Collection Development Policy in Academic Library
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Abstract

This paper aims to discuss on the collection development policy and its implementation that focused in academic library. The implementation will arises some issues and challenges. Academic library confronted the issue of budget and library is now moving towards e-book. The paper offers insights into how to overcome the issues and challenges faced. It describes the area in which collection development policy can be used to fulfill the critical roles of supporting the library's mission to provide excellent resources, services and facilities in academic library.

Keywords – Collection development; collection development policy; academic library

Introduction

A library benefits come from the collections that it hold. Without library collections, users may be reluctant to come to the library and utilized the services offered. Therefore, a library collection should be viewed as an investment and should be looked at from benefit perspectives. However, libraries of all types have experienced a continuing tension between demand and value and much of the literature on selection has focused on this tension between what users want and what librarians believe is good for them (Johnson, 2009). Evans (2000) define collection development as the process of making certain the library meets the information needs of its service population in a timely and economical manner, using information resources produced both inside and outside of the organization.

A policy statement is a form of framework and a set of parameters within which staff and users work. It serves many functions beyond being merely a tool for selection of materials. Adekanmbi (2007) stressed that a good collection development activities are based from their policy. Thus, libraries recognized that the collection development policy play an integral role in collection development activities (Pickett et al., 2011).

The collection development policies are closely linked to printed materials. However, looking at this ICT era, electronic resources are becoming increasingly important to libraries of all types and sizes, whereby these resources consuming an ever-increasing share of library budgets. According to International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (2001), library selection decisions that focused on electronic resources should be developed with a clear collection development policy. This might be a separate policy or an integrated one. As highlighted by Kebede (2000), both printed and electronic resources should have a written or revised collection development policy. Moreover, some libraries will be founded to retain their national/traditional resources mission and remain relatively unchanged in continuing to focus on the acquisition of comprehensive collections.

Collection Development Policy

A collection development policy can be defined as a formal written statement of the principles guiding a library's selection of books and other materials, including the criteria used in selection, de-selection, and acceptance of gifts. It may also address intellectual freedom, future goals, and special areas of attention (Johnson, 2009). The policy will guide library staff in completing their task regarding the collections that they gain for their library because it provides details procedure on certain collection development.

Specifically, the staff consults the collection development policy when considering which subject areas to augment and determining how much emphasis to give for each area (Evans, 2000). Some libraries call it an acquisition policy, some a selection policy, some a collection development policy and others simply a statement. Whatever the local label, the intent is the same, that is, to define the library's goals for its collections and to help staff members select and acquire the most appropriate materials. As highlighted by Gregory (2011), with the collection development policy, it may serve as blueprints for the operations of a library. Furthermore, by implementing the policy, it will assists the tasks of acquiring, organizing and managing library materials.

The Implementation of Collection Development Policy

Into the 1900s, most selection in academic libraries was handled by faculty members. However, by the late 1970s, faculty often collaborating with librarians in selecting the library's materials but the main aim is still the same that is to meet the needs and interests of specific faculty members to maintain

a unified collection to meet both current and future institutional priorities (Johnson, 2009). Library staff will work together in developing the library collections. In addition, staff may be divided into groups that focus on different faculty. By doing so, library may ensure that faculties within the university were given an equal service. Each staff will be particular concerned on the faculty needs and the materials required can be best acquired with a good communication between the library and the faculty. The staff will accomplish their task appropriately by following the certain procedures produced by the library in supplementary to the library's collection development policy.

Librarians do not simply acquire materials suggested by the faculty and other users. They have to evaluate the available resources, sources, comparing them to the research and teaching interests of their users. Therefore, in order for the librarians to acquire and purchase any items on demand, they should consider the budget given to them to ensure the cost-effectiveness between the printed materials, AV materials and the electronic resources.

