

What books? Where? ...



The Future of the Academic Library Print Collection: A Space for Engagement

Introduction

Academic libraries seek to engage people with information resources and maximize use of library spaces. When users increasingly rely on digital rather than print resources, libraries respond by shifting space usage from stacks to user working and reading spaces. How then do we, as academic library professionals, best keep print collections on public view and maximize user engagement?

In this whitepaper, we focus on fostering engagement with print resources among library users, particularly with open stack¹ print collections and users within the local community. We advocate moving toward a more flexible, more user-focused service that makes library collections easier to understand and to use. Libraries need to work with their surrounding communities in the further development and presentation of their collections.

We offer a flexible, à la carte approach to transforming open stack academic library print collection management. We have developed a three-tiered system of potential approaches and actions for academic libraries to foster engagement with their collections. We also include materials and tools to help guide individual libraries towards a data-driven approach to print curation that may be tailored to their local context. We hope that these approaches and tools aid academic libraries in helping users engage in meaningful dialogues with print resources.

¹ An open stack, or “open-shelf,” system is defined as follows: “of, used in, or constituting a system of library organization in which books are so shelved as to permit direct examination and selection by patrons.” In *Merriam-Webster.com*. Retrieved October 12, 2017, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/open-shelf>

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I. Goals, Guiding Principles, and Resources

Our print collections have a long and glorious future ahead. The sheer quantity of academic library print collections has doubled within the lifetime of every serving tenured professor in America.² As a result, traditional library stacks are often not the first choice for researchers in a world of easy access to information online through speedy searches that provide near-instant gratification. The challenge is to develop dynamic and exciting print collections that are human scale³ while still providing to be useful for a variety of learning and scholarly activities. Conversely, how can we ensure that the large pools of resources we offer do not overwhelm our users? How can we make the print libraries of today and tomorrow into spaces that users *can* and *will* use? Addressing these concerns means developing an approach that allows us to look to the future of the academic library print collection with confidence and renewed vigor.

Developing engaging collections will ensure the future of the academic library print collection. This project focuses on leveraging our locality, communities, and spaces of physical encounter with print collections. Academic librarians have done an excellent job of thinking and acting at a consortia level, responding to growing financial and physical pressures experienced by their libraries. Libraries have increasingly collaborated on large-scale infrastructure as they move “toward a set of services around creation, curation, and consumption of resources that are less anchored in a locally managed collection.”⁴ We can deliver to our users the most recondite materials they may require. This collaborative network allows libraries to build local collections that provide highly curated and engaging open stack print collections. These collections resonate with local communities because the network⁵ may be leveraged to obtain all other material needs for scholars.

Because the resulting superabundance of resources can be intimidating or confusing, we must also work to create and curate open collections that make it easier,

² See Lavoie, B. F., & Schonfeld, R.C. (2006). Books without boundaries: A brief tour of the system-wide print collection. *The Journal of Electronic Publishing*, 9(2), doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/3336451.0009.208>

³ “In its simplest definition, creating a human scale environment means making sure that the objects we interact with every day are of a size and shape that is reasonable for an average person to use,” see S. Burke (2016, Jan. 12). Placemaking and the human scale city [Blog]. <http://www.pps.org/blog/placemaking-and-the-human-scale-city>

⁴ Dempsey, L. (2015). Technology co-evolves with organization and behaviors. In N. Allen (Ed.), *New Roles for the road ahead: essays commissioned for ACRL's 75th Anniversary* (pp. 22-34). Chicago, IL: Association of College and Research Libraries.

⁵ A collection organized by network is no longer defined according to size or physical ownership by a single entity; instead, a network in this sense is constituted by “a coordinated mix of local, external and collaborative services...assembled around user needs,” see L. Dempsey. (2016, January 31). The Facilitated Collection [Blog]. <http://orweblog.oclc.org/towards-the-facilitated-collection>

especially for rising student generations, to become skilled and resourceful users of print.

1. Goals

Print has great potential, but this potential will not be realized through benign neglect. As a form, print offers benefits in learning and retaining information. As artifacts, print materials also offer a treasure trove of historical and cultural information that can only be accessed physically. For these reasons and others, printed materials have a bright future, but it is also a future that will be shared with other media that offer their own unique affordances.⁶ We live in a hybrid age of both print and digital and should seize the opportunities offered by both. In academic libraries, we aim to honor the print tradition and define a local print curation strategy that is meaningful and sustainable for our communities. We seek to use print to best advantage. As such, we will design dynamic print stacks that demonstrate the multifaceted nature of print without overwhelming our users in a deluge of information. This will serve both to preserve print literacy and to carry out the great task of libraries acting as custodians of what one friend of libraries famously called “toute la mémoire du monde”: “all the world’s memory.”⁷

Social use of print will inevitably change. One of the clearest trends in academic library collection management is the removal of large swaths of print volumes from traditional campus library collections in favor of remotely stored physical copies or digital versions (sometimes leading to a “bookless library”).⁸ Digital resources offer speed of access and the ability to search and data-mine with greater ease; they also do not take up precious physical space. For these reasons, traditional library stacks are increasingly being abandoned by users in favor of digital collections and services. This trend away from open stacks renders them a less effective utilization of campus space in the eyes of some administrators, particularly at a time when more demands are placed on such spaces.

⁶ *Affordance*, coined by psychologist J.J. Gibson, is a term at play in several disciplines, including education and digital media theory. *Affordance* is defined in the *OED* as “A property of an object or an aspect of the environment, esp. relating to its potential utility, which can be inferred from visual or other perceptual signals; (more generally) a quality or utility which is readily apparent or available.” In *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. www.oed.com/view/Entry/263548

⁷ Braunberger, P. (Producer), & Resnais, A. (Director). (1956). *Toute la mémoire du monde* [Motion picture]. France: Les Films de La Pléiade.

⁸ Florida Polytechnic (<http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2014/08/academic-libraries/new-floridapolytechnic-unveils-bookless-library/#>) and the University of Michigan Medical Library (<http://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/education/2015/08/04/university-michigan-opens-bookless-medical-library/31137539/>)

To take full advantage of print's possibilities, it is imperative that library collection management is approached in a deliberate rather than reactive manner. This means choosing the items that are kept close at hand, rather than letting inertia take over and remaining passive to what is kept in our collections (e.g., moving materials en masse to off-site high density storage after the microfilming of large swaths of content and digitization of rare volumes). Collection management trends have changed the landscape of our collections, without us being fully aware of their downstream effects, whether positive or negative. They have had a similarly unmeasured effect on the makeup and character of what we could call a "national" academic collection for the United States as well as the global body of scholarly print resources. We propose that the creation of the on-site, publicly browsable print collections is a fresh opportunity to shape collections as a learning and research service of high value.

We therefore have five primary goals concerning the future of the academic library print collection. **First**, as we have articulated above, we must take a deliberate and consciously chosen approach to print collection management. **Second**, we are committed to the fostering of information literacy broadly speaking and print literacy specifically. **Third**, we seek new curation approaches to ensure that our libraries reflect the full range and nuance of global cultures, past and present. **Fourth**, we propose strategies (and ways of devising further strategies) to allow academic libraries to work at a network level, accommodating a larger population of students and scholars than in the past.⁹ (A careful approach to building a collaborative national library collection will allow individual libraries to collect more deeply on individual topics without sacrificing access to breadth.) **Finally**, we look to extend the reach of academic libraries to engage with the communities surrounding them as a way of realizing the commitments to inclusiveness that animate our institutions today.

