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## Understanding Electronic Resources Collection Development Practices Through Selected Theories

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# Understanding Electronic Resources Collection Development Practices Through Selected Theories

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## Abstract

Theories provide a foundation for science. They promote and improve research as well as provide a foundation of support for the topics being studied. This paper examined some library theories in order to gain a better understanding of how electronic resource collections are developed. The five laws of library science, selection theory, and acquisition theory are among the theories examined, with the aim of revealing who proposed them, the year they were proposed, and the theory's statement, as well as their importance for a deeper understanding of electronic resources collection development practices. The paper suggests that when selecting e-resources for acquisition, librarians should consider users' interests; librarians should ensure that e-resources are available and accessible to save library users' time; and selectors should carefully select electronic resources of proven reputation for library users without overwhelming the collection with irrelevances. In order to meet users' information needs, librarians should look beyond printed materials while providing information services. For a deeper understanding of the idea and to enrich their study, researchers exploring the field of electronic resources collection creation may combine these theories with other library theories.

**Keywords:** Theories, Electronic Resources, Collection Development, Five Laws of Library Science, Ranganathan, Selection Theory, Acquisition Theory

## **Introduction**

Through electronic collection development processes, libraries are steadily moving away from print acquisitions and toward electronic resources. Mansur (2012) defines collection development as the selection, acquisition, and processing of library items in a variety of formats for present and future needs of users. It entails the process of expanding the library's electronic resource collection in order to meet users' existing and potential information needs, as well as their interests and aspirations. The author went on to describe electronic resources collection creation as the process of preparing, choosing, and obtaining a balanced collection of library materials in electronic formats such as e-books, e journals, media, and online resources in a variety of electronic formats. It entails the process of expanding the library's electronic resource collection in order to meet users' existing and potential information needs, as well as their interests and aspirations. According to Mansur (2012), collection development methods for electronic resources include a number of procedures such as selection and deselection of current and retroactive e-resources that meet user needs; planning strategies for continued purchase of electronic resources while considering cost restrictions and usage; and evaluation of e-resource collections to determine how well they serve users.

Electronic tools are materials that need computer access, whether through a personal computer, a mainframe, or handheld mobile devices, according to the International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) (2012). They can be accessed locally or remotely via the internet. E-zine, e-text or e-book, abstracting and indexing databases such as MEDLINE, e-journal, locally loaded databases, e-library, CD-ROMs, and websites are all examples of electronic resources. An e-resource, according to Sadeh and Ellingsen (2005), is a collection of electronic journals or a database of abstracts and indexes that includes the full text of any or all publications. Electronic

resources also include items that aid in resource access for users, such as A-Z lists, Open URL, servers, federated search engines, resources that give full-text content, such as publishers' electronic journal material, journal content platforms like Project Muse or JSTOR, and content aggregators like EBSCOHOST's Academi, according to Bothmann & Holmberg (2008), as quoted by Okogwu (2017). Electronic resources allow users to have several access points to the resource at the same time. Information resources are often viewed, extracted, and integrated into other documents, and cross-references between publications are common. To be sure, the shift from print-based libraries to electronic collections or electronic resource acquisition paved the door for easier and faster access to information resources and, more crucially, influenced a strategic decision about electronic resources. E-books, e-Journals, articles, newspapers, theses, dissertations, databases, and CD-ROMs are all examples of electronic resources.

These electronic databases contain all current knowledge. Because of the benefits associated with their use, libraries are increasingly using electronic services. They include the fastest method of knowledge access as compared to other conventional methods, its updating is simple for producers and helpful to consumers, and it is also cost effective when compared to traditional collation methods. It is also economical in terms of space, since it needs no physical space, it is versatile and can be formatted to accommodate users, its access and usage need not be place or time dependent, and it is easily searchable (Shukla and Mishra 2011, and Balanque, 2012)

Electronic resources, on the other hand, have become increasingly important in recent years due to their up-to-date, multi-dimensional, and directional existence, as well as the fact that they can be accessed and used from anywhere, regardless of geographic boundaries. A broad variety of human endeavors benefit from such resources. According to Sharma (2009), the value

of e-resources has persuaded many libraries to move to digital e-resources, which are less costly and more convenient for easy access. E-resources have made a significant contribution to research activities, and several scholars have praised the benefits of e-resources over other knowledge formats. Some library theories are useful for a better understanding of electronic resources and collection growth, and researchers will find some theories related to these areas useful to their studies to improve the foundation of their researches.

