



# The Review and Weeding of a Reference Collection: A Case Study

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## Abstract

The author's library decided to weed its paper-based reference collection. Some of the titles in the collection were out of date because the most recent edition was in the e-book format and available online. Other titles were simply outdated, irrelevant, or in poor physical condition. In addition, the collection took up prime space on the main floor. The library used three criteria to assess the collection: age, currency of content, and inclusion on a core title list. The criteria were not determined initially but rather through trial and error. When completed, the print-based reference collection was considerably smaller and moved to a different location. When viewed in retrospect, the weeding process lacked one standard criterion: no one did a literature search. Though there was no compelling reason to do a search after the fact, the collection development librarian wanted to know if this would have made a difference in the process. The literature search revealed some interesting information about weeding. This included that weeding a reference collection is a topic infrequently covered in the literature, as well as the fact that a core title list is rarely used. It also revealed that the creation of a collection development policy and a weeding policy for the reference collection would have made the process simpler.

**Keywords:** reference, weeding, core titles, literature review, collection management

## **Introduction**

The research method described in this article is a little different from standard research articles. The author identified the problem, found a solution, put it in place, and then conducted a literature review to determine how well this worked. The possible outcomes to this process include finding better solutions to the problem, finding major problems with the solution the author used, or finding literature that supported or justified the solution the author used. From the author's experience, executing projects on the fly without a thorough search of the literature happens in many libraries. How vital is a review of the literature beforehand?

In this paper, the author provides an overview of the project—including its execution and the results of the project—and then completes a literature review. The author wants to determine if the project would have a better outcome from the knowledge gleaned from the literature review.

## **Background**

### **Prior Library Environment**

Like many academic libraries, the librarians at the Calvin T. Ryan Library at the University of Nebraska at Kearney continually look for ways to improve service to our students and faculty. Key elements for that service are providing both the materials and the space to use the materials for their research. Space is at a premium and should be used to its best advantage. Librarians at the Ryan Library have done this in a variety of ways, such as identifying many online resources to provide information for both the on-campus students and those attending at a distance, as well as rearranging the furniture and shelving to get the best use of the floor space. However, one area needing reassessment was the reference collection.

People use the library in a variety of ways. Desktop computers for individual use continue to take up a large footprint throughout the library. Programs, meetings, and instruction are commonplace as well and are located on all floors. There was a veritable hum of activity in the library but not in the reference collection area. It was very quiet there. The shelving for the reference collection resided next to the reference desk on the main floor in an easy to find spot. Most of the resources traditionally used in the reference area are now available online. Instead of using the print reference collection, students and faculty ignore the reference

area on their way to the computers and the programs, meetings, and instruction sessions that are taking place in the library and causing that hum of activity. When looked at as a whole, the library appeared to have made great strides in improving service to the campus but had neglected the reference area.

### **Prior Reference Weeding Attempts**

Attempts in the previous decade to improve the library by eliminating the reference collection in one fell swoop were not successful. One of the arguments against the elimination of the reference collection was that it had taken years of careful work by all the reference librarians to develop the collection. There was no clear design presented to dismantle the collection. In addition, many of the librarians were close to retirement age and were not ready for such a major change.

In the intervening years, many of those librarians have retired. The librarians who remained, as well as newly hired ones, determined that the best plan of action now was to go slowly and take the process a step at a time. As a first step, the librarians agreed after much discussion that all new purchases for reference materials would be for those available online, with few exceptions. Soon after the decision was made, it became apparent that if the new titles for the reference collection were going to be online, then the volumes currently in the physical reference collection were redundant and would soon become outdated.

### **The Weeding Process**

The Coordinator of Collection Services spearheaded the project. She determined that the next step was to review the collection, determine which titles were outdated, and remove them from the reference collection or move them to the general book collection. Those moved to the general book collection were determined to have some useful information even though outdated.

The weeding project began slowly. Some of the initial decisions were easy. It was first determined that if the library had purchased a reference work as an online resource, the library would not retain the paper print copy. This was the first criterion established by the librarians in the project. A list was made of those titles that were available online in our collection. The

coordinator compared this list with what was on the shelves. She pulled any exact duplicates and withdrew them from the collection. If the online version was an updated or newer version of the one on the shelves, then she withdrew the outdated version. This resulted in a list of 201 titles with many of them multivolume sets. She offered these titles to other academic libraries in the state. The smaller colleges, those that could not afford to purchase some of the larger sets on their own, quickly snapped them up. The coordinator sent any of the books that remained, mostly outdated material, to Better World Books for disposal.

