazines and vendor catalogs are printed on, as well as newsprint, making it easy to recycle discarded magazines and newspapers. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to recycle books. Paperbacks can often be recycled, but hardbacks are usually only recyclable if the covers are removed, a job that is very time consuming. Check with local recycling companies to ensure that you are not simply passing along 'garbage' that will either foul the recycling process or need to be hauled to the dump by someone else.

Children's books that are worn or damaged beyond repair may also be 'recycled' by laminating the illustrations and putting them on craft sticks to make puppets for library storytime, local child care centers, or teachers, or for creating flannelboard versions of popular stories. Many crafters have begun to 'recycle' books into works of art such as hollowed out 'book boxes' to hide valuables or store items, or turning them into purses and other items. See the Altered Book website, http://www.alteredbookartists.com/, for an amazing assortment of art made from old books.

DESTRUCTION should be reserved for materials in the worst physical condition, the absolutely hopeless cases, and then only as a last resort if the books cannot be recycled or sold for pulp. The advantage of this method is that it requires minimal time and effort. The major drawback is that the library derives no benefits, in money or public relations, from the discarded materials. Besides contributing to the already overflowing landfills, this method of disposal is likeliest to cause a 'weeding controversy,' since many people are shocked by the 'waste' of throwing 'good books' on the trash heap. Also, 'book burning' has unpleasant connotations. If you can explain that only those books and nonprint items in the worst physical condition get this treatment, you may be able to avert negative publicity. Another potentially embarrassing situation that can occur is for well-intentioned patrons to 'find' library books in the trash and assume vandals have put them there. Although this method of disposal cannot be avoided, it should be the last resort.

Epilogue--Encouraging the Hesitant Weeder

Hopefully, this manual has already capably demonstrated the place of weeding in the cycle of library service, the benefits of regular CREWing, and the streamlined simplicity of the CREW method. However, there are several common objections to rigorous weeding often heard from librarians not comfortable with the task. Since they serve to justify keeping collections unweeded and unreviewed, they need to be considered in this manual.

I am proud of having a large selection of books for my patrons. Besides, I need to have enough volumes in the collection to remain a system member or meet standards.

BUT - Quality counts more than quantity, both with the patrons and with the Texas State Library & Archives Commission. While the State Library will not automatically disqualify you for system membership without taking other factors into consideration, annual statistics that show virtually no discards could indicate that the collection may be outmoded or growing in a haphazard fashion. **A good library is not necessarily a big library**. The level and quality of service the library can offer is of utmost importance. Of course, if the size of the collection is very near the minimum required for system membership, it simply cannot be weeded quite as strictly as a library collection safely over the requirement. In such cases, libraries concerned with going below minimum requirements should check with the Texas State Library & Archives Commission for more information. Once the volume count exceeds the library's shelf capacity, however, full-scale CREWing should be done in earnest. For service, efficiency counts more than raw size. Ask your regional system staff for help in procuring newer, higher quality books. An outdated book added to your collection today costs money (the time you spend processing the book) and will be of little or no use to your patrons.

I don't have the staff time. We are too busy performing more critical library tasks.

BUT - If you have the time to select new books, then you have the duty to weed those that are no longer useful to your collection. No one has all the time needed to do important tasks, but you MUST find the time to weed. Your library's image, credibility, and quality of service are at stake. To help find the needed time, make it a regular part of your routine, and use the guidelines in this manual to help make it a time-efficient process.

If I throw this book out, I just know someone will ask for it tomorrow.

BUT - This situation seldom actually occurs and is certainly less common than a patron asking for a book you decided not to acquire for the library in the first place. A detailed weeding study conducted over a three-year period at Yale University revealed that in two years, only 3.5% of the weeded items were asked for.[17] In fact, a book that has not been used in the past five years is unlikely to be used in the next five. The 'weeded needed' will be few, their absence is less harmful to public relations than a habitually cluttered and unreliable collection, and most likely they are still accessible through interlibrary loan. Moreover, CREW cuts down on the number of 'asked-for unacquired,' by alerting the librarian to gaps, losses, and the full range of materials available. The reality is that if no one is using the book, you are probably the only one who will miss it! Remember that the best items in your collection are the items that are being used.

THE COLLECTION WEEDS ITSELF—WE LOSE BOOKS EVERY DAY!