Many of our successes as libraries hinge on fostering print literacy, meaning the ability to analyze, understand, and use books and other physical printed formats in the learning process. Just as using digital materials requires practice before their potential can be unlocked, the effective use of print materials requires training and guidance. Learning about the physical characteristics of printed works can lead to a deeper engagement with those works. For example, when encountering a book, learning why the binder used a particular style of binding, design for the text block, paper weight, or size of the book may give clues to when the book was made, who made it, why it was made, and the import and nature of the contents as a bridge to understanding the book's cultural context.

Creating truly inclusive libraries necessitates new ways of curating print collections that reflect the full cultural and social diversity of the society and the world

⁹ Working in network across state, consortia, and national levels would allow our academic libraries to scale our services on a model similar to Uber or Amazon, strengthening collection discovery, access, and delivery and thereby benefiting individual users with unique research needs.

we live in. Inclusivity in our stacks provides learners and scholars with tools for a better understanding of the scholarly record and cultural heritage. Our collections must foster the exploration of myriad perspectives, offering access to the broadest range of human perspectives and experience. To do so, it is necessary to critically review our collecting and curating functions and to be intentional about the selection, acquisition, and management of the authors, content, languages, and perspectives represented in our collections. This process must take care to support historically marginalized communities, whose print resources are often particularly fragile, easily lost, or even relegated to off-site storage due to low circulation rates. Basing an open collection on records of historic use runs the risk of enshrining traditional perspectives and risks losing more diverse cultural perspectives. Sensitivity to emerging voices and methods means considering how our holdings are displayed. It is not enough to merely include historically marginalized voices and perspectives in our collections: We need to display them within the library's open stacks alongside traditionally privileged voices.

There is a need for universities and colleges—and thus the libraries associated with them—to serve a far larger group of citizens than ever before. In 2015, only 42.3% of the population of the United States had completed an associate's degree or more.¹⁰ Dr. Michael Crow, President of Arizona State University, has called for a “fifth wave” of university design that can scale to match the need.¹¹ It is not feasible for all American universities to cling to old models based on seventeenth-century educational practices. Similarly, it is dangerous for libraries to universally follow a model developed in Europe to serve the needs of a small elite.¹² Librarians must instead find a way to meet larger demand without sacrificing our dedication to the preservation and promotion of knowledge. Furthermore, just as earlier waves of academic institutions developed their identities around the local communities that they served, so too must the future of education speak to local communities and local history as well as the larger global community of scholars.

Academic libraries aim to inspire, engage, and enrich the knowledge of our communities. In addition to serving the student body, faculty, and staff, libraries must make a place for the broader public. We posit that academic libraries are part of the communities that surround them. As such, they must reflect the interests and needs of those communities. We believe as well that well-crafted libraries can be powerful tools in making the values of intellectual responsibility and rigor visible and attractive to a

¹⁰ US Census Bureau (<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p20-578.pdf>).

¹¹ Crow, M. (2016). Wave 5: Launching a New Wave in Higher Education [Video]. Retrieved from <https://president.asu.edu/node/2080>

¹² American universities were initially modeled on English colleges and universities, but the nineteenth century saw a turn towards German-style research universities that prioritized research over teaching. For more, see Rudolph, F. (1990). *The American college and university: A history*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press. (Original work published 1962).

wider public. The cultural, social, and political life of our communities will benefit if the public beyond the walls of academic institutions understands what we do and values what university disciplines have to offer.

2. Guiding Principles

This whitepaper addresses these large goals within the context of a given academic library. In doing so, we are guided by principles that underpin all our work in libraries and must be kept in mind as we plan for the future. They influence our actions as we move forward in creating a proactive, not reactive approach to the future of print in the academic library:

- Seeking, interpreting, and using the input of faculty, students, the university community, and local community;
- Creating and sustaining engagement with our users;
- Developing users' information literacy and information management skills;
- Promoting diversity and inclusion;
- and last but certainly not least, articulating the value of our libraries.

To understand what our users need from a particular print collection, we must know our communities. We must ask ourselves: Do we receive input from our students, faculty, university constituents, and local community members? Do we routinely ask for and take advantage of feedback on our initiatives and major changes in the library? Do we act on this user data? Do we use it to inform our decisions?

To maintain engagement with our users, we must cultivate and maintain communication with each group. We must leave the library space and get into the spaces that faculty, students, university community, and local community members occupy both physically and mentally. If we want to increase engagement with the print resources we provide, we must have a dialogue on their terms rather than our own. In other words, once again we need to know the users' needs. We need to invest time and effort in establishing and nourishing relationships with user groups. These sustained relationships also require a substantial succession plan for the time when library liaisons and other staff move on. Preserving contacts and connections on an institutional as well as personal level is difficult, which is a further reason why libraries must invest in a strong set of user needs assessment tools.

Libraries are by definition places where information is stored, preserved, and retrieved. An important part of libraries' responsibilities is therefore the fostering of information literacy and management (i.e., the capacity to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed

information¹³). As information resources proliferate both in terms of scope and type, it is essential to ensure that library users can engage fully with information in multiple media and that our information resources are as abundant, well-curated, and transparently usable as possible, defined as far as possible by what we know about our communities' needs. We must further ensure that the library's users—regardless of background—can access the right kind of information to meet their needs. Academic libraries often assume a particular mindset and baseline skills that are present before the user even arrives. These assumptions are often based on expectations of socioeconomic class and are most likely to be met by students who come from families with a history of college attendance, but even among these privileged groups, these assumptions increasingly do not hold. As universities and colleges enroll students who may have little or no experience navigating the complexities of the library system, it is the responsibility of libraries to adapt and to make the logic behind library systems of classification more transparent to our users.¹⁴

We have an obligation to ensure our libraries are sites of inclusion by taking care that the full range of human diversity is reflected in our collections. A library that takes seriously its obligation to educate students into socially and ethically responsible adults must offer access to a myriad of perspectives. This goes hand in hand with our collective responsibility as academic libraries for keeping the scholarly record, namely to ensure that our collections reflect all of humankind accurately and broadly. A diverse collection compels the user to engage with preoccupations and identities that are not their own but are no less relevant to their own experience or the world in which we all live. The respectful encounter with previously unexplored perspectives is an integral part of education, and it is our responsibility to ensure that our collections promote that experience.

Finally, academic libraries must more clearly articulate our value to users. If we commit to sustained engagement, we will have ample opportunity to express our value to users, but this too has to be deliberate and designed for efficacy. In addition, libraries must articulate their value so that university administrators see more clearly the connection between libraries and the success of our learners and scholars. Whether we choose to communicate about our inclusive print collections, our seamless integrations of information resources into curricula, or our physical spaces, we must communicate the many benefits of an integrated approach to print and digital library collections.