The books remaining on the shelves after this process were not available in an online format. The next steps were not as easy as the first. The review of the rest of the reference collection would require the assistance of all the librarians. The review of the remaining reference collection required sorting the material into one of four groups: titles to be withdrawn, titles to be relocated, titles to be updated, and titles to be kept. The steps necessary to accomplish this review included the following:

1. The coordinator of collection services placed book carts in the reference collection area along with pencils and book slips. The book slips were of three types:
  - One was to indicate that the book be kept and placed in the general book collection (relocated titles).
  - The second slip indicated that the book be withdrawn (withdrawn titles).
  - The third slip indicated that the book be updated with a newer edition (titles to be updated).

Books without a slip remained on the reference shelves (titles to be kept).

At this stage, each librarian received instructions to review titles in their respective liaison areas and to use their own criteria for making these decisions. The librarians added notes to the slips to clarify their decisions. Most of the librarians were generalists in their liaison areas and lacked the knowledge of critical works in their fields of responsibility. Therefore, they made decisions based primarily on the standard criteria of age, physical condition, and usage. If there was an area not having a liaison, such as library science or engineering, anyone could make recommendations in those areas.

2. The librarians had six weeks to review this collection. As books were marked for relocation to the general book collection, the reviewing librarian placed the book on a specific cart for that designation. At the end of each week, staff members relocated these books.
3. Another separate cart held books marked for withdrawal. When a cart became full, the Coordinator of Collection Services alerted library faculty members to review the books a final time and to make any changes in their disposition. Once the review deadline for the cart had passed, staff members pulled and withdrew the books remaining on the cart.

All this activity happened during the summer of 2010. The Coordinator of Collection Services hoped that by the end of the summer the other librarians would have reviewed the entire reference collection and thus a much smaller footprint would remain on the floor. Though no specific goal was determined at the outset of this project, the Coordinator of Collection Services thought it likely that a much smaller reference collection would be the result. The collection consisted of approximately 14,000 volumes at the outset and approximately 7,500 volumes after the initial phase of the review, but she wanted to move additional volumes out of the reference collection.

Another summer project was happening at the same time in the library. A new policy developed in the spring of 2010 by the librarians stated that the library would rely solely on electronic journal subscriptions if they met the following criteria (later incorporated into the library's collection development policy, University of Nebraska at Kearney Calvin T. Ryan Library, 2011, p. 9):

Only electronic format journal subscriptions will be maintained at the Calvin T. Ryan Library at the University of Nebraska at Kearney IF the following criteria are met:

1. Usage statistics indicate that demand for non-electronic formats (e.g., print or microform) does not warrant continuing access, based on consultation with affected liaison and department.
2. Content, such as articles, book reviews and letters, are available electronically in PDF format, or another similar graphic format.
3. The Library retains post-cancellation access rights to purchased journal content and

they are easily accessible.

When a journal met the criteria, the policy required the removal of the equivalent print volumes from the library. During the summer, a project team pulled and recycled the paper volumes of the affected titles. After pulling these volumes, the project members closed the gaps created in the journal shelves. All this work provided three rows (10 ranges, six shelves per range, double-sided) of vacant shelving formerly used by the bound journals. These three rows were located near the stairs on the lower level of the building.

In contrast to the high energy used on the journal project, the review of the reference collection proceeded slowly and did not meet the expectations of the Coordinator of Collection Services. The librarians had their own projects to complete during the summer months and, in addition, there was a reluctance to tamper with the long established and developed reference collection.

The Dean of the Library looked ahead of these projects and decided to use the space occupied by the reference collection for more study space for students. To accomplish this before the fall semester began, the Dean and the Coordinator of Collection Services made a decision to move temporarily the partially reviewed reference collection to the three rows of shelves vacated by the journal withdrawal project. The three long rows of shelves would provide enough space and were located just one level below at the foot of the open stairs located near the reference desk. The reference collection would still be easy to access for both the user and the staff.

The library staff and student workers removed the approximately 7,500 remaining books from the location they had occupied for decades and moved them to the vacated shelving. They then dismantled most of the reference collection bookshelves and put them into storage. This made room in the vacated space for much needed tables and matching chairs. The workers retained some of the low shelving from the reference collection to provide for a larger new books area. Soft furniture placed around the perimeter of the space added to the cozy feel. Students immediately filled the study space and soft seating areas.