Losing books to theft or non-return doesn't count! Those are books someone wanted enough, presumably, to keep instead of bringing it back to the library. Attrition from loss and theft certainly means you need to replace some of those books with newer editions or different titles but you are putting them back on shelves that are crowded with a lot of books that aren't worth stealing, or borrowing.

Well, this old book may be rare and valuable, even a first edition!

BUT - Even if the old book dates back before 1900, chances are one in several thousand that it is worth even as much as $5.00. Ex-library books, even when they are otherwise valuable titles, are rarely of interest to collectors. Why? Because libraries mark up the books with accession numbers, bar codes, property stamps, etc., and the books have often received heavy use.

Only a handful of unique copies, authors' personal copies, or other treasures sell for more than a few dollars. Old books are overwhelmingly rubbish or cheap curios. They almost never deserve the glass-fronted cases or separate stacks they too often receive at the expense of library space, time, money, and usefulness. 'First Editions' are also worth very little, especially when 'damaged' by library markings and worn by use, except in rare cases where only a handful of copies remain. The first edition of an unimportant book is worthless, even if it is unique. A high-priced ($30.00 or more) first edition is almost always a classic or near classic that was not appreciated when it was first published. If you have never heard of the title, it almost certainly is not of this sort.

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[17] *Weeding Library Collections: Library Weeding Methods*, 3rd edition, 1989, p. 50, 52.

If you still think you have a valuable book, check some of the online out-of-print book websites like Alibris, http://www.alibris.com/, or ABE Books, http://www.abebooks.com/, to see if there is any market for the item. (ABE Books also provides interesting articles about collectable authors—if you have ANYTHING signed by J.K. Rowling, get it off your shelf—and other topics that may help you locate saleable items in your donations and discards.) If the book is in fact worth more than a few dollars, weed it and sell it! If you are selling a large number of books that you believe to be valuable, contact a reputable antiquarian book dealer for their estimated auction value of the book. Most real rare books are sold at auctions in New York or London.

If I discard a book because it has not been used, isn't that admitting publicly that I made a mistake in selecting it?

SO? You are human! Every librarian makes those kinds of mistakes. In many cases, books we select are NEVER used by a patron. Selection is not based on scientific formulas or objective measurements. To a very large extent, selection must be based on the librarian's judgment of books and expectations of what people will want to read. However, there are millions of books available, and over 50,000 new books released every year. It's impossible for even the best librarian to always 'be right." Judgment can be sharpened by training and experience, but it can never be made infallible.

Isn't weeding really just irresponsible destruction of public property?

NO. As explained in the first part of the manual, weeding is a very constructive process that increases the library's ability to give a 'full service value per dollar" and that improves the appearance and comfort of the library building. As for 'irresponsibility,' the CREW method's very first step involves checking any possible legal constraints specifically to avoid violating civic responsibilities. Further, destruction by trashing or burning is not the only method of disposal; in fact, it is the last-choice option. Weeding library materials that are no longer of use is no more 'irresponsible' than discarding broken equipment from the recreation center or repaving a road that has become worn from use. Ask if the police department still has old uniforms and vehicles!

We need to have something (or anything) on this subject. And we need every copy of this classic for the school rush.

BUT – Is 'something' really better than 'nothing' when it is outdated and erroneous? Ask yourself if you would use the book to do your own research. Would you want your child's grade to depend on using outdated information? If 'something' is needed on a subject, then a good resource that will be used is called for. If it will not be used, even the only book on a subject, such as paleobotany, is simply cluttering the shelves. If an unused book takes up space, an inaccurate book is worse. If you really need a resource on a particular subject, acquire something new, accurate, well written, and sturdily bound. If it is within the library's mission to provide enough copies of classics to meet the needs of a class of students, then those extra copies could be kept in a storage room until the rush or replaced with clean, easy-to-store, attractive, inexpensive paperbacks.

Remember that CREWing entails a **continuous** process of **review**, **evaluation** and **weeding**. Weeding itself should be an ongoing, routine part of the work schedule, not a onetime operation or a 'once in awhile' project. Maintaining this cyclical process will prevent the buildup of unused, unwanted and damaged materials, which in turn leads to a monumental weeding task after months or years of neglect. In the long run, CREWing actually improves the quality of your library and enhances its reputation for providing accurate and dependable service in uncluttered, pleasant surroundings. In the short run, it augments the library director's professional judgment and working knowledge of the collection.