¹³ American Library Association, Presidential Committee on Information Literacy: Final Report (<http://www.ala.org/acrl/publications/whitepapers/presidential>)

¹⁴ According to the ALA, only 44.8% of incoming first-year students have experience evaluating the quality and reliability of information and only 29.3% have experience finding scientific research articles and resources. American Library Association, *The State of America's Libraries 2017 Report*, p. 6 (<http://www.ala.org/news/sites/ala.org.news/files/content/State-of-Americas-Libraries-Report-2017.pdf>)

3. Resources and Planning

Many of the resources necessary to achieve these goals are already at the disposal of academic libraries. We advocate not for a massive acquisition of new materials to replace pre-existing ones, but a strategic redeployment of the materials already present within library holdings. Libraries have all acquired distinctive collections whose distinctiveness, once identified, can be used to further highlight their unique institutional character. The deliberate rather than reactive approach to curation and stack design, if also applied to questions of staffing, resource budgets, and maintenance costs, can meet the financial needs and challenges that arise from the reimagining of library organization that we propose. By taking an intentional and goal-oriented approach to our print collections, we can reallocate funds to pursue our old missions in new ways.

The large print collections already held by libraries are not mountains that have to be gradually reduced in size but resources for us to draw upon in building new, intentionally designed print collections that are structured and managed for best use. When books move out of the open stacks and into remote shelving, this is not a loss but an opportunity to build more focused and coherent open collections whose organizing principles are readily apparent even to the first-time viewer. Books stored in remote shelving, meanwhile, will remain fully accessible through online discovery tools and through a commitment by libraries to ease of access, speed, and convenience of delivery. We can develop collections that facilitate maximum engagement and keep those collections fresh by devising a resource-intensive but meaningful rotation of volumes from location to location for limited periods and specific purposes instead of limiting ourselves permanently to a small subset of the total. This is possible if we consider our purpose as a library to provide both open stack “showcases,” or carefully curated and interesting openly available print collections (i.e., carefully curated and interesting openly available print collections) and vast stored collections in closed stacks. If we consider our two categories of print collections as having permeable and cross-collection flows between them, we can more easily envision a fluid curatorial process where the print that users see in our libraries changes and responds to the activities, interests, and trajectories of our communities over time.

Collection development policies often speak to local interests as well, whether addressing academic, historical, and/or cultural themes or philosophies. We suggest that open stack collections are already moving—and should be moving—towards a special collections model (i.e., curating them more purposefully with an eye towards the distinctive). In doing so, the character and strengths of a browsable collection become more visible and what we have, cherish, display, and promote will increasingly be the collections that, in one way or another, reflect our disciplinary and institutional priorities.

Library holdings can thereby become a means of promoting institutional or regional character, particularly if libraries continue to leverage existing networks of libraries to promote collaboration toward a national collection.

The character of a library's collection is defined by the people who work in it, whether through writing collection development policies or through the communications about the collections. Libraries are dependent on on their staff both for its daily running and for the long-term functioning and effective utilization of the resources and services it has amassed over the course of its existence. Close and open communication between library administration and library personnel is essential to achieving the objectives outlined above and the long-term, intermediate, and short-term goals below.

II. Possibilities: Long-term, Intermediate, and Short-term

We have grouped our recommendations into six broad areas of concern: understanding the needs of the scholarly community; bridging the gaps between print and digital collections; curating for teaching and learning; curating for a local context; redesigning the stacks; and continuing to reimagine the library as a space. There is considerable overlap in terms of intention, implementation, and sustained growth for all of these areas of concern—we refer to them as distinct areas as a matter of organizational rather than intellectual distinction.

For each of these six areas of concern, we will provide a multi-tiered set of options for improving engagement and discovery. Each tier represents a different amount of time and energy investment. We encourage treating these recommendations as an à la carte menu from which to choose what work best for your needs and institution. We distinguish here between long-term, intermediate, and short-term goals, which we present in decreasing order of complexity and investment.

Long-term goals cover efforts realized well beyond the life of the three-year grant program, in time frames anywhere from five to fifty years. Such goals are strategic; they shape a library's character and policies on a large scale and guarantee a sustainable future for these institutional values. For example, a long-term goal might commit the library to establishing collections focused on indigenous American cultures and making those resources more visible to the public.

Intermediate goals are guided by principles or precipitate actions that achieve a specific goal. An action attached to an intermediate goal might occur as a one-time event or involve repeated events, workshops, or displays occurring over a few years or more. An intermediate goal solves a problem or builds on an existing strength within a specific context. These goals may require cooperation with other institutional departments and/or a recurring budgetary investment. An action supporting an intermediate goal might, for example, develop a workshop series to acquaint librarians with a faculty member's current pedagogical and research needs.

Finally, short-term goals allow ideas and projects in service of long-term goals to be tested on a smaller scale before a larger-scale implementation. Like intermediate goals, projects attached to short-term goals involve shorter-term work. However, short-term goals come to fruition on a limited timeframe, usually attached to a deadline. Rather than being leveraged toward problem-solving in current contexts, projects associated with short-term goals often serve as pilots for longer-term initiatives. A sample project related to a short-term goal might showcase information resources in connection with an institution-wide event.

Because long-term goals may involve a significant reallocation of institutional funds and priorities, they will inevitably require a strong commitment by senior library

administration, who will also be responsible for making strategies associated with long-term goals understood and supported by senior university leadership. Intermediate and short-term goals are envisioned as outgrowths of strategic long-term goals that can be implemented and developed by administrators and/or library personnel.

1. Building a Community of Scholars

Needs and Challenges

While we often imagine scholarship as a solitary endeavor, the best scholarship takes place in a community. The library as a building represents a place where scholars can meet and work together at various points in their studies; many students come to the library specifically seeking a space for individual and group work. By concentrating information resources in a specific place, print collections can build a collaborative community. Part of our task as librarians is to establish print collections in both open and closed stacks that not only meet users' individual needs but foster the development of a collaborative community. Furthermore, the library's entrance spaces often determine how the library and university as a whole are perceived by prospective as well as current students and as such are crucial to the development of the scholarly community even beyond the library's walls.

Libraries should consider their role as part of the larger research enterprise. By organizing information and resources, we can highlight the expertise that researchers have developed and in doing so, foster new scholarly work and collaboration. By seeing what other people are working on, learners and scholars may find themselves drawn to new research problems and to potential collaborators on projects of their own. At the same time, however, we must take into account the need to protect our users' privacy so that they do not feel stifled or judged by excessive scrutiny. Our challenge in this regard is to find a middle path, allowing our users to make their interests visible to potential collaborators without requiring them to completely sacrifice the protection of their privacy. Even for the solitary researcher, finding other experts to consult for research advice or clarification is an important element of scholarship and one in which libraries can—and should—take a leading role.

Possible Responses

Libraries can help promote scholarship by fostering inclusive, interactive spaces of knowledge creation and sharing. Furthermore, this process can be facilitated by making a wide variety of information available to the university community and members of the local community who are lifelong learners. By involving our users in the development of our curation and display of research, we can encourage a sense of investment in our collections. This initiative can also aid us in welcoming diverse

students to the library by encouraging them to view themselves as emerging scholars and to display their work. As with all scholarly communication, being exposed to new ideas and different perspectives will enrich all users' research pursuits. Finally, this co-creation of collections will bring new users into the library space, since they will have a personal interest in displays as well.

Long-term: Curated Exhibits

Set up exhibits and events related to the university community.

