

25th Anniversary Panel Discussion

Sunday, May 15, 2011
Minneapolis Convention Center
101 J, Level One
6:45-7:30 pm

Where's the collection development in "patron-driven"?

Remarks prepared by:

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In preparation for this I started by looking back at the biggest changes

In terms of the biggest change, the shift from print to digital is the easy answer but it also brought so many changes on our approach to collection development.

In the past, the librarian knew best and we selected what we thought was best for the patron.

Data did not drive a lot of decisions because it was difficult to collect.

We were more focused on selecting the best resources just in case someone needed it.

We tried to collect at least all the core materials and for academics in-depth research, whether or not they were wanted or used.

But tight budgets, shifting patron expectations, the administrative belief that everything digital must be free or less expensive, and the reality of escalating prices make this impossible.

Here are my current thoughts on collection development.

Our patrons know what they want and need – not always the best, but perhaps the most useful and relevant to them.

We are more than our collections and the stacks and volumes in them – we should be focused on quality, access and responsiveness – that is what patron driven access is all about

Just-in-case is a waste of resources when items are never used – just-in-time is difficult, but that is where we need to be headed -- we need to use metrics to drive our decisions .

Librarians need to align the collection with the priorities of your institution – its core programs, hot new initiatives – let go of materials that no longer focus on those core missions.

If a publisher does not make metrics easy to access, use and understand, I question the value of continuing that resource.

If it is electronic they will come – users expect and want electronic access – print is dying not because digital is the preferred format, but because it is easier to access from any point at any time and our patrons need to be efficient.

Patrons will settle for what is easily available so our selection and evaluation skills are critical whether it is electronic, print, or an Internet site.

And while I have found myself becoming a lawyer and contract negotiator, our skills for selecting and evaluating quality resources are still essential

Using print was easy if not always convenient.

Our focus should be on ease of access – untangling the myriad interfaces and search strategies and trying to bring everything together. Our focus needs to be not just patron-driven acquisitions, but patron-driven access.