According to Turner's eSource on Social and Behavioral Theories, a theory is a collection of interconnected concepts, meanings, and propositions that explains or predicts events or situations by defining relationships among variables. A theory is a theoretical explanation for events, behaviors, and/or circumstances. Theories, according to Shidi (2013), give a framework for research. Theories, he observed, promote and strengthen study and give a foundation of support for the topics researched. Theories are thus a collection of concepts that have been correctly presented or argued out with the goal of clarifying facts or events. As noticed by Hornby, a model is a concise depiction of a system used for describing how something works or calculating what might happen (2005). They give a solid foundation on which research can be built. A researcher is expected to stand on the shoulders of another to observe a distance (existing knowledge). As a result, theories serve as the foundation for comprehending an idea. Within academic areas, such as Library and Information Science, the usage and creation of theory is prevalent. The employment of theory in scholarly study, according to science philosophy, could be a sign of a discipline's academic maturity (Hauser, 1988).

Furthermore, several librarianship theories are considered very useful and insightful for an in-depth examination and comprehension of electronic resources collection development techniques in order to get a deeper and better understanding of electronic resources collection

practices. This paper examines some theories, as well as the scholars who advanced them, that are relevant to the study of electronic resource collection development practices. As a result, the following theories underpin this investigation: the Five Laws of Library Science, Selection Theory, and Acquisition Theory.

### **Ranganathan's "Five Laws of Library Science" (1931)**

Dr. Shiyali Ramamrita Ranganathan proposed the five laws of library science in 1931, describing the rules of operation in a library system as observed by Okogwu (2017). It is a famous text that encapsulates the essence of library and information science practice.

- Books are for use
- Every reader his/her book
- Every book its reader
- Save the time of the reader
- The library is a growing organism

**Books are for use:** Ranganathan (1931) observed that books were often chained to prevent them from being removed, meaning that storage and preservation took precedence over use. Ranganathan didn't deny the importance of preservation and storage, but he claimed that the goal of these efforts was to promote the item's use. Libraries aren't much use if they aren't used. Numerous copies of many library materials are available today, and they can often be had for a low price. Ranganathan brought the sector's attention back to issues of access. Quality "customer" service and the development of a "customer" orientation are now heavily emphasized. The focus here is on users and how the information available may meet their needs.

**Every reader his/her book:** We all have different interests, and there is a book out there for everyone. As a service organization, the library collects books and other information products, such as electronic resources, for the benefit of its users. The needs and interests of the community served by the library are crucial in the acquisition process as a service institution. This will allow the library to determine which information or electronic resources will meet the users' information demands.

**Every book its reader:** This third law is similar to the second, but it places a greater emphasis on the item or book. In this sense, a book is a general term that refers to both printed and electronic resources. According to the recommendations, each electronic resource should be assigned to a certain reader, and the library should establish a fundamental rule for accessing the resources, mostly due to the necessity for direct access to the e-resource.

**Save the time of the reader:** The goal of libraries should be to save the reader's time. This statute recognizes that part of the excellence of library service is the ability to efficiently meet the needs of library users observed Ranganathan. This entails enhancing library management through the application of relevant business procedures. Staff with strong technical and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) abilities should be highlighted in the library to help library patrons access resources quickly and effectively. Every person values their time, and effective time management is essential for success.

**The library is a growing organism:** This is the "fundamental concept" that controls library organization, according to Ranganathan. "It is a recognized biological indisputable fact that a growing organism alone will survive," writes Ranganathan (1963). An organism that stops growing will petrify and die." The library is viewed as a dynamic institution that is always

changing. The library is a dynamic institution that adapts to changes in staff, physical collections, and abstract collections of electronic resources, as well as patron usage. This includes expansion within the physical structure, as well as a collection that has evolved from traditional prints to electronic resources.

Information is now saved in electronic form and accessed by libraries to supplement traditional library services, thanks to the advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The following laws were paraphrased to better suit electronic resources: resources are to be used, each person has his or her resource, each resource has a user, save the user's time, and the library is a developing organism (Ranganathan, 1963). Access to electronic materials has been made direct, convenient, and timely to use as a result of technology advancements in libraries. As libraries changed operations to match the changes inherent in the use of continually changing technology, the use of electronic resources transformed the library into a living organism.

