

5-2009

Reference Collection Development Policy

University of Nebraska at Lincoln

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University of Nebraska at Lincoln, "Reference Collection Development Policy" (2009). *Collection Development Policies -- UNL Libraries*. 56.

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Reference Collection Development Policy

University Libraries University of Nebraska-Lincoln

May 2009

Approved: CDC: May, 2009

Reference works provide essential support for the instructional, research and service programs of the university community. Primary audiences are university students, faculty, and staff. Secondary audiences include local and state governmental agencies, local businesses, local nonprofit organizations, students from other Nebraska colleges, high school students and other community users.

Reference works provide a range of information that serves a diverse clientele. They support basic and advanced research; provide curriculum support for undergraduate and graduate students; and serve people working in a wide range of disciplines. They are necessary to the work of librarians and other library staff. Reference works are not intended to be read as a whole. Some serve as guides to research or entry points to the literature of a field. Others are designed to be searched for specific pieces of information. They include indexes, bibliographies, dictionaries, directories, almanacs, encyclopedias, atlases, style manuals, and statistical compilations.

SELECTION

The goal of University Libraries reference collection development is a full and appropriate transition from print to online. The transition is seen as a way to provide remote access and campus-wide access to resources; to minimize duplication; to maximize cost effectiveness; and to provide the highest level of search capability.

Print and electronic collections are integrated. Print titles may be purchased or retained when print provides significant advantages over electronic. Print duplicates of electronic versions and multiple copies of print titles must offer especially significant advantages. Such advantages may include: availability, ease of use, heavy use, completeness, need for cumulative information, need for official text, instability of online title, need for archival copy, and cost. CD-ROM and microfilm reference titles are generally not purchased

Selection of electronic and print reference monographs is the responsibility of the liaison librarians. In Love Library, selection of print material for the reference collection is done in collaboration with the Reference Desk Services Librarian. Cost distribution is negotiated by the selectors. Liaison librarians may also purchase print reference titles, such as directories and encyclopedias, for the circulating collections.

Selection of electronic and print reference serials is the responsibility of the Collection Development Committee, based on recommendations of the subject

specialists. Generally, costs are charged to serials funds. In special cases, other funds may be used.

MyiLibrary is the platform of choice for electronic titles. However, content and functionality take precedence over a specific platform. Functionality criteria include speed, search capability, ease of use, cost, and added value.

ACCESS

Electronic

Electronic reference works are highlighted on the library e-resources web page if they are significant or heavily used and if they meet the E-Resources page criteria. The criteria for significance include authority, uniqueness, currency, breadth, diversity, ease of use, depth, longevity, and level of use. Other electronic reference titles are accessible through the library catalog.

Print

Significant or frequently used print reference titles are shelved in separate reference collections. Because physical space is limited, these are working collections. The criteria for significance include authority, uniqueness, currency, breadth, diversity, ease of use, depth, longevity, and level of use.

Because the size and scope of separate print reference collections vary by branch, branches may have separate reference collection development policies.

Print reference collections are non-circulating so that books remain available to librarians and patrons.

REVIEW

Periodic evaluation insures that both electronic and print reference collections continue to meet needs.

Electronic

Electronic reference serials (and any titles with ongoing fees) and all titles on the E-Resources page are reviewed annually by liaison librarians. When they no longer meet the criteria or collection needs, serials may be cancelled. Serials and monographic titles may be removed from the E-Resources page and made accessible only through the library catalog.

Print

To highlight important titles and make them more useable, print reference collections are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Like selection decisions, retention and de-selection decisions are the responsibility of the liaison librarians. In Love Library, liaison librarians collaborate with the Reference Desk Services Librarian. Titles may be transferred to LDRF, transferred to the stacks, or withdrawn at any time. In addition, some transfers and withdrawals take place automatically, according to guidelines established with Technical Services.