The point of weeding, and of CREWing, and of all other library functions, technical or public, is to provide your patrons with better service, clearer access to the world's knowledge, and entertainment. By streamlining your collection for efficient and reliable use, you are making it easier and faster for the people of your community to find the facts, phrases, and stories they need. Therefore, take this manual and discuss the matter with your staff, volunteers, and Board. Think about it for a while. Then, start working toward efficient, effective service and a high quality collection.

Don't delay—start weeding today!

Bibliography

Standard Collection Bibliographies

Note that some of these titles are expensive; check with your regional system office, the Texas State Library's Library Science Collection, or a large public library to borrow items that you do not need on-hand on a regular basis. Use them to compare your holdings to those that are highly recommended, core collection titles, or to help you make decisions about whether to replace, retain, or discard an item that has marginal circulation or is in poor condition.

Bank Street College of Education. *The Best Children's Books of the Year, 2008*. Teachers College Press, 2008.

Barr, Catherine and John T. Gillespie. *Best Books for Children: Preschool Through Grade 6, 8th Edition*. Libraries Unlimited, 2005.

Barr, Catherine and John T. Gillespie. *Best Books for Children: Preschool Through Grade 6, Supplement to the 8th Edition.* Libraries Unlimited, 2007.

Books Out Loud: Bowker's Guide to Audiobooks 2008. Bowker, 2008.

Bowker's Complete Video Directory 2008. Bowker, 2008.

Brice, Donaly and Bill Stein. *More Than a Lone Star: A Texas History Selection List for the Small Public Library*. Houston Area Library System, 2003.

The Complete Directory of Large Print Books and Serials 2008. Bowker, 2008.

Cords, Sarah Statz and Robert Burgin. *The Real Story: A Guide to Nonfiction Reading Interests*. Libraries Unlimited, 2006.

East, Kathy and Rebecca L. Thomas. *Across Cultures: A Guide to Multicultural Literature for Children*. Libraries Unlimited, 2007.

Fichtelberg, Susan. *Encountering Enchantment: A Guide to Speculative Fiction for Teens*. Libraries Unlimited, 2006.

Fraser, Elizabeth. *Reality Rules!: A Guide to Teen Nonfiction Reading Interests*. Libraries Unlimited, 2008.

Frolund, Tina. *Genrefied Classics: A Guide to Reading Interests in Classic Literature*. Libraries Unlimited, 2006.

Gillespie, John T. and Catherine Barr. *Best Books for High School Readers: Grades 9-12*. Libraries Unlimited, 2004.

Gillespie, John T. and Catherine Barr. *Best Books for High School Readers: Grades 9-12, Supplement to the First Edition*. Libraries Unlimited, 2006.

Gillespie, John T. and Catherine Barr. *Best Books for Middle School and Junior High Readers*. Libraries Unlimited, 2004.

Gillespie, John T. and Catherine Barr. *Best Books for Middle School and Junior High Readers: Grades 6-9, Supplement to the First Edition*. Libraries Unlimited, 2006.

Herald, Diana Tixier. *Teen Genreflecting: A Guide to Reading Interests,* 2nd Edition. Libraries Unlimited, 2003.

Herald, Diana Tixier and Bonnie Kuntzel. *Fluent in Fantasy*. Libraries Unlimited, 2007.

Herald, Diana Tixier and Wayne A. Wiegand. *Genreflecting: A Guide to Popular Reading Interests*, 6th Edition**.** Libraries Unlimited, 2005.

Husband, Janet G. and Jonathan F. Husband. *Sequels: An Annotated Guide to Novels in Series*, 4th Edition. American Library Association, 2008.

Hysell, Shannon Graff. *Recommended Reference Books for Small and Medium-sized Libraries and Media Centers, vol. 28*. Libraries Unlimited, 2008. (The current edition reviews titles published in the previous two years. Check earlier editions to analyze older reference tools.)

Lima, Carolyn W. and John A. Lima. *A to Zoo: Subject Access to Children's Picture Books*, 7th Edition. Libraries Unlimited, 2005.

Lima, Carolyn W. and Rebecca L. Thomas. *A to Zoo: Subject Access to Children's Picture Books Supplement to the 7th Edition*. Libraries Unlimited, 2008.

Lynn, Ruth Nadelman. *Fantasy Literature for Children and Young Adults: A Comprehensive Guide, 5th Edition*. Libraries Unlimited, 2005.

Magazines for Libraries, 17th Edition. Bowker, 2008.