The reference collection was now no longer visible on the main floor, but it was only an open flight of stairs below the reference desk. It was easy to access, just not easy to see. Over the following semester, the relocated reference collection was apparently out of mind of librarians and students alike. No one asked where the collection went. The librarians did not need to leave the reference desk to use the relocated reference collection. As noted before, most of the current resources were available online. The students continued to fill the study space once occupied by

the reference collection.

The review of the reference collection, however, was not yet complete. There were still many books in the three categories mentioned earlier that remained the shelves in their temporary location. The temporary location was just that—temporary. The Coordinator of Collection Services needed to provide some additional incentive for the librarians to review the remaining collection. The reluctance to review the collection by the librarians stemmed from the concern that there had been no assessment of the materials in the collection and thus the librarians might remove valuable information.

The library had utilized the Bowker Book Analysis System (BBAS) the previous year. This utility compared the titles held by the library with the list of materials contained in Resources for College Libraries (RCL) (n.d.). RCL provides a list of titles that it considers basic to college libraries. Though not exhaustive, the RCL does provide a place to begin when developing a core collection. Using such a tool allows a library to see areas the library needs to enhance based on the titles in this resource.

Using the data acquired from the analysis, Coordinator of Collection Services identified titles in the reference collection that matched those listed in the RCL. Using this guide to a core collection as another criterion, the Coordinator of Collection Services tagged each title that appeared in this resource with an adhesive blue dot. These tagged titles formed the new core of the reference collection.

Establishing this core group based on a recognized resource provided much-needed reassurance for some librarians. This core group of titles addressed their concern of discarding reference books without some prior assessment. The use of an authoritative source provided the relief they needed. The use of this impartial reviewer (BBAS) allowed the librarians to address the rest of the collection, review it, and make some decisions, knowing that no matter their decisions, there would be noteworthy books in a print reference collection in the end.

In addition, if the library had an older version of a work identified in the RCL, it was agreed that the library would get the updated version and either relocate the older version to the general book collection or withdraw it altogether. Since the reference collection is a non-circulating collection, placing the older edition in the book collection allowed library users to check out the title if the information was still of some value.

To sum up the process to this point, about half of the original 14,000 titles were now in the temporary location. The library removed all of the duplicates to online resources and the

books identified by librarians as outdated or unnecessary. The resulting 7,500 books now needed to be reviewed.

The process for this group of books included the following:

- The librarians inserted book slips into each book as before, but this time the books remained on the shelves with the book slips in them.
- The book slips used were the same as before, but this time only those books not tagged with the blue dot were under consideration.
- If one librarian made the notation to relocate a title to the general book collection and another librarian bookmarked it to stay in the reference collection, the more conservative decision to leave it in the reference collection prevailed.

Librarians identified most of the remaining reference collection to go into the regular book collection or update some titles for the reference collection. After the librarians reviewed the reference collection, the Coordinator of Collection Services pulled and placed the withdrawn titles on a cart. The librarians were given another week to look at these titles and, if necessary, mark them to be retained. This was the last step before they were withdrawn. By the end of the final review, there were just three book trucks of books to be withdrawn because most of those the librarians had identified within the reference collection went to the general book collection.

The Coordinator of Collection Services and the collection services staff pulled and relocated the books destined for the general book collection and edited their bibliographic records in the online catalog. Finally, Coordinator of Collection Services reviewed the outdated reference titles that librarians identified as necessary if current. If there was no newer version in print, the Coordinator of Collection Services determined the final placement of the item. She withdrew most of them. The collection initially had about 14,000 volumes. The first round narrowed it down to about 7,500 items before moving them to the temporary location. The collection currently has 4,414 volumes.

Those titles that remained will continue to be a reference collection. The librarians agreed that this smaller collection would serve the users much better, and it no longer takes up prime real estate in the library. The final location of the reference collection is on the upper floor next to the general book collection, to be used in conjunction with the regular books on the shelves and with the online resources available anywhere. This location is still somewhat convenient to the reference librarians. It is just up one flight of stairs from the reference desk. Time will tell if print reference books are used at all. The ease of use and availability of online



resources may make the reference collection obsolete. The space vacated on the lower level will provide yet another location for study tables, soft seating, and additional computer access.

## Literature Review

Even though the literature is full of materials on reference collections, very few articles actually address weeding a collection. The author was able to identify the following resources that cover some of the issues involved in removing titles from a reference collection.