The implications of this approach for collection development practices are that while considering e-resources for acquisition, the users come first. The satisfaction of users is the primary goal of resource acquisition. And, once obtained for the library, these e-resources are simple to utilize, saving library users time. The library has become a living organism as a result of the installation and acquisition of e-resources.

### **Selection Theories by Thaddeus Mason Harris (1793)**

Collection management and development can often be traced back to selection theories. Thaddeus M. Harris compiled the first selection guide in 1793, according to Johnson (2009). He noted that there are so many books... that choosing the ones with a good reputation from among



the many that are indifferent or useless requires the utmost prudence. Before recently, there has been an unbroken tension between demand and value in libraries. There has been a problem with demand-value. Selection theory began to specialize in focusing on who should be picking items for the library, how selection decisions were made and, as a result, the proper criteria, and alternatives to individual title selection for collection building.

This idea has implications for collection development techniques in that it is necessary to exercise caution while selecting established e-resources from among the many that are indifferent or useless. With the advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), a plethora of electronic resources have become available, and the selection must exercise discretion when recommending resources with a proven track record in university libraries.

### **Acquisition Theory by Osburn (1993)**

In terms of information acquisition and dissemination, collection development acts as a buffer between the publisher and the library. Its main goal is to acquire published materials in both print and electronic formats for the library's collection development. Despite the fact that researchers have thoroughly discussed acquisition techniques in the literature, this part of librarianship has yet to be linked to any body of knowledge, principles, or theory. The following principles define the nature of publishing and publication as they pertain to the collection creation process: publishing is regular, quantitative, and predictable; publications are describable, recognizable, and accessible; no single source can offer all conceivable publications; publishing entails costs; librarians, publishers, and suppliers all serve various purposes; and have different value systems and motivations.

There is no single source of information that can give all of the information that library customers demand in the form of books and non-book resources. Libraries no longer rely on a single form of print for the supply of information materials, thanks to the rise of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The use of electronic resources is intended to supplement the use of printed materials. Furthermore, according to Osburn (1993), the application of these ideas is critical for the development of theory, as well as the strengthening of librarianship training and acquisitions processes. In addition, she believes that acquisition theory may be found in the economics and technology of information transfer, and that, in the end, the process of building the theory behind collection development will enable librarians to go beyond their typical everyday practice of obtaining only prints and embrace the possibilities of acquisitions as it relates to the larger world of scholarly research and communication.

This theory has implications for collection development practices in that it defines collection development concepts and thus offers a clearer understanding of the role of acquisition in the library in achieving university goals for successful service delivery

## **Conclusion**

For a deeper understanding of the growth of electronic resources collections, the analysis looked at three theories. Five Laws of Library Science, Selection Theory, and Acquisition Theory are among them. The person who proposed or propounded the theory, as well as the year it was proposed, were considered in each theory. With the aim of introducing prospective researchers to a body of information that would be referred to during their study, these theories were revealed and their application to electronic resources collection development practices was considered.

The librarian had to consider the users first when creating an electronic library collection for the library, thanks to five laws of library science.

The primary goal of resource acquisition is to satisfy users. Furthermore, quick access to electronic services is critical in order to save users' time, which is valuable. The need to be more careful in selecting processes of those e-resources with established reputation from the many that are indifferent or useless has been revealed by selection theory, which has exposed the selector of electronic resources on the need to be more cautious in selecting processes of those e-resources with established reputation from the many that are indifferent or useless.

This is more noticeable and considered since the advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which has enabled the proliferation of electronic content on the internet, and the selector must exercise caution in selecting resources with a proven track record for library users while avoiding overcrowding the collection with irrelevant materials. Selection theory has aided the library in achieving accuracy, objectivity, and continuity in the selection process, as well as ensuring that resources meet the users' knowledge needs. Acquisition theory outlines collection growth concepts, allowing for a clearer understanding of the role of acquisition in the library in achieving the library's goals.

## **Recommendation**

This paper makes the following suggestions based on the theories' provisions and validity.

- The Five Laws of Library Science support librarians in ensuring that users' needs are prioritized when evaluating e-resources for acquisition.
- To save library users time, librarians can ensure that e-resources are available and accessible.

- Selection theory aids librarians or selectors in carefully selecting electronic resources with a proven track record for library users while not overcrowding the collection with irrelevant materials.
- In order to meet users' information needs, librarians have been asked to look beyond prints while providing information services.
- Researchers interested in the creation of electronic resources collections may use these theories in conjunction with other theories to enrich their study.

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