- **Intermediate: Co-Create Exhibits Based on Faculty Research**
Each semester, engage with a few teaching faculty to highlight their current research in a small print collection.
- **Intermediate: Co-Create Exhibits Based on Student Interests**
Each semester, engage with students to help them develop a collection related to their current interests.
- **Intermediate: Develop a Community Exhibits Calendar**
Create a public calendar that maps an entire year of faculty and student exhibits.
- **Short-term: Develop Showcases for Events**
Set up a small collection related to a major institution-wide event or an important guest speaker.
- **Short-term: Give Awards for Effective Library Use**
Each semester, engage with students to promote scholarship by giving awards for best use of library resources (both print and digital), reinventing old-style book collection prizes by asking not what collections students personally own but how they have used our collections for their purposes. Display the results in a library or student's college lobby or online.

Long-term: Crowdsourced Data

Consider crowdsourcing our data to help users feel invested in the community of scholars.

- **Intermediate: Develop Metadata with the Community**
Enlist people (whether learners, scholars, and/or community members) to suggest new or additional metadata to describe a given collection and then review and expose those tags to the academic community.
- **Intermediate: Enable Personal Tagging**
Develop an interface online that allows users to suggest new tags for the materials that they find in library holdings that may be saved to provide a personal view of library collections.

2. Bridging the Gap between Print and Digital Collections

Needs and Challenges

Print and digital collections are often presented as being in opposition to one another, but this is a false dichotomy. Indeed, the largest distinction between the two is whether the material is owned outright by the library—as is the case with most print materials—or licensed, as many digital materials tend to be.¹⁵ Both print and digital materials serve the same purpose: to preserve and transmit information. Within our libraries, we must recognize and capitalize on the intersections as well as the separations between different forms of information technology. We now live in a hybrid world: In much the same way that the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw an increasing reliance on print alongside traditional manuscript culture, current society is dependent on materials that exist partially or entirely in digital spaces, as well as those materially present.

Library users need to be guided towards a deeper understanding of both print and digital materials. For some libraries, this may require a greater investment in digital materials; for others, it may involve a greater dedication to improving print literacy. In either case, it is crucial that we foster literacy in both print and digital materials. Preferences for either medium, print or digital, often arise reflexively, out of study habits, rather than from a carefully weighed evaluation. Opportunities must be provided for library users to learn to use print and digital materials skillfully and judiciously, choosing their medium with an eye toward effectiveness.

To move forward effectively, libraries themselves must understand the affordances of both print and digital media. There are distinct advantages to both: Print materials offer an awareness of material culture, history, and durability in ways that remain elusive for digital materials, while digital materials radically accelerate the rate at which information can be retrieved, analyzed, and otherwise adapted for academic work. Similarly, there are also disadvantages to each: Print materials impose physical limitations on access and are difficult to analyze in depth, while digital materials are often unwieldy and worryingly difficult to preserve. Our task is to find the best information technology for each task and to ensure that we can provide effective solutions to the research problems our users face.

Possible Responses

It is our job to teach literacy skills for both print and digital materials and to closely match our instruction to users' needs. The time for favoring one medium or the

¹⁵ For more on the shift from a print-centric ownership model to a digital licensing model, see L. Dempsey. (2016, January 31). The Facilitated Collection [Blog]. <http://orweblog.oclc.org/towards-the-facilitated-collection>

other has passed: For the foreseeable future, digital and print will live alongside one another in our libraries. We must adapt our services to remove obstacles to access for both so that our users can search, explore, and use our information resources with confidence.

Long-term: Digital and Print Acquisitions

Revisit policies for budgeting and acquisitions.

- **Intermediate: Rethink Budget Lines**

Instead of print/digital, perhaps libraries should separate our budgets more rigorously between those materials collected for permanent holding and curation (both print and digital) and those materials that are made available for access but where responsibility lies elsewhere.

- **Intermediate: Prioritize Individual Purchases**

Rethink bulk buying of databases or packages: Buy items on demand and individually instead of making big-package purchases. Support “by-the-drink” pricing negotiations, which benefit users by allowing their needs and interests to drive acquisitions.

Long-term: Emphasize Overlap

Involve users in the discussion about the distinctions between print and digital and integrate the two when appropriate.

- **Intermediate: Sponsor Maker Workshops**

Sponsor regular workshops on bookmaking and coding alongside one another.

- **Intermediate: Seed the Shelves with Links to Other Materials**

Seed the shelving area with indications of materials not on the shelves, such as screens displaying online resources relevant to the collection in that space.

- **Intermediate: Emphasize the Overlap by Avoiding Limiting Search Options**

Consider not automatically separating out digital vs. print media as a search option in discovery systems.

- **Short-term: Include QR Codes**

Include paper inserts in books or displays on shelving with QR codes (or other mechanisms) that point to reviews, videos, or other resources to draw more interest for print collections.

Long-term: Crowdsourced Data

Consider crowdsourcing library data so as to help users feel invested in building the community of scholars.

- **Intermediate: Organize Metadata Hackathons**

Organize workshops along the lines of “Wikipedia Hackathons” to teach users about metadata and collaboratively edit metadata related to library databases and/or catalogs.

3. Curating Collections for Teaching and Learning

Needs and Challenges

In addition to research, libraries serve as spaces for teaching and learning. While many students come to libraries unsure of how to use the resources that we place at their disposal, they come to the library nonetheless. This is not only because the library offers a quiet space to work but also because they associate the library with learning. We need to tap into that association and make our library collections intuitively useful for beginning students as well as advanced ones. We can do this by fostering a culture of peer mentorship where students can pass on knowledge about using the library system and by making library collections effective as teaching tools. We need to co-develop library collections with instructors and curriculum designers to better serve learners.

The library print collection, when properly deployed, is a powerful pedagogical tool. Learning to navigate the library teaches lessons about finding and evaluating information that can be applied not only to the library as an institution but also beyond its borders. In treating the physical collection as a pedagogical tool, new considerations about the design choices related to the open stacks arise. If we think in terms of research skills as well as immediate use, we can develop stronger and more engaging collections that will help promote a more conscious and effective use of the library by our students.

Possible Responses

As librarians, we serve the entire university or college with which we are associated and are therefore in a unique position to partner and collaborate with many groups to encourage learning and integration. We collaborate with faculty to bring information resources to them and, more importantly still, to their students. These resources not only open the student to new perspectives and outlooks but also serve to enrich the student’s thought processes and writing. We should strive to be integrated into every discipline and into each class within each discipline. Our resources should therefore reflect the current curriculum and strategic direction of each academic unit.

Long-term: Library-Faculty Collaboration on Curricula

Develop and maintain communication with faculty and instructional designers to increase library integration into curricula, directly support professional research, and contribute to their students' success.