The oldest article was from 1986. In this article, the results of a survey conducted by Engeldinger (1986) in the spring of 1982 surprised him. He was looking for libraries that had collection development policies specifically for the reference collection and the weeding of the reference collection. Engeldinger (1986) did not find any articles on weeding reference collections or even on transferring reference books to the circulating collection (p. 366). Based on the survey, however, Engeldinger went on to provide statistical information on weeding policies and practices regarding general collections. He found that there were many more practices than policies: “The suspicion that librarians are conservative when it comes to weeding library materials is not new, and responses to the question regarding reference materials lend support to this belief” (Engeldinger, 1986, p. 369).

Engeldinger (1986) also examined the weeding factors at the surveyed libraries. The author’s knowledge of the criteria used by other libraries would either support the Ryan Library’s practice or not.

There appear to be two major considerations that reference librarians use to arrive at their decisions. On the one hand, there is the material itself and the characteristics about it that directly affect whether or not it stays on the shelf or not. These include frequencies of use, age of material, arrival of a new edition that supersedes a volume already on the shelf, or other elements that could be considered when weeding judgments are made (Engeldinger, 1986, p. 369).

He then provided some criteria on the material itself, but this was very weak in detail. Engeldinger (1986) addressed the other criteria that pertain to “the availability of shelf space and staff to do the necessary processing” (p. 369). This second category of considerations often

provides the impetus for libraries to do the weeding when the shelves become too full and there is no room to add books. However, the first group of considerations that Engeldinger (1986) identified guides the selection of the material needing weeding and that seemed rather minimal. From his survey, age was a strong indicator for weeding while frequency of use was not as important. Other than including librarians or bibliographers in the process, there was no consideration as to the quality of the book's content in the weeding decision.

The article by Biggs and Biggs (1987) provides some of the same conclusions as Engeldinger's, such as the lack of reference collection policies and that lack of use of the material is often a weeding criterion though there is no empirical data to support this criterion. Biggs and Biggs (1987), however, addressed for the first time the impact of online reference resources on weeding the reference collection. In their survey, they asked if the library provided computer searching, either as a special service or as an online reference service. From the manner in which this question was phrased and in the time period in which it was used, it would appear that this question addresses librarian-mediated searching. The survey found that 75 percent of the doctorate-granting institutions provided online reference searching compared to a much smaller percentage for the college libraries. Of those who did offer online searching, the survey asked another question: "When deciding whether to acquire a paper-based reference source, to what extent is its online availability influential?" (Biggs and Biggs, 1987, p. 76). Therefore, not only did the questionnaire acknowledge the use of online searching in libraries but also its influence in making collection development decisions. At that particular time, it was the author's observation that many—but not all—libraries opted to use the safe route by purchasing a paper-based resource even though they had access to an online version. However, some libraries that were more confident in the technology would not duplicate titles. Surprisingly, it was the smaller colleges with smaller budgets that expressed this confidence and would not purchase a paper-based version if they had access to the online version. Doctoral institutions usually have larger budgets and could afford to duplicate resources for a longer period.

Hattendorf's (1989) article addressed the importance of a collection development policy for the reference collection and stated that it should be a responsibility for each library. As much as Hattendorf (1989) gave a well-rounded history of the reference collection, she did not provide any guidelines on how to select and/or weed a reference collection. Her article is more an examination of who should be doing weeding rather than how it should proceed. She included a passing reference to using online searching, but her article provides little else about the impact of online access to reference collection selection.

As demonstrated by the following quotation from the American Library Association

(ALA), collection development of the reference collection in libraries became a major focus in the late 1980s.

In 1987, the Reference and Adult Services Division of the American Library Association voted to establish a separate and distinct section, CODES, the Collection Development and Evaluation Section. This new section created a standing committee devoted to addressing reference collection development concerns, the Reference Collection and Evaluation Committee. (American Library Association, 1988)

By 1990, weeding reference collections finally became a topic of discussion. *Reference Librarian* devoted an entire issue to it called “Weeding and Maintenance of Reference Collections” (Pierce, 1990). Not surprisingly, two of the authors already mentioned (Biggs, 1990; Engeldinger, 1990) were included in this publication. The issue focused on three aspects of weeding and evaluating a reference collection: considering the institutional context, making policy decisions, and evaluating and weeding collections. The articles that were most compelling were in the last two sections. The Mathews and Tyckoson (1990) article in the last section emphasized using a systemized process for weeding. They provided examples of what one institution did to weed its reference collection. Primarily the process at this institution consisted of one person reviewing the entire reference collection by subject, pulling possible candidates for weeding, and sitting down with the subject specialist to make the final decision. The librarian reviewed only one shelf of books each week so that neither the subject specialist nor the technical services employees were overwhelmed with handling a large number of books. This process continued throughout the year, going from one subject area to another.

