Weed, Store, or Keep?

Usage Statistics and Decision-Making in the Stacks

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Why We Don’t Weed

◆ Hard work
◆ Time consuming
◆ Emphasis on numbers
◆ Sacredness of collection
◆ Public backlash
Do you need to weed?

- What is the nature of your collection?
- Research
- Support of curriculum and teaching
- Are numbers important to you?

“A high level of disuse is the price of scholarly potential”
Keeping your collection active

- Weeding increases the availability of stack space for current and future growth
- Tidy shelves are more convenient for users
- A higher proportion of materials on the shelves are of interest to patrons
- Your collection is not stagnant, but instead is lively and more exciting to users
Slote’s Recommended Standards

- Weed to maintain a core collection of books to satisfy 95% of user demand
- All weeded books should be considered for storage
- One complete weeding should take place each year
- Volumes that have not circulated in X years should be weeded
- Weeding criteria should be based solely upon the likelihood of future use
The Past and the Future

- Many studies have found that past use (circulation or in-house) is the best predictor for future use.
- Circulation should be a consideration in making decisions to weed, keep, or send an item to storage.
- You must create a plan for what you want your collection to be prior to any weeding project.
- Warning: Some research has shown that shelf level has a strong impact on circulation.
Collection Development

Prior to any weeding project, draft a collection development policy, ideally based on your library’s vision and mission statements.

There are many resources available to assist you in crafting a sound collection development policy.

Ask yourself how you can select the most pertinent books that your patrons want, and... what should your long-term strategies be in order to remain an essential, viable part of the academic community?
Weeding based on Circulation

- You can conduct a deselection project based only on circulation, but ...

- You will better serve your patrons by using circulation as only one factor in your decision making process.
Sample Weeding Criteria

- Circulation statistics
- Duplicate copies
- Have later/reprint edition
- Have better/more recent sources
- Textbook
- Outdated/Contains incorrect information
- Inappropriate for your patrons
The footsteps of the librarian

“There is no better fertilizer than the footsteps of the farmer.”

Care of your collection will take you into the stacks. It can be dirty, dusty, and exhausting.

Put on your overalls and grab your gloves!