- **Intermediate: Collect Curriculum Data**
Collect faculty data concerning curriculum integration and instruction actively and on a regular basis. Use that data to inform collection, curation, and display decisions.
- **Intermediate: Collaborate on Curriculum-Specific Collections**
Collaborate with faculty to produce rotating, curriculum-themed print collections related to freshman seminars and senior capstone courses, for example.
- **Intermediate: Co-Create Dissertation- and Thesis-derived Collections**
Enlist new faculty to produce collections based around their dissertation research—everything they had to read to produce their work—to give students an idea of how research begins and proceeds. Students with prizewinning honors theses could have similar exhibits for their work.
- **Intermediate: Offer Pedagogy Workshops**
Institute regular workshops that offer librarians training as pedagogues as well as information specialists.
- **Intermediate: Make Exhibits Permanent with Online Representations**
Give every physical exhibition of library materials a digital representation and design that representation to be a permanently accessible resource continuing the work of the exhibition itself.¹⁶
- **Short-term: Promote Freshman Reading**
For institutions with a “one book” program for freshmen, engage with the faculty teaching a freshman seminar to develop an appropriate exhibition supporting it.
- **Short-term: Collaborate with Faculty on Course Collections**
Enlist faculty members to produce exhibits related to their course designs: for instance, a collection of everything they had to read to design a specific class. These collections may serve as an alternative to the traditional “reserve shelf,” offering a way to make students aware of the materials supporting their coursework. Maintain and repeat these year- to-year in appropriate courses.
- **Short-term: Give End-of-Year Student Awards**
If present, engage with schools/departments that celebrate end-of-year

¹⁶ The memorable 1993 Library of Congress exhibit of Vatican Library materials sets an example of this commitment: <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/vatican/vatican.html>. The exhibit was perhaps the first major exhibition given an Internet presence in the age of the Mosaic browser.

student achievements and host award events at the library, where award-themed collections will be featured.

- **Short-term: Develop News-Related Exhibits**
Set up an exhibit relating to current events and news items under the banner of “What you need to read to understand what is happening.”

Long-term: Student Engagement

Set priorities to help students feel welcome and comfortable in the library.

- **Intermediate: Look for Book Traces**¹⁷
Sponsor regular workshops where students can pore through older books in the stacks looking for ownership marks or other bibliographic information.
- **Intermediate: Engage Students in Conservation Programs**
Join with faculty in designing for-credit and research projects for students to involve them in the physical work of book conservation.¹⁸
- **Short-term: Develop First Semester Collections**
Create a select, curated collection, known as a “breakout collection,”¹⁹ displayed prominently in the library at the beginning of the semester to welcome and orient students, giving them a quick (and possibly funny or light) history of the institution.
- **Short-term: Develop Nontraditional Display Options**
Highlight visible spaces (entry, information desk, café) as venues for presenting small collections intended for high visibility, both known popular materials (e.g., graphic novels or fantasy/sci-fi) and scholarly resources students will find useful (e.g., dictionaries, new reference books, new books in a well-defined subfield like sustainability, leadership, or gender). In all such cases, plan for and execute frequent rotation of materials to maintain fresh attention.

4. Curating for Local Communities and Contexts

¹⁷ This tactic is based on an existing project (<http://www.booktraces.org/>) and a specific iteration of that project taking place at ASU Library (<https://repository.asu.edu/collections/276>).

¹⁸ The mission of the Rare Book School in teaching analysis of and care for the book as material artifact is an example of this kind of conservation (<http://rarebookschool.org/>).

¹⁹ A breakout collection is here defined as a smaller collection freed from the stacks and placed in a strategic or high-traffic area of the library for a particular purpose. A breakout collection would still be traditionally shelved, with the call numbers facing out, while a collection for nontraditional display might model itself on a presentation style reminiscent of Barnes & Noble (with front covers facing out).

Needs and Challenges

Academic libraries are an important part of the community surrounding them and as such may serve to challenge, provoke, and exemplify the reach and stretch of a university or college. We need to ask questions about what local communities both want and need from academic libraries in their area, with regard to educational resources, cultural heritage materials, and local history. Universities and colleges exist as part of the public rather than distinct from it. Performing arts departments, university museums, and sports teams are working to bridge the gap between academia and the community; academic libraries should continue to learn from the example of these arms of the university and partner with them in their community engagement. As repositories of knowledge, it is important for academic libraries to engage directly with the public, enabling repeated and continual contact rather than limiting users' engagement to their educational years.

Our twenty-first-century world and the universities within it can only function within a public that has adequate access to information and literacy. We must seek out and engage the totality of the population surrounding our libraries. We must speak to questions of diversity and inclusion in our collection development: If we want to welcome non-academics into our community, then we need to ensure that they can see themselves reflected in our collections. We must practice and cultivate sensitivity to both the rich culture and specific needs of populations living around our institutions: Ethnic minorities, non-cis gendered people, and other historically marginalized populations should be welcomed by our collections and spaces.

We must also be sensitive to the needs of other demographic groups. High school students, for instance, often have information resource needs that go far beyond their school and public library resources but have difficulty reaching or understanding university collections. Similarly, the academic library is not traditionally a child-friendly space, and it is consequently difficult for parents to take advantage of library resources. We must also consider military veterans and the elderly, who may also have needs that are often unmet. In taking these communities' needs into account, we commit ourselves fully to our mission of serving the greater public good and foster a positive relationship between academia and the public at large.

Possible Responses

As libraries consider moving to more highly curated print resources, they have the opportunity to develop unique collections that engage community members. Curating for the community allows for a focus on local identity; it helps us build bridges to people and groups with whom we want to have long and meaningful relationships.

Long-term: Community Engagement

Prioritize establishing a sustained engagement with community through multiple means.

- **Intermediate: Develop a Community Archive**
Review which community repositories are already in place at other local or regional institutions, including historical societies, church libraries, and small museums. Taking care not to compete with such repositories, create a collection development strategy that employs crowdsourcing or substantial input from local groups (i.e., asking for photos, letters, and other materials from local community members).
- **Short-term: Enhance Production Values**
With all projects for display of materials, emphasize “production values”: graphically appealing signage, high-quality fixtures for display, good lighting, regular maintenance to keep materials well-positioned and visually attractive.
- **Short-term: Develop a Local History Collection**
Create a collection related to the history of the surrounding area that is placed in a space to maximize engagement with these resources. Highlight the connections between history and the present.
- **Short-term: Develop an Institutional Collection**
Create a collection on institutional history that is placed in a space to maximize engagement with these resources. Use the collection to highlight the ways the institution has changed and the ways it has stayed the same.
- **Short-term: Develop a Local Author Collection**
Create a small print collection comprised of local (university and non-university) authors. In this strategy, academic libraries may take their cue from public libraries, which often employ local author collections to engage the community.
- **Short-term: Develop a Local Events Collection**
Create a small print collection based on local events, holidays, and/or customs. Celebrate with an event to engage community members.

Long-term: Emphasis on Local Community

Collect community data through surveys and other means. Do so actively and on a regular basis, using that data to inform display decisions and build a local scholarly community.

- **Intermediate: Work to Assess and Understand Local Needs and Wants**

Leverage local community relationships to foster connections to the library and to assess local needs and wants.

- **Intermediate: Facilitate Community Lending**

Partner with public and high school libraries to increase the use of books and other information resources by people in the community.

- **Intermediate: Establish Partnerships with Local Public Institutions**

Partner with local libraries, museums, historical societies, and other public institutions to develop exhibits and events relevant to the local community (e.g., art museum rotating exhibits could have a partnering library exhibit, with each promoting the other).

- **Intermediate: Advertise the Library Everywhere**

Find locations outside library facilities on campus and off for displays promoting library awareness, especially of print materials.