In 1991, Nolan’s article specifically addressed selection and weeding of a reference collection. He concluded that many poorly managed reference collections resulted in outdated materials. In addition, he stated that instead of reviewing one’s current collection and addressing its weaknesses, many librarians simply purchase the latest reference work and hope it fills a void in the collection. He continued by saying that, without a clear reference collection policy, there was no definition of what constitutes a reference book or what should constitute such a collection. Nolan (1991) concluded his article by mandating two responsibilities for those librarians selecting or deselecting material for the reference collection. The first responsibility is applying more rigorous thought to the criteria assigned to the collection and the second is to “review the collection on a regular, systematic, and aggressive basis” (p. 90). He noted that, “the

vast majority of reference collections would be significantly diminished in size if these proposed guidelines were actively followed. . . . The leaner, trimmer collection will become more functional; users will find useful sources more easily; and librarians can reclaim valuable space which can be put to other uses” (Nolan, 1991, p. 90).

Nolan (1991) had many good things to say about developing a reference collection policy, such as “creating a reference collection development policy would be a positive step toward better management” and “libraries need to consider systematically what they want in their reference collections, why they want them there, and how they are placed there” (p. 82). The title of Nolan’s (1991) article, “The lean reference collection: Improving functionality through selection and weeding,” implied that he had something to say about the practice of selecting and weeding the reference collection. Instead, he focused on defining what a reference collection should be in theory. In the end, however, he made an effective summation of what would most likely happen with a well-written, rigorously followed reference collection policy, but he did not come up with any more to say about the practical aspects of selection or weeding.

Sendi’s 1996 article detailed the assessment of the reference collection at her library. Her opening statement about weeding excursions and outgrowing its usefulness to patrons was noteworthy. Unfortunately, her description of assessment stopped short of actually using it for weeding.

A decade later, Colson (2007) conducted a similar literature review and found mostly the same articles on this topic. She did, however, make a notable point when she said,

Before weeding, before deciding whether to discard or move individual books to the circulating collection, a mission and policy must be developed. Once developed, it is hoped that the more difficult part of the job—decision-making—will have been strongly aided, and the more tedious parts can be followed with greater confidence than otherwise (Colson, 2007, p. 172).

Colson (2007) then emphasized the need to take the next step: after a mission statement and reference collection policy are written, one must actually create a weeding plan and implement it (p. 174).

Singer’s (2008) article actually reflects what Colson (2007) advocated. Singer’s article provided detailed criteria for weeding the reference collection, including some of the primary ones used at the Calvin T. Ryan Library: age of the material, use of the material, and

identification in a source for core titles. In addition, she provided information on the use of electronic resources in lieu of paper sources and specified that it is now a criterion for weeding (Singer, 2008).

Singer wrote another article in 2010 about the history of ready reference collections. Though this article does not focus on history *per se*, the fact that a new format has completely altered the selection and deselection of reference materials is pertinent. Singer's 2010 article discussed the demise of ready reference and the reference collection as a whole due to the availability of the same information through electronic databases provided by libraries or via search engines such as Google or other internet resources.

In addition to the journal articles regarding the weeding of reference collections, a few books also provide some information. Three of the most current are *Weeding Library Collections* by Stanley Slote (1997), *Reference Collection Development: A Manual* edited by Alice Perez (2004), and *Fundamentals of Collection Development and Management* by Peggy Johnson (2009). Slote (1997) discussed weeding in both broad concepts and specific methods, providing some advice on unique collections such as reference collections. Perez (2004) focused more on developing a collection development policy specifically for reference collections with some mention of including weeding in the policy. Johnson (2009) was more comprehensive than the other two, covering a broad background in collection development and management. She also provided nine pages on the topic of weeding a collection with some portion of that specifically targeting weeding a reference collection. Perez (2004) provided no details on the weeding of a reference collection; she merely stated that weeding should be included in the policy. Johnson (2009) provided more commentary on weeding in general, highlighted reasons for it, and focused on some popular methods and criteria used. One point she was clear about was the need for "established criteria, documented in a written policy, guiding weeding decisions" (p. 153). In addition, Johnson commented on the important aspects of a successful weeding project. These included having a "clear purpose (improving the collection, making materials more accessible, freeing space, etc.), sound planning, good communication, sufficient time to do it well, careful consideration, and appropriate communication with administrators and constituents" (p. 153). The conclusion from her detailed discussion of the topic is that planning is most important, whether it be the criteria used for the weeding or communicating with those most likely to be impacted with the process.