New York Public Library. "100 Picture Books Everyone Should Know." http://kids.nypl.org/reading/recommended2.cfm?ListID=61]

O'Gorman, Jack. *Reference Sources for Small and Medium-sized Libraries*, 7th Edition. American Library Association, 2007.

Pearl, Nancy. *Book Crush: For Kids and Teens*. Sasquatch Books, 2007.

Pearl, Nancy. *More Book Lust*. Sasquatch Books, 2005.

Pilger, Mary Anne. *Science Experiments Index for Young People*, 4th Edition. Libraries Unlimited, 2005.

Schwedt, Rachel E. and Janice DeLong. *Core Collections for Children and Young Adults*. Scarecrow Press, 2008.

The Software Encyclopedia 2008. Bowker, 2008.

Thomas, Rebecca L. and Catherine Barr. *Popular Series Fiction for Middle School and Teen Readers*. Libraries Unlimited, 2005.

"Top Fifty Gaming Core Collection Titles." *Young Adult Library Services*. v6 no2 Winter 2008, p36-38+48.

Wadham, Tim. *Libros Essenciales: Building, Marketing, and Programming a Core Collection of Spanish Language Children's Materials*. Neal-Schuman, 2006.

Walker, Barbara J. *The Librarian's Guide to Developing Christian Fiction Collections*. Neal-Schuman, 2006. (The three titles in this set were originally published as individual volumes in 2005 covering core books and authors for adults, teens, and children.)

Wilson Standard Catalogs / Core Collections Series
(The Wilson Standard Catalog Series titles are available in two formats, print and electronic. New editions of each print volume have Core Collection in the title, as is currently used in the online edition of each title. See also Electronic Databases section following.)

Children's Catalog. 19th Edition. H.W. Wilson, 2006.
(annual supplements are published between editions)

Senior High Core Collection. 17th Edition. H.W. Wilson, 2007.
(annual supplements are published between editions)

Public Library Core Collection: Nonfiction. 13th Edition. (Public Library Catalog) H.W. Wilson, 2008.
(annual supplements are published between editions)

Middle and Junior High School Library Catalog. 9th Edition. H.W. Wilson, 2005.
(annual supplements are published between editions)

Fiction Catalog. 15th Edition. H.W. Wilson, 2006.
(annual supplements are published between editions)

Young Adult Library Services. "Top Fifty Gaming Core Collection Titles."
http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Gaming_Lists_&_Activities

Zbaracki, Matthew D. *Best Books for Boys: A Resource for Educators*. Libraries Unlimited, 2008.

Recommended Lists and Best of the Year Lists

The American Library Association and journals such as *Library Journal*, *School Library Journal*, and *Booklist* release notable and 'best of the year' lists annually. Check the current lists for good replacement titles and check previous lists to help you make decisions about the quality of titles that are circulating marginally or to decide whether to replace a title.

ALSC's Children's Notables Lists

http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/awardsgrants/childrensnotable/index.cfm

This division of the American Library Association issues annual lists of notable materials in book, film, audio, and software formats for children from birth through age 12. Usually released in January immediately following the Midwinter Meeting. Also check award lists, including the Newbery Award, the Caldecott Award, Siebert Award, the Odyssey Award, and others.

Notable Books for Adults

http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/awards/notablebooks/lists/index.cfm

The Reference and Users Services Division of the American Library Association issues an annual list of 25 important and highly readable books of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry for adult readers.

Outstanding Reference Sources

http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/awards/outstandingreferencesources/index.cfm

The Reference and Users Services Division of the American Library Association issues an annual list of outstanding reference resources, emphasizing those of most value to small and medium-sized public libraries. Issued each year in May.

Notable Videos

http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/vrt/initiatives/notablevideos/index.cfm

Video Round Table, a group within the American Library Association, provides an annual list of fifteen notable non-feature how-to and educational films.

YALSA Book Awards & Booklists

http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/booklistsawards/booklistsbook.cfm

This division of the American Library Association issues annual lists of notable materials in book, film, and audio formats for teens. Usually released in January immediately following the Midwinter Meeting. Also check award lists, including the Alex Award, the Printz Award, and Young Adult Nonfiction Award, as well as lists like "Outstanding Books for the College Bound" and "Great Graphic Novels for Teens."

Indexes

While most standard indexes are now available electronically, some libraries keep older print copies. Retain works that are listed in standard indexes and are still being used by patrons. (See also Electronic Databases and Online Resources sections following.)

