

LIS 9315 Collection Development – Mark Borden (Mailbox #98)

Major Project – Management of a Library Part 1

Introduction

For this project I decided to make a fiction special library devoted to the subject area of early manned space flight. To limit the size of the collection I decided to narrow the subject area to only NASA missions Mercury, Gemini and Apollo and the astronauts, in those programs, who made space flights. In researching for this project I was able to determine that there are multiple institutional libraries but none devoted specifically to these subject areas as most of them are technical or medical (Nasa Headquarters Library). The exception being the NASA headquarters library which is more specific to policy and management.

A. Library Description and History

The “NASA Library of Pioneers”, or LoP, was created five years ago as a separate entity from the other several institutional repositories. Located in Houston, Texas, the LoP occupies a formally unused portion of the Johnson Space Center totalling approximately 3,300 sq. feet. The NASA Library of Pioneers receives the majority of its funding directly from the parent organization but also is the recipient of private donations and state and federal grants when available. The LoP was created by NASA to act as a resource information center for staff both at the Johnson Space Center, especially marketing and trainers/instructors, as well as for the public given the large amount of visitors that are served yearly.

B. Clientele served by the collection

NASA Employees - Serving NASA employees is the top priority for the LoP and are considered our “primary users”. This group includes, in addition to current employees, support staff, management and retirees and is not limited to those only at the Johnson Space Center but other NASA Centers as well. As such this is the only group that is allowed to borrow material, with appropriate documentation, and is considered foremost when selecting materials for our collection with an emphasis on the particular needs of the Johnson Space Center as a training institution.

General Public – All members of the public may visit the LoP and use materials, however, they are unable to borrow them. Some items may be restricted from being used because of conservation needs and it is at the discretion of library staff if such material may be withheld. In such circumstances every effort will be made to produce a copy for the patron at no cost to themselves. Photocopies are available for public use but some material may be unable to be reproduced due to copyright limitations.

United States Armed Forces – Given the close historical ties between NASA and the United States Armed Forces we will make our materials via interlibrary loan when requested.

Library staff- The needs of the LoP library staff will be considered when selecting any material deemed useful for training purposes or to fulfill their operational requirements.

C. Mission Statement

The “NASA Library of Pioneers” is committed to preserving the legacy of our first astronauts and endeavors to support humanities continuing exploration into space. By providing high-quality information and services to the staff at the Johnson Space Centre we will enhance the training of future astronauts. In addition the “NASA Library of Pioneers” is devoted to

preserving the rich history of the organizations early years and resolves to protect, maintain and conserve primary documents and artifacts from this period. Lastly we intend to enhance the public's appreciation of our first astronauts and space programs. To those ends the library is open to the public and they are free to use the materials within.

D. Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the LoP is to support users at the Johnson Space Center to help them achieve their organization goals. To achieve this goal we will take suggestions for materials from department management and instructors as well as yearly surveys to individuals in these roles to ascertain if their needs are being met. A secondary goal is to make resources, and in particular primary resources and their reproductions, to visitors and researchers to the library. We believe in access to information and will endeavor to assure the public has entry to as many primary documents as appropriate for the collection. Meet and plan with the records managers to have both newly created records and recently declassified documents, records relevant to our collection, sent to the LoP on a regular schedule. Public Outreach is also an important goal for the LoP as the preservation and promotion of our organization history to the public is integral to our moving forward. To accomplish this goal the LoP will cooperate with schools and education groups whenever possible.

E. Collection Analysis

In performing a collection analysis I would suggest that it is absolutely important to consider the worth or impact of a collection based on two metrics. The first being how well does the collection fall in line with both the stated mission of the library and its goals and object. The second consideration to scrutinize is how well does the collection meet the needs of its patrons or

clientele. These two metrics are closely interconnected but I would argue are not mutually exclusive. The collection could accurately match the mission statement of the library, as well its goals and objectives, but may fail to meet the needs of its users for a variety of reasons like underfunding, poorly located, etc. Similarly users may be very satisfied with the collection at a given library but it may be wide of the mark in meshing with the mission statement or goals and objectives. In such a case it may be that library may need to update their mission statement and/or goals and objectives or reconsider what role they are filling.

The LoP is a library dedicated to early manned spaceflight and, more specifically, NASA missions Mercury, Gemini and Apollo. The reason why those three programs were chosen is they are both chronically first in NASA's timeline but also largely iterated on one another towards a final goal of landing a human on the moon. Such a collection would be largely made up of primary materials, artifacts, and secondary materials both about the missions and the astronauts involved. Having access to that information can help NASA staff make more informed decisions on how to future astronauts which is mentioned in our mission statement. In addition a goal and objective of the LoP is to administer yearly surveys to our primary user group to see if their needs are being met. This is a more user-based approach, as opposed to a collection-based technique, as we are attempting to gather data on our clientele's needs and react accordingly rather than checking against other external standards.

In attempting to measure our outcomes, in this case how effective we are at servicing our patrons, looking at the LoP's inputs and outputs can give us some insight about the materials collection. One of the drawbacks of being public is the LoP cannot accept, or collect, any materials that have access restrictions placed on them like classified documents (NASA Headquarters Library). Due to this our ability to provide services to on-site staff, which may

very well have clearance to see such documents, is hindered as we cannot hold them in the library. Furthermore the public, and in particular researchers, may not get the “full picture” or see their work suffer if documents are omitted from the collection. This is a case of one of our libraries inputs, collection size and growth, being influenced by decisions far outside of its control.

In our collection we strived to meet the needs of our users over having a balanced collection. Although that may sound counter-intuitive, meaning the assumption would be having a balanced collection would lead to better information, but this may not always be the case. There are certainly those out there whom hold more esoteric ideas or beliefs about the moon landing and, although interesting on a sociological level, does little to help the LoP achieve its goals and objective. Furthermore the need to have this material added to our collection to balance it has not been expressed by any members on staff. Members of the public wishing to access material of this nature will be able to obtain it at other sources such as local public or academic libraries so we do not feeling leaving it out of the collection is greatly impacting our service to them either.

Lastly our collection has a variety of different formats which can be a double edged sword. Given the time period of when these missions occurred, late sixties to early seventies, it is sometimes difficult to find equipment able to read these materials. The problem is compounded by such formats that require maintenance, to keep their integrity, and the rarity of finding individuals with those skills meaning outside contracting may be needed. This is to say I would argue that part of collection analysis is not only determining only if an item belongs in a certain library because it fits within the scope but also is it what is best for that material in regards to preservation. So if even film stock of the any of the Mercury, Gemini or Apollo is appropriate

for the LoP given it perfectly matches the scope of our collection part of our responsibility is assuring we have the resources, technical skills and wherewithal to properly care for that material. In our case I believe that answer is not so having reproductions of those landings on DVD is the trade-off we have to make.

References

(n.d.). In *Nasa Headquarters Library* . Retrieved January 27, 2014, from <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/hqlibrary/index.html>