Johnson (2009) concluded her section on weeding with a few paragraphs on weeding specific types of collections, reference being one of them. The author was rather surprised by her statement that reference collections are weeded more regularly than other portions of the

collection, but then she went on to state that libraries often have policies in place to withdraw a superseded edition or a routine to replace directories or encyclopedias on a regular schedule, such as every five or ten years. Weeding, in the mind of the author, is more complex than the replacement of one edition by another, but it helped to see the scope of what another author sees as weeding a specific collection.

## Discussion

Though this project began without an initial literature review, the eventual literature review provides support for most of the actions in the project. As documented above, the concept of management of the reference collection is an elusive one. Reference collections are frequently included in general collection development policies, but when procedures are put in place the reference collection is rarely included. One idea that has merit but not a lot of data to back it up is the need to develop a mission statement for the reference collection, a collection development policy for the reference collection, and a weeding policy. Though mentioned separately, incorporating the weeding policy into the reference collection development policy would reinforce the importance of weeding on a regular basis.

The Calvin T. Ryan Library developed a collection development policy in 2011 that encompasses all the library's collections. This policy mentions the reference collection but does not provide any details for developing or managing it. The Collection Development Committee that wrote the policy agreed to postpone writing the section on the reference collection rather than delay the comprehensive policy any further. The Ryan Library has an overarching mission statement but not one specifically for any one unique collection, including the reference collection. Additionally mentioned in the literature review is the need to have these documents in place before tackling the actual weeding process. An early discussion of the project elicited true concern about weeding too much of the collection. A collection development policy for the reference area might have alleviated this concern.

As for the criteria for weeding a reference collection, the literature was very sparse and dated. Many articles touched on the necessity for weeding the collection. Very few, however, actually discussed how to go about it. As mentioned in the description of the project, some criteria such as age or physical condition of the book are factors mentioned in some of the literature. The review addressed superseded editions briefly. The lack of literature on the impact of online reference resources on a print reference collection was notable, primarily due to the

publication date of many of the articles. One criterion mentioned only once was the use of a core collection resource. In the Ryan Library project, the use of the core collection bibliography was a significant factor in acquiring the cooperation of the librarians in the actual weeding of the collection. Given this criterion as a safeguard against totally dismantling the reference collection, the librarians were willing to devote their time reviewing titles not so designated.

## Conclusion

The literature review revealed that though articles were written about weeding reference collections, very few addressed the actual process to follow. One aspect the literature review did indicate was that if the library had established policies and criteria for weeding first and then followed with the actual steps already decided upon, the project might have proceeded a bit more smoothly. The literature review supported some of the criteria established for the actual process, if not the sequence of events. Technology became a major factor over time. By the time the Calvin T. Ryan Library attempted the weeding of the reference collection, electronic resources that duplicated many of the print resources were available. This availability provided a significant criterion used for weeding the collection. From the beginning, two additional criteria were established: age of the item and the use of the item. Once it became clear that the librarians were reluctant to use only these two criteria for the non-duplicated titles, it was determined that a third criterion, the use of a recognized source for a core collection, would provide the assurance that was needed to continue the process. The project, therefore, had a fruitful conclusion with the reference collection thoroughly reviewed.

Information discovered in the literature review provided both support and education to the author about managing this important collection. The literature review provided support to the author's use of two criteria (age and circulation) that other libraries have used to accomplish the same goal. It provided education to the author about the need for the reference collection to have a clear mission and collection development policy that allows for a clear focus on how to weed it. However, the use of the RCL bibliography (or any bibliography) as a means to establish a core collection [and the fact that it provided a much-needed stabilization to the process at the Ryan Library] was barely mentioned as a criterion in the literature.

The literature review was a valuable exercise. Seeking confirmation of one's actions or additional information to aid in one's future actions are two outcomes of a good literature review. Though the weeding project is completed, the author will take the information gleaned



from the literature review, such as the establishment of a mission statement and collection development policy for the reference collection, and incorporate it into future weeding projects.

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