5. Redesigning the Stacks

Needs and Challenges

While open stacks remain important engines of discovery, they are often seen by administrators as a less and less effective utilization of campus space at a time when more and more demands are placed on the space inventory. Materials have been moving out of the stacks and into closed stack special collections storage or high-density storage spaces for a long time, perhaps longer than might be apparent at first glance, given that off-site storage has been a staple of large research libraries for decades. Our libraries cannot hold everything that we already own, let alone the volumes that we would like to acquire: Whether through deaccession, special collections workflows, or high-density storage decisions, the books will leave our open stacks. In response, we propose a “zero-base” approach to building our collections. Given that space is limited, each volume’s presence in our stacks needs to contribute specifically to the design of the whole. Our challenge is to develop all book stacks as thoughtfully as possible.

Different library users need book stacks for different purposes: Some use them to find materials related to class projects, others as a quiet place to work, and still others use them for personal research projects, to name only three uses. In designing effective stacks, we need to consider how best to meet these needs rather than duplicating the pre-existing system on a smaller scale. This may entail structuring different areas within the open stacks in different ways and considering whether traditional classification systems remain effective in meeting current user and community needs. In this regard, as in others, digital resources and the integration of them into print collections may serve to enhance the resources at hand.

Possible Responses

While we must minimize our print footprint to make way for study and production spaces (such as “makerspaces”), it does not mean that print is no longer relevant. We could commit to a proactive reorganization of the stacks rather than weeding reactively. Once again, we must return to a question of whether we know our users. For example, information related to users’ usage of a particular book could be collected and analyzed before a book is moved to off-site storage. Once we know our users’ needs, we could create the kind of curated collection that will be of significant use to our communities.

Long-term: Museum-style Collections

Designate some standard collections that remain in place permanently and some themed “exhibition” collections that change at regular intervals.

- **Intermediate: Collect and Analyze Use Data to Inform Displays**
Collect use survey data from users about collection displays and use the analysis to make decisions about changes to current and future collection displays.
- **Intermediate: Students Create Collections**
Engage students by setting up a project where we ask the students to submit their choices of materials to assemble into a collection.
- **Intermediate: Develop Foreign-Language Collections**
Remain aware of foreign-language material acquisition and keep those materials within the open stacks alongside English materials. In addition to scholarly content, work with international student organizations at your university to collect current and relevant content for their community needs, especially for ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups. If there are departments or centers at your institution that support the teaching of less common languages, make sure that you provide support for those languages.
- **Intermediate: Integrate the Circulating Collection with Special Collections Exhibits**
When the most elaborate special collections exhibits are created, find appropriate ways to display as part of the exhibit currently available circulating print and other analog materials so that visitors can follow up their interest in the exhibit immediately and tangibly.
- **Short-term: Make Book Covers**
Invite makers to enliven the lobby by asking graphic design students and other art-related disciplines to redesign book covers. This benefits libraries by bringing local art into the lobby as well as the students, who can develop pieces for their portfolios.

- **Short-term: Display Historic Book Covers**
Create a collection of historic book covers not available on discovery services such as WorldCat, Amazon, or Goodreads to demonstrate the design trends, marketing strategies, and reader reception of specific books, series, genres, readerships, time periods, etc. (Review as well the treatment and use of dust jackets for new acquisitions.)
- **Short-term: Promote New Arrivals**
Keep a shelf of recent acquisitions of the library displayed in multiple locations. Emphasize not only the accessible and prospectively popular but also seemingly esoteric subjects of high interest to the institution: Doing so can help communicate to users where the frontiers of knowledge may be expanding. (N.B.: Such displays could also track books receiving awards from learned societies and other authoritative bodies.)
- **Short-term: Curate Staff Picks**
Keep a shelf of staff recommendations (especially for leisure reading) near the front desk. Encourage staff to be resourceful and imaginative in the things they select.
- **Short-term: Collect User Data on Breakout Collections**
Employ platforms and tools for gathering user perspectives and feedback on breakout collections related to specific events or seminars.

Long-term: One In, One Out

Advocate for acquisition and cataloging systems be more user-friendly to selection and deselection of existing library collections and follow the “one in, one out” model, both for the collection overall and especially for the open stacks. Presently, library systems and workflows are often set up for procurement only. Users should be aware of constant change in what is displayed.

Long-term: Enable Easier Deselection Processes

Ask vendors to overhaul acquisitions and cataloging systems to make selection (and deselection) easier.

6. Opening the Library as a Space

Needs and Challenges

Libraries are not just collections of information resources but are also physical spaces subject to many pressures. Space on campus is limited, and as such single-purpose spaces—if they ever truly existed—are increasingly a thing of the past. Most immediately, such concerns have led to a decreasing amount of space dedicated to

open stacks and an increasing movement of materials to off-campus storage. As buildings, libraries now serve numerous roles: stacks, classrooms, study spaces, computer laboratories, makerspaces, leisure reading spaces, exhibition spaces, event locations, and so forth. Many university and college campuses are crowded, so this tendency for libraries to assume many roles will only increase over time. We suggest that there is an opportunity here to make a virtue of necessity: By thinking about the different roles that different libraries must fulfill, we can think about how to design various areas of the library to promote the kinds of engagement that will ensure maximum impact.

Given these spatial constraints, libraries need to locate their collections carefully to ensure maximum impact. If we are reducing our footprint as storehouses, then the spatial design of the collections that we keep in our libraries is nearly as important as the question of what we locate within them. We need to consider the physical design of the stacks on two levels: as physical locations in the library as a whole and as spaces to which users want to go. The library must be developed as a space that is not merely functional but guides users to the best aspects of itself. We need to produce spaces that are functional as well as welcoming, spaces that students feel comfortable seeking out, and spaces that promote a thorough engagement with the stacks as a discovery tool.

Possible Responses

Library spaces serve many needs of different audiences. Some users need quiet study space and others want large, noisy collaborative areas where they can work in groups. Others need production spaces to create materials for classes, conferences, and personal projects. Additionally, libraries are used to serving disciplines across the entire university or college, and we must bring a correspondingly flexible and comprehensive approach to library spaces.

Long-term: Distinct Designs

Structure furniture and specific areas to suit distinct needs.

- **Intermediate: Develop Stack-Specific Designs**

Design areas for students you are trying to attract. Art history books, for instance, should be in spaces with broad tables so that the books can be laid out and examined side by side.

- **Intermediate: Curate Thematic Stacks**

Design the library to have guided discovery. Organize the collection into thematic stacks, not necessarily by LC call numbers if alternate systems for tracking the location of items for retrieval are in place. Signage within the stacks can make suggestion based on the collection (e.g., “if you like this French author, see...”).

- **Short-term: Reinvent the Study Carrel**
Revisit the design of the study carrel to integrate it into the stacks more and set up a private study space designed to facilitate concentration, minimize distractions, and provide a secure and comfortable location for sustained work.
- **Short-term: Develop Communal Spaces in Stacks**
Turn the stacks into a destination (i.e., a space where students go to meet with their cohort or work on assignments).

Long-term: Greater Visibility

Make the work done behind the scenes more accessible to library users.

- **Intermediate: Make the Library an “Open Kitchen”**
Bring internal processes to external spaces, such as moving conservation, bookbinding, or technology innovation into a more public sphere.
- **Intermediate: Make the Print Strategy a Topic of Public Discussion**
Create opportunities for the university community to meet with library curators (Friends of the Library, undergraduate library committee, schools/departmental library liaisons) and talk about curating the open stacks collection.

Long-term: User Data

Collect user data on how the space is best used actively and on a regular basis.