The Columbia Granger's Index to Poetry in Anthologies. 13th Edition. Columbia University Press, 2007.

Index to Poetry for Children and Young People: 1993-1997. H. W. Wilson, 1998. (Other Volumes: 1964-1969, 1970-1975, 1976-1981, 1982-1987, 1988-1992).

Play Index 1998-2002. H. W. Wilson, 2004. (Other Volumes: 1949-1952, 1953-1960, 1961-1967, 1968-1972, 1973-1977, 1978-1982, 1983-1987, 1988-1992, 1993-1997).

**Short Story Index, 1999-2004*. H. W. Wilson, 2005. (Other Volumes: 1900-1949, 1950-1954, 1955-1958, 1959-1963, 1964-1968, 1969-1973, 1974-1978, 1979-1983, 1984-1988, 1989-1993, 1994-1998, 2000, 2003).

Electronic Databases

Listed here are electronic database versions of standard indexes. These are available through paid subscriptions but some may be available through the TexShare databases at no or reduced fees for your library. Link to www.texshare.edu for more information on databases available to public and academic libraries in Texas.

Children's Core Collection

http://www.hwwilson.com/print/childcat.cfm

Database version of *Children's Catalog*.

The Columbia Granger's World of Poetry

www.columbiagrangers.org/grangers/index.jsp

Electronic indexed poetry.

Global Books in Print

http://www.globalbooksinprint.com/bip/

Comprehensive guide to books in print.

Graphic Novels Core Collection

http://www.hwwilson.com/Databases/graphicnovels_core.htm

More than 2000 recommended titles.

Middle School and Junior High Core Collection

http://www.hwwilson.com/print/mjhscat.cfm

Database version of *Middle and Junior High School Library Catalog.*

Nonbook Materials Core Collection

http://www.hwwilson.com/Databases/nonbook_core.htm

Recommended multimedia resources.

Play Index

http://www.hwwilson.com/Databases/playindex_e.htm

Database version of *Play Index*.

Public Library Core Collection: Fiction

http://www.hwwilson.com/print/fictcat.cfm

Database version of *Fiction Catalog*.

Public Library Core Collection: Nonfiction

http://www.hwwilson.com/print/publibcat.cfm

Database version of *Public Library Catalog*.

The Reader's Advisor Online

http://rainfo.lu.com/

Database version of the *Genreflecting series and other reader's advisory tools*

Senior High Core Collection

http://www.hwwilson.com/print/srhscat.cfm

Database version of *Senior High Core Collection*.

Short Story Index

http://www.hwwilson.com/databases/storeindec.htm

Database version of *Short Story Index*.

Online Resources

Listed here are selected online resources which appear in the text of this manual. These websites offer free resources to help with collection development, selection, and weeding decisions.

Adult Reading Round Table Booklists

http://www.arrtreads.org/booklists.htm

The members of this group are librarians and library staff from libraries in the Chicago area who are interested in leisure reading and promoting reading for pleasure. Check out their reading lists and genre studies.

Alibris

www.alibris.com

If you think you have a valuable book, check it on Alibris, an out-of-print and rare book dealer. Alibris for Libraries will help to locate used, new and hard-to-find books, movies and music. Alibris offers out-of-print, older in-print, and otherwise unavailable titles in stock, including custom tools for managing replacement and collection development projects.

Altered Books website

http://www.alteredbookartists.com/,

The International Society of Altered Book Artists website offers an amazing assortment of art made from old books.

Better World Books

http://www.betterworldbooks.com/

This program works with libraries across the country to sell discarded and donated material on 20 online marketplaces to generate funding for both libraries and non-profit literacy initiatives.

Blogistics

http://www.blogistics.com/

Purchase used books directly from libraries. Note that each company has specific requirements

Cash 4 Books

http://www.cash4books.net/

This online company offers their service to anyone that needs to sell books quickly and easily. They buy a wide variety of books, but they specialize in textbooks, non-fiction, business, and professional/ technical books.

Determining the Value of Donated Property

http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p561.pdf

This Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Publication 561 is designed to help donors and appraisers determine the value of property (other than cash) that is given to qualified organizations.

