

Collection Development Backgrounder

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Sourcing

This summary boils down information from Helene Williams' Collection Development course (LIS 522) in Spring 2016, at the University of Washington Information School. This summary reflects collection development best practices as presented in Helene's lectures, Johnson's *Collection Development and Management* (2014) and a few scholarly and gray articles (Chadwell (2010), Moroni (2012)). Course content addressed electronic resources, although not datasets explicitly. Summer review may uncover more literature about data collection management specifically.

Collection development basics

A collection development policy ensures that content in a collection reflects likely users and their needs, and that the curator (the library) is following sound practices for selecting, maintaining and weeding such a collection, within capacity. The policy models transparency and accountability, and demonstrates that selection and weeding are based on fair, reliable and consistent standards, not whim or partisanship.

The document should be clear enough to be used for public communication as well as staff training. It should embrace the strategic goals of the institutions (the Washington State Library, under the Washington Secretary of State; key State Library funders such as Institute of Museum and Library Services; and the Washington State Office of the Chief Information Officer) as well as the ethical and service standards of the American Library Association.

Basic elements

- **Overview:** the collection's purpose, its intended users and their general needs
- **Details:** subjects/formats sought, what's in scope and out of scope, diversity and inclusion goals, other significant priorities
- **Selection details:** Who identifies data to be published? What methods/tools are used to identify desired data? Any particular criteria for inclusion or exclusion? How does the curator cultivate publication of needed data? Who oversees or reviews selection, and how often? How do users participate?
 - **"Budget" considerations:** For government data, this largely boils down to staff time and capacity for publishing data and for maintaining data in a portal collection.
 - **Gifts:** Since most open government data currently falls in this category, address who accepts or politely rejects data gifts, the process to be followed and how quickly.
- **Collection maintenance:** who assesses data usefulness and how? what is done to promote collection items' discovery and use?
- **Weeding:** Who weeds, how often and on what basis? What methods/tools/standards are used for weeding? Who oversees or reviews? How do users participate?
 - **Preservation:** Will weeded datasets be expunged? Archived? Returned to sender?
- **Complaints:** Who handles complaints, how and how quickly?