- **Short-term: Display Breakout Collections**
Allow known library and institutional data to inform curation and display of breakout collections (see footnote eighteen for earlier definition) related to seminars and events on campus. Such collections can help users synthesize knowledge, make connections, and become oriented to the wealth and variety of the library’s collections as a whole.

III. Measuring Success

To measure the success of the long-term, intermediate, and short-term goals suggested above, we suggest that you (the librarian or administrator) use a four-step process developed around broad goals, select a specific method, take concrete actions to achieve the goals, and then determine success based on whether the actions contributed to the goal in question.

1. Establish Goals

Begin with the long-term strategies that you have selected as the guiding principles for your library. Articulate a specific goal that you are hoping to achieve. Briefly justify why you feel that goal is worth investing resources in and clarify how it will contribute to your library's larger mission. By specifying the goal and taking the time to justify it to yourself, you will set yourself up to focus more effectively on more immediate tactics and projects that can be chosen to achieve that goal in particular.

Suppose, for example, that you have decided that you want your library's users to be more aware of the different uses to which the library as a space can be put. You decide that you will do this by increasing transparency about the different kinds of work that librarians do in the library. As library users see the library being used for different things, their own sense of the library as a space that can be used for different purposes will expand and they will use the library more.

2. Map Out a Plan

Taking the goal you wish to achieve, map out a plan for achieving it. You will want to be more concrete than you were before, but keep your options open: Few goals will be achieved with only one intermediate or short-term tactic employed. Most will require a combination of approaches over the course of a longer time span. For each method that you consider, think about how it will contribute towards the larger goal you have specified and what other side-benefits or costs it may entail. Be sure to involve the staff that you will enlist in carrying out the plan. They will have valuable insights about feasibility and effectiveness.

Continuing with the example begun above, you decide that, among other things, you want to try making some of the behind-the-scenes work done at a library visible in a kind of "open kitchen." By bringing that work out into the open, you will show a side of the library space with which your users may not be familiar. It may improve library users' ability to use the library as a resource by giving them a greater understanding of how library resources are developed and put into place.

3. Take Action

Having mapped out a plan, develop a list of concrete actions or steps that you will take to carry it out. Be as specific as possible about the amount of time and resources that you want to invest into each of them. As you work out the details of the plan you prepared, keep your goal in mind. Each of the steps you set up to achieve your plan should also relate back to the goal that you set yourself at the start; doing so will make it much easier to determine metrics.

For instance, as part of your goal of opening up the library as a space, you decide to station a cataloger in the lobby of your library to do her job in the open. In addition to its usual display monitor, her computer is attached to a second, much larger screen that shows her work to passers-by. If library users want to ask questions about the cataloger's work, the cataloger can pause to answer and to explain the rationale behind what she is doing. You might start by doing this two days a week for several hours at a time to see whether it is effective or not; if it proves effective in sparking user interest (see below), then you can consider increasing the amount of time you do it. Ultimately, this will encourage library users to think of the library as a space that is organized with particular ends in mind and to let them think about how they might organize their own uses for the space.

4. Determine Metrics and Measure

In developing metrics for a specific strategy or project, return to the question of how it will achieve the goal that led you to take this action. This will make it much easier to determine effectiveness: Your first question can be a broad one about whether the goal has been achieved after the step. You can then refine your metrics to focus on specific aspects of that goal and see what improvements can be made to the actions you have taken to increase their impact. Stay flexible in your thinking: It is very possible that a step taken to produce one benefit may fail to achieve that goal but will contribute to another concern instead.

The goal for the public cataloger was to improve users' understanding of the larger work carried on in the library and to improve transparency. Possible metrics might include tracking how many people stopped to watch the cataloger and checking how many conversations people started with her. An uptick in the amount of times that people access subject headings and other cataloging metadata through the library website might also indicate success.

IV. Future Steps

Further research and work are necessary to develop many of the program elements discussed so far. In particular, we feel that there are four main areas of research that will best complement and support our suggestions. First, academic libraries should continue to work towards a national academic library print collection so that the work of developing a comprehensive archive of the scholarly record can be distributed more broadly. Second, we need to reconsider previous stances towards data tracking and use so that we can customize our approaches to better suit our users, always keeping in mind our obligation to preserve the privacy of our users. Third, we should engage more meaningfully with the local communities, public libraries, and community colleges surrounding our universities. Fourth and finally, we must invest in developing more inclusive libraries that engage all of our user communities.

We have emphasized that individual academic libraries should respond to local communities and local needs. At the same time, academic libraries should collectively respond to a national need for a comprehensive print archive. There may seem to be an inherent tension here. However, if we build strong partnership networks, we could establish a comprehensive networked national library collection that accommodates both rich local and national strategies. We could attempt to evaluate how many copies of a given work are necessary to preserve the integrity of the scholarly record and to ensure the effective use of that work by scholars. Wide discussion of interlibrary loan relationships between libraries and a survey of cooperative collection development and archiving programs will also enrich the conversation.

As information professionals, we would like to seek a balance between two competing needs: data tracking and privacy. While libraries have historically facilitated rather than monitored access to information, we may want to consider collecting more user data so we can more effectively serve their needs.²⁰ All the resources in the world mean very little if they cannot be accessed properly. Collecting information on our users' experiences will help to improve our websites, digital resources, physical spaces, and print resources so we can make the library as useful and as usable as possible. Fortunately, libraries are already collecting some anonymized user data in the form of circulation statistics, user surveys, and other forms of feedback and demographics. We could undertake a systematic survey of this data both to take full advantage of what we already know and to determine what is not being collected at present. Furthermore, as we work to expand our libraries' impact into our local communities, we could discover more about our non-users and how we can reach them. For example, understanding

²⁰ ALA, Privacy: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights
<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/privacy>.

what the barriers are to community members entering the library or using collections would be key to making friendlier and more inclusive spaces for engaging with print.

If we seek to expand the social impact of our academic libraries, we could take inspiration from other institutions already heavily involved in social engagement. Like museums and historical societies, our libraries have the resources to curate collections that speak to the specific interests and needs not only of scholars but of the larger community. We could cooperate with the community to develop collections that are relevant to them. Curating collections in response to events put on by other parts of the academic community have proven effective, such as the Diversity Book Display Initiative at the University of the Pacific.²¹ Building respectful and receptive relationships is key to listening to community members voicing their interests and needs.

Finally, academic libraries could actively invest in inclusive practices for open stack print collections in three important regards. First, we should consider the historical academic library collection development policies and trends in selection. Have these policies tended to overemphasize materials from historically dominant cultures or viewpoints? Second, we could ensure that academic collections can be navigated by everyone rather than restricting knowledge to a small demographic with skills drawn from an elite background. There are many ways of knowing and learning that may not be accounted for in our libraries. We could also consider potential barriers to entry that may be implicit in the structure of our collections and make the library easily accessible by neophyte users while helping them to use its resources to the fullest extent. Ensuring access for users with disabilities is critical to academic libraries, and a national discussion about how libraries can be more effective in both online and with regard to print is timely. Finally, academic libraries should raise awareness of the effects of microfilming, rebinding, and digitization on our collections. Much of the print record has been affected by one of these three processes and their long-term impact on scholarship and learning is still to be determined.