Disposal or Weeded, Discarded, and Unwanted Books

http://www.lrs.org/documents/field_stats/weeding_LP.pdf

This 2008 compilation by Maura McGrath for Library People: Friends of Colorado Libraries

Duplicates Exchange Union

http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alcts/mgrps/ecoms/duplicatesexch/duplicatesexchange.cfm

A group within the American Library Association, ALCTS Division, this group connects those who need materials with those who have more than they need. Members communicate by electronic discussion list to exchange usable library material. All kinds of libraries and librarians, primarily of small college and public libraries participate. Everyone is welcome.

Green Weeding: Promoting Ecofriendly Options for Library Discards

http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6592668.html

This recent article by Sarah Penniman and Lisa McColl in *Library Journal* (September 15, 2008) captures some current library activities and options for environmentally friendly weeding and online selling of discards.

The Modern Library

http://www.randomhouse.com/modernlibrary/100best.html

Lists of the 100 'best' novels and non-fiction books, voted on by readers may help libraries determine a core collection of classics and important contemporary books to retain in the collection.

The New Planning for Results: A Streamlined Approach Course.

http://www.elearnlibraries.com/courses/the_new_planning_for_results/index.html

This course is based on the popular American Library Association publication, *The New Planning for Results: A Streamlined Approach* by Sandra Nelson.

Sending Books to Needy Libraries: Book Donation Programs

http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/hqops/library/libraryfactsheet/alalibraryfactsheet12.cfm

This American Library Association Fact Sheet 12 offers information on organizations that do want books for specific projects.

The Sunlink Weed of the Month Archives

www.sunlink.ucf.edu/weed/

Funded by the Florida Department of Education, the SUNLINK Weed of the Month program introduced a new weeding subject area each month from September 1997 to December 2005, organized by the primary Dewey classification. Although no longer adding to this website, the guidelines for weeding each topic area are very useful.

Tips for Online Book Sales

http://www.folusa.org/resources/tips.php

Friends of Libraries USA (FOLUSA) website offers "Tips for Online Book Sales," "Online Resources" and "List of Friends Selling Online."

Your Old Books

http://www.rbms.info/yob.shtml

This guide from the American Library Association, ACRL, Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, lists resources for the evaluation and appraisal of books, offers questions and answers on what makes a book rare, and suggested organizations that welcome book donations.

Further Readings

Listed here are journal articles and books that provide additional information on weeding and topics related to collection development and maintenance. For those in Texas, remember that many of the articles are available through databases in TexShare.

Alabaster, Carol. *Developing an Outstanding Core Collection: A Guide for Public Libraries*. American Library Association, 2002.

Baumbach, Donna J. and Linda L. Miller. *Less is More: A Practical Guide to Weeding School Library Collections.* American Library Association, 2006.

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Bromann, Jennifer. "Letting Go: How One Librarian Weeded a Children's Magazine Collection." *School Library Journal* v. 48 no. 7 (July 2002) pp. 44-46.

"Commentary on weeding." *Library Administrator's Digest*. Feb 1999. FindArticles.com. 13 May 2008. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3858/is_199902/ai_n8843523

Doll, Carol A. and Pamela Petrick Barron. *Managing and Analyzing Your Collection: A Practical Guide for Small Libraries and School Media Centers*. American Library Association, 2002.

Dilevko, Juris. "Weed to achieve: a fundamental part of the public library mission?" *Library Collections, Acquisitions, & Technical Services* v. 27 no. 1 (Spring 2003) pp. 73-96. http://www.moyak.com/researcher/resume/papers/weeding-pdf.pdf

"Evaluating Library Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights." Adopted February 2, 1973, by the American Library Association Council; amended July 1, 1981. http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=interpretations&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=8537

Garcia, June and Sandra Nelson. *Public Library Service Responses 2007*. American Library Association, 2007.

Greiner, Tony and Bob Cooper. *Analyzing Library Collection Use with Excel*. American Library Association, 2007.

Handman, Gary. *Video Collection Development in Multi-type Libraries: A Handbook*. 2nd Edition. Libraries Unlimited, 2002.

Hoffmann, Frank W. and Richard J. Wood. *Library Collection Development Policies: School Libraries and Learning Resource Centers.* Scarecrow Press, 2007.

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Periodicals and Electronic Lists

Booklist

http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/hqops/publishing/booklist_publications/booklist/booklist.cfm

This publication from the American Library Association includes a regular 'roundup' of reference titles and articles that focus on 'core collections' for specific subject areas, including types of novels. For example, core collections have been covered for historical sagas, graphic novels featuring women, and African American cuisine. If you don't subscribe (you should!), search for these resources through the TexShare databases when making weeding decisions.

