Paraprofessional Pre-weeding Facilitated Review Process for Non-research Collections

Kevin Merriman,
Acquisitions Librarian
Why we fear weeding

- Library as repository
- Fear of patron judgment or backlash
- Fear of administration judgment or backlash
- Need to keep collection numbers high
- Fear of making a mistake
Benefits of Weeding

- Bad stuff removed (i.e. outdated)
- Good stuff emerges (by being seen)
- Circulation improves
- Shelf browsing becomes more productive
- Content is updated
- Space is freed for new materials
Ongoing weeding

- Major weeding is obvious to scrutiny
- Delayed weeding permits buildup
- Large projects can be stressful
CREW

Continuous Review Evaluation & Weeding

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Acquisitions Librarian
MUSTIE

- Misleading or factually inaccurate
- Ugly (worn beyond rebinding)
- Superseded (by new edition)
- Trivial (no “merit”)
- Irrelevant to needs / interest of patrons
- Elsewhere (easily borrowed elsewhere)
Texas State Library and Archives

Materials/Books of Poor Content:
- Outdated and obsolete information
- Inaccurate or false information
- Superseded editions
- Biased or sexist terminology or views
- Mediocre writing style
Texas State Library and Archives

- Materials/Books of Poor Appearance
- Unused Materials
- Topics No Longer Within Your Collection
- Priorities

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Acquisitions Librarian
Paraprofessionals

- Vested interest
- Familiarity with the collection
- Front-line feedback
- Tangible Awareness

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Select to Review

- Having an out-dated circulation pocket indicating not having circulated since the library was automated

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Select to Review

- Being in poor repair, dirty, or otherwise undesirable for research use.
Select to Review

- Do NOT pull items with a "keep note" such as "Keep 2005 - KWM" written inside the front cover. This note indicates that a member of the weeding committee (KWM) reviewed the title in 2005 and determined it still met the collection criteria at that time.

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Acquisitions Librarian
Changing the Home Location

- Via the Cataloging menu, the item is edited and the home location is changed to “review.”
- Whether you choose to shadow this location is debatable... having someone request it may “save” the holding.
Gathering Statistics

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Acquisitions Librarian
Checking Regional Holdings

- A trained student worker or Collection Management Department member will run the remaining titles through OCLC WorldCat with the Louisiana Academic Libraries as a limiter... the titles will then be marked with the number of copies in the state to aid the Weeding Committee Members in their evaluation of the title.

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Acquisitions Librarian
Statistical Analysis

- Reports are run to further review books that have in-house use or circulation since the beginning of the Unicorn system (4-5 years)
Statistical Analysis

- Slote Method
  - Items in Review with Charges
  - Items in Review with In-house
- Archives Review (published before 1850)
Committee Review

- Weeding Committee does the Review
- Any member can veto the w/d
- Add date and initials to keep
- Two members approving a w/d sends the material to Tech Services for withdrawal
Impact on Collection

- My statistics would not help because of a large weeding project related to a mold outbreak
- Anecdotally, though, I estimate less than 10 percent of the pre-selected materials went back to the stacks...
Reasons to De-Preselect

- A rarely used classic still in reasonable shape
- Items re-routed to Rare or Special Collections
- Over-used items needing replacement rather than withdrawal
- Having a research degree program which may consider historical research significant
In Summary

- Successful weeding is generally accepted to be continuous weeding.
- Paraprofessionals are capable of recognizing a significant portion of material to deselect.
- This frees subject specialists to quickly review highly probable options to deselect.
- Further, digging into the remaining collection will be more meaningful...

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