GUIDELINES for a COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Digital Libraries

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A policy statement is a kind of framework and set of parameters that employees and users work with. The main reasons for having a written collection and development policy can be divided into four main categories.

1. Selection

 The primary function of the Written Collection Development Policy is to provide guidance to staff when selecting and deselecting (print and electronic) resources for local collections. These reference guides reduce the need for selectors to ask repetitive questions and help train new staff. It also provides useful information to other library staff based on collections.

2. Planning

 Policy documents provide a solid foundation for planning for the future, helping to set priorities, especially when financial resources are limited. This helps protect library funds by providing a rationale for a fair allocation of resources and by explaining the rationale behind the takeover bid.

3. Public relations

 A formal policy statement can be useful in making the case for a library when dealing with the library's users, administrators, and funding institutions alike. They support the

stated goals of the organization and demonstrate responsibility and commitment to the agreed goals. Ideally, editing of documents requires active participation of both users and administrators, thus improving communication between the library and its customers.

4. The wider context

As individual libraries are unable to provide all services on their own, they are uniting as cooperatives etc. For this to work, there must be mutual knowledge and consensus about which library is collecting what. Thus, written collection and development policies are often the basis for broader cooperation and resource sharing locally, regionally, nationally or even internationally.

The main reason for the collection development policy is to prevent libraries from randomly purchasing resources driven by events or individual passions that may not support the library's mission. Electronic resources are becoming increasingly important in libraries of all kinds and sizes, consuming an increasing proportion of library budgets. Therefore, selection decisions regarding electronic information resources should be made within an explicit collection and development policy.