Academic library contains many types of information sources ranging from books, periodicals, technical reports, standards, patents, microfiche/film and audio/video to the whole array of computerized information sources and services. The electronic resources are mainly made up of CD-ROM, e-journals, online databases as well as the Internet-accessed information sources. Burnette (2008) stressed that over the past fifteen years, advances in information technology and changes in the publishing industry have transformed the tasks of gaining library collections and the work performed in the collection development departments. In acquiring the electronic resources, staff has to collaborate routinely throughout the library with staff in administration, reference, public services and information technology regarding such issues as business terms, trial access, pending license agreements, access parameters and renewal terms.

Impact of the Collection Development Policy

By implementing the collection development policy, library users may know the collection development concept especially in acquiring the library collections. They will be aware on the rational why some material should be purchased while other is rejected. Faculty members and the management of the academic institution have often demanded that the library purchase items which serve the needs of only one or two users and in fact sometimes expect such material to be housed in their own offices

permanently. However, with the policy, librarians have the authority to stand on and provide the users with the coherent reasons why there are this and that in the library acquisition.

Moreover, the policy may satisfy users by acquiring various formats of information. Special focus in the policy statement on how printed materials, AV media and electronic resources should be incorporated into the overall collection development policy of an academic library setting may give advantage to the end users whereby with this policy users may have a variety of formats of information to be refer to.

Issues and challenges

In implementing the collection development policy, the library confronted with several issues and challenges. They are discussed as the following:

    i.   Budgets

        This is a major issue that arises in every academic library where available budgets have to be spent with more circumspection and care. In developing the collections, materials is acquired where possible in the most appropriate format as indicated by reasons of economy as well as other factors like the user needs and preferences, durability, ease of use, frequency of use and the relevance to the subject. Therefore, when it comes to this issue, librarians have to be wise in order to avoid mismatch between the materials users are given and what they actually need.

    ii.   Move towards e-book

        Library is now focusing in moving towards e-book. One of the reason highlighted is e-book is cheaper than book when library purchase them in package. The other reason is with e-book, library can identify how many users are accessing to the material every day. Compare with book, library cannot identify how many users are accessing to the book unless the book is borrowed by the users. Thus, this initiative taken by the library will become a challenge for librarians in order to learn to strike a balance between collecting and providing access to printed and electronic resources.

Recommendations

There are some recommendations to the issues and challenges confronted by library in the implementation of their collection development policy. They are described in details as the following:

i.   Budgets

To avoid this issue, library should match the funds with the needs, setting limits on spending and monitoring their expenditures. According to Curran and Miller (2005), good budget management skills are critical for the librarians. It is because library budgets are often quite complex. The way in which books are purchased is very different from the way periodicals are purchased or electronic products are licensed. Thus, it is important for the librarians to understand the budget well enough to be able to explain or discuss it with external constituencies (faculty, tax-paying citizens, parent organizations administrators, etc.)

ii.   Move towards e-book

Library should consider the disadvantages of the e-book. McLuckie (2005) in his study on e-book found that there is a study on the usability of e-book for college students done by a researcher revealed that the performance of students who had made use of handheld e-books as opposed to the printed textbooks did not perform better than the other students. A number of tasks were mentioned as being tedious, such as moving from page to page, searching for a particular word, or finding a certain chapter in the text. The small screens and issues with glare were also mentioned as being deficiencies. Users of the readers also felt that they retained less information than when consulting printed textbooks.

Conclusion

Library including academic library's collection development activities may differ based on what is suitable for their community needs whereby this definitely may affect the library acquisition. Thus, collection development policy plays an integral role in collection development activities. It can therefore be said that a collection development policy is a document drawn up by a specific library to provide guidelines for library staff in order for them to meet the needs of that particular user group. To the librarian, the process of identifying what the library should acquire, determining how and from whom it can be obtained is time consuming and often quite complex. In many ways the work is hidden from the public. However, without an effective acquisitions management and collection development program,

the expectations of the library users can never be met. The selection of the library materials is not the responsibilities of the librarians solely. The whole university community play their role in developing the library collection to ensure that the library fulfill the needs of the community without any bias.

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