Through this whitepaper, we urge academic libraries to collaborate and join larger discussions about what may be shared goals of improving engagement, inclusivity, and usability and how we could come together en masse to more purposefully shape our collections over the short and long-term. The academic library and their print collections have a bright future ahead, provided that we can adapt them to meet the changing needs of the twenty-first-century library user.

²¹ Maloney, M. M. (2012). Cultivating community, promoting inclusivity: collections as fulcrum for targeted outreach. *New Library World* 113(5/6), 281-289. doi: 10.1108/03074801211226364

V. Allocating Resources

We have consciously chosen in this document to concentrate on ambition and innovation. The work that we have outlined here goes far beyond traditional “stack management” in libraries, where a book’s fate is sealed once it has first been catalogued and shelved and where the continuing responsibility of keeping stacks orderly and usable can be considered routinized work carried out by relatively low-paid employees under minimal management. We propose with this whitepaper that libraries first consider their vision for their communities’ engagements with open stack collections before re-allocating funds, staff time, and effort. A clear vision should then help guide the allocation of resources channeled to selection, curation, preservation, and management of print volumes. Questions of how many staff and with what skills and supervision level will need to be answered in accordance with the local workforce development plan, institutional preferences, restrictions on job types or positions available, and even expectations for salary and cost of living in a particular region. In addition, there are both one-time and ongoing expenses incurred in the purchasing and licensing of information resources. There are both capital and operating collection expenses that should be reviewed, benchmarked with peer institutions, and weighed to develop an intentional approach such as we advocate. We recognize that determining a strategy for re-allocating resources is challenging. This may be another opportunity for conversations with multiple partners, networked institutions, and even collaborations within a state or region.

Where we see opportunity is in reallocating time now spent to selection, acquisition, and processing (tasks increasingly routinized and automated) to time spent on presentation and, for want of a better word--marketing, of our collections. Provision of information has become very nearly a commodity business and should be managed on that assumption. Making that information known and useful and used by the most creative scientists, scholars, and students in our institutions is, on the other hand, a set of tasks requiring imagination, creativity, and innovation. Support for the print collections as a vital resource can and should be a powerful engine for supporting universities’ highest goals.

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Appendix: Worksheets for a Localized Plan

To better help you gauge which of the tools that we have offered are most appropriate for your institution's needs, we include some suggested questions that may help you find the data necessary for a locally informed plan. Feel free to choose those questionnaires that you think are most relevant to your institution:

1. Scale of Institution²²

Library Holdings

Titles Held: _____
Volumes Held: _____
E-Books Held: _____
 Permanent: _____
 Subscription: _____

Storage

Off-Site Volumes: _____
Archive Holdings: _____
Rare Books: _____

Library Services

Annual Gate Count: _____
Check-Outs: _____
Renewals: _____
Interlibrary Loans
 Provided: _____
 Received: _____

Digital Searches

Successful Full-Text Article Requests: _____
Regular Database Searches: _____
Federated Database Searches: _____

Acquisitions in the Past Year

²² Much of this information is already on hand in the annual responses to the ARL questionnaire and can be usefully applied to planning questions.

New Print Volumes: _____

New eBooks: _____

New Subscriptions

New Databases: _____

New Journals : _____

Deaccessions in the Past Year

Print Volumes: _____

eBooks: _____

Cancelled Subscriptions

Databases: _____

Journals : _____

2. Institutional Mandate

Does your library have an official charter or mission statement?

If you are part of a university or college, what is its stated goal? Is there an official charter or mission statement?

If applicable, are there major divergences or overlaps between your charter or mission statement and that of your parent institution?

3. Identifying Collection Strengths for Research

What are the strongest print collections in your library?

What are the collection policies set by your library?

What are the strengths and institutional priorities of your parent institution? Do your policies follow those priorities?

What materials do your users often request be purchased?

Do you have “hidden collections”? What is your cataloging backlog?

What are the holdings of other institutions in the region (i.e., within easy driving distance)?

What do you want your collection to be known for at the local, state, regional, and national levels?

What are the top three most important messages your library would like to convey to your collection users?

4. Identifying Collection Strengths for Teaching

Are there major courses that all undergraduate students must take at your parent

institution? If so, what are they?

What kinds of library resources do these courses require?

Are any of your collections integrated into core curricula? If so, into which ones? Are there any collections that might be particularly appropriate for such integration?

Does your library include textbooks in its holdings? For which fields?

What are the academic disciplines for which your library subscribes to the widest range of journals?

What kinds of field-specific reference works does your library offer?

5. Available Resources

Full-Time Equivalent Staff and Personnel

Professional Staff: _____

Support Staff: _____

Student Assistants: _____

Organization

What kinds of work groups have you set up and what are their mandates?

What are current expectations placed upon staff? Do they have time to undertake new projects with their current workload?

Information Resources

Database Subscriptions:

Consortia:

Budget

Materials Expenditures

One-Time Resource Purchases: _____

Ongoing Resource Purchases: _____

Collection Support: _____

Salaries and Wages

Professional Staff: _____

Support Staff: _____

Student Assistants: _____

Other Operating Expenditures: _____

6. User Needs

How many times is your library used and by what sort of user (undergraduate student, graduate student, faculty, staff, external scholar)?

What major areas of study and/or scholarship does your library support?

What is the current curriculum for the major programs of study at your parent institution?

What resources does your library have to support that curriculum specifically?

Where in the library do students congregate?

What kinds of study and work spaces does the library provide?

What are the top three most important messages your library would like to convey to your users?

7. User Demographics

Census Data: State

White: _____
Hispanic: _____
Black or African American: _____
American Indian & Alaska Native: _____
Asian: _____
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander: _____
Two or More Races: _____

Female: _____

Male: _____

Demographic Data: Parent Institution

White: _____
Hispanic: _____
Black or African American: _____
American Indian & Alaska Native: _____
Asian: _____
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander: _____
Two or More Races: _____
International: _____

Female: _____

Male: _____

Users by National Region

Northeast (New England): _____

CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VE

Northeast (Mid-Atlantic): _____

NJ, NY, PA

Midwest (East North Central): _____

IL, IN, OH, MI, WI

Midwest (West North Central): _____

IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD

South (South Atlantic): _____

DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV

South (East South Central): _____

AL, KY, MS, TN

South (West South Central): _____

AR, LA, OK, TX

West (Mountain): _____

AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY

West (Pacific): _____

AK, CA, HI, OR, WA

International: _____ ²³

Country _____ :

Country _____ :

Country _____ :

Country _____ :

Country _____ :

Country _____ :

Country _____ :

Library User Data

Where does your typical user come from? To what extent are they representative of the area surrounding your library?

²³ Once you have a sense of how many of your users are international, identify the countries with the largest number of students sent to your institution.

8. Surveying Local Communities

Census Data: City

White: _____

Hispanic: _____

Black or African American: _____

American Indian & Alaska Native: _____

Asian: _____

Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander: _____

Two or More Races: _____

International: _____

Female: _____

Male: _____

Local Background

How often does the local population use the resources available at your library?

What is the historical background of the local population?

What is the historical background of your city?

What kinds of library resources does the local population need for professional purposes?

Are there any public libraries for your local population? Are the local population needs met by the resources provided by your local public library system?

What kinds of library resources does the local population need for leisure purposes?

What are the top three most important messages your library would like to convey to your users in the community?