Collection Management

From Haworth Press, this quarterly journal is devoted to the theories, practices, and research findings involved with the modern management of library collections. ISSN: 1545-2549

COLLDV-L

http://serials.infomotions.com/colldv-l/

This listserv is a moderated discussion list directed primarily to those involved with library collection development. Although some discussions are rather academic and many of the postings deal with employment opportunities, subscribers can post questions regarding weeding activities and replacement of materials.

Fiction_L

http://www.webrary.org/rs/Flmenu.html

This electronic listserv is hosted by the Morton Grove Public Library and is devoted to reader's advisory topics including collection

development issues, booklists and bibliographies. Check out the booklists for great fiction titles on a wide range of topics.

Library Journal

www.libraryjournal.com

Each issue includes a roundup of reference titles. Also check out the collection development calendar online, which highlights specific subject areas. Each article includes new titles and classics. For example, the January 2008 issue focused on pregnancy and childbirth, while June 2007 covered water sports.

School Library Journal

http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/

Despite its name, this journal covers materials for youth in school *and* public libraries. In addition to reviews and 'editor's choice' lists of the best books and media for the year, articles may focus on important titles in particular subject areas or genres. For example, the May 2008 issue included a focus on science fiction.

Appendix

OVERVIEW CHART OF CREW FORMULAS 99

DISPOSAL SLIP TEMPLATE 101

Overview Chart of CREW Formulas

Dewey Class	CREW Formula
000	
004	3/X/MUSTIE
010	10/3/MUSTIE
020	10/3/MUSTIE
030	5/X/MUSTIE
Other 000s	5/X/MUSTIE
101	15/5/MUSTIE
133	10/3/MUSTIE
150	10/3/MUSTIE
160	10/3/MUSTIE
170	10/3/MUSTIE
200	10/3/MUSTIE or 5/3/MUSTIE
306	5/2/MUSTIE
310	2/X/MUSTIE
320	5/3/MUSTIE
323	5/3/MUSTIE
330	3/3/MUSTIE
340	5/2/MUSTIE
350	5/3/MUSTIE
360	5/3/MUSTIE
370	10/3/MUSTIE
390 - 394	10/3/MUSTIE
395	5/3/MUSTIE
398	X/3/MUSTIE
400	10/3/MUSTIE
500	5/3/MUSTIE
507	10/3/MUSTIE
510	10/3/MUSTIE
520	5/3/MUSTIE
550	X/3/MUSTIE
560	5/2/MUSTIE
570	7/3/MUSTIE
580	10/3/MUSTIE

Dewey Class	CREW Formula
610	5/3/MUSTIE
629	X/2/MUSTIE
630	5/3/MUSTIE
635	10/3/MUSTIE
636	5/2/MUSTIE
640	5/3/MUSTIE
649	5/3/MUSTIE
670	10/3/MUSTIE
700	
709	X/3/MUSTIE
720	X/3/MUSTIE
737	5/3/MUSTIE
740	X/3/MUSTIE
770	5/3/MUSTIE
791	10/2/MUSTIE
793 - 796	10/3/MUSTIE
800	X/3/MUSTIE
910	3/2/MUSTIE
Personal Travel Narratives	5/2/MUSTIE
930 - 999	10/3/MUSTIE
92, 920 or B	X/3/MUSTIE
F (Fiction)	X/2/MUSTIE
Graphic Novels	X/1/MUSTIE
E (Easy Readers/ Picture Books)	X/2/MUSTIE
JF (Juvenile Fiction)	X/2/MUSTIE
YA Fiction (Teen Fiction)	3/2/MUSTIE
J and YA Non-fiction	Use adult criteria (and review children's general criteria)
Periodicals/ Newspapers	3/X/X
Government Documents	3/2/X
Local History	X/X/X
Nonprint	WORST
Film Formats	2/1/WORST
Audio Formats	X/2/X

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Disposal Slips

Disposal Slip

Book Title or Call Number: _____

- ❑ Bindery
- ❑ Mend/Preserve
- ❑ Promote
- ❑ Donate to: _____
- ❑ Sent To: _____
- ❑ Check Database for other locations of this title: _____
- ❑ Discard
- ❑ Book Sale
- ❑ Replacement/New Edition

Other locations of this title: _____
Title to replace this volume: _____
Authorizing Agent: _____

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Book Title or Call Number: _____

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