
**Major Determining Variables for the Acquisition and Management of Information
Resources in Libraries in United States of America**

BY

Kingsley U. SAVIOUR, Ph.D
Department of Communication Studies
University of Illinois at Chicago
Northern Illinois,
United States

ABSTRACT

Information is a valuable resource to be managed like other resources. Information Resource Management contributes directly to accomplishing organizational goals and objectives. Proper management of resources enables effective acquisition of library resources in any academic library. Acquisition plays a vital role in the support of the academic sector and research by providing access tools to quality information resources in multiple formats utilizing current technologies. Library acquisition is the process of selecting and acquiring selected materials for library and information centers in all formats including digital items and maintaining the necessary records related to acquisitions. In acquisition of library materials, Shiyali Ramamrita Ranganathan father of library science coin out the Five Laws of Library Science: books are for use, every reader his book, every book its reader, save the time of the reader, the library is a growing organism. Acquisition is also used to refer to the functional department (Acquisitions Department) responsible for all aspects of obtaining materials for libraries. The acquisition department undertakes a function of selection, ordering, evaluating and funding, acquiring books and non-book material for the library through approved methods for the library such as purchase, gifts, exchange or any other arrangement. Therefore, library is established to serve the information needs of students, researchers, lecturers, and the entire educational society. This information needs is serviced through purchase, donation/gifts, resource sharing and legal deposit of the information resources. One of the recommendations made was that library should solicit for book donation and fund from Non-government organizations (NGOs) and prominent individuals to enable it provide accurate information for the community.

KEYWORDS: Information Resource Management, Acquisition, Funding, Ordering, Evaluation and Selection

Introduction

Osagie (2008) addresses Information Resource Management as the effective handling of information resources and the resulting information assets. Because information is a valuable resource to be managed like other resources, information resources management contributes directly to accomplishing organizational goals and objectives. Proper management of these resources enables effective acquisition of library resources in any academic library. According to Ode and Omokaro (2007), library has moved from traditional era to digital in order to meet the current information needs of people. The acquisition department, also known as collection development department performs the crucial role of bringing into the library information, carrying materials and ensures efficient record keeping. The acquisition department undertakes a function of selection, ordering, evaluating, receiving

and claiming items, acquiring books and non-book material for the library through approved methods for the library such as purchase, gifts, exchange or any other arrangement e.g subscription. Since it is only through this department that all the library materials are acquired, the department is expected to use other means such as inter-library loans, bequeaths and legal deposits to get materials into the library.

Tomar (2007) carried out a literature survey on library acquisition and collection management during the period of 1990-1995. The review compiled in a book revealed the old questions-how to select for collections, how to make optimal use of limited budgets, how many serials and which ones are sufficient and how to evaluate collections and determine use. Newer concerns have been added about how best to select not only print but also electronic resources and what to own and what to acquire 'just in time', how to provide for preservation along with other costs, how to combine and balance resource sharing, cooperation, and document delivery and how to deal with the changes in scholarly communication. Libraries can continue to offer valuable services to users or users can find other means of accessing the information they need, if ways can be found to develop the electronic library out of traditional library with systematic procedures and policies. To satisfy the research needs of the user community is the highest priority of a library, digital or otherwise. A positive effect of the current situation is that Librarians and administrators have learned to question their roles and goals and find new ways to fulfill both. Also Vatnal & Ramesha (2001) carried out a case study of Kamataka University, Dharwad to explore the quality assurance in acquisition management in some selected subjects. In Karnataka University library, organized efforts are made to follow the procedures and guidelines in the collection management. In these days of escalation of prices, shrinking budget and ever-changing technology, the libraries need to change the age-old attitude of the library acquisition. Instead of deriving the privilege by acquiring all that is published, it is better to readjust the policies to suit the changing scenario. Adequate efforts should be made to control and use the available facilities and explore the potential of information technology.

Theory of Library Science

Theory of the five laws of library science which was coined out in 1931 by Shiyali Ramamrita Ranganathan father of library science.

- i. Books are for use
- ii. Every reader his book
- iii. Every book its reader
- iv. Save the time of the reader
- v. The library is a growing organism

In acquisition of library materials, the Five Laws of Library Science have close relationship with it even in the present digital scenario. Usability of all resources likely to be selected is to be anticipated based upon user survey or feedback from the users. A survey of one of the university libraries was conducted about the usability of resources purchased during the last three years. The results were quite discouraging showing that the use of those books were too low. Even those who had made recommendations to purchase these books had not used them. This reveals the casual way of selection of resources.

First Law (Books Are For Use): When Five Laws of Library Science were evolved, reading material were limited to only books and journals. Therefore, the term book was used. It implied that in the present context every bit of information and knowledge irrespective of their embodiment or content are for use anywhere and anytime. This law emphasizes that no such documents; digital or non-digital should be acquired which are not likely to be used by the potential users of the library. This conveys that whatever information sources are acquired or are available must be used. This implies that librarians have to play crucial role of marketing their resources thereby promoting their use. Promotion of usage is only possible if the acquisition indices is considered very well. The resources are to be advertised particularly electronic resources, which do not have visibility as printed resources. This principle also satisfies the call of the present knowledge society to make knowledge freely available and accessible. To satisfy the first law in respect of selection, all the three components of acquisition discussed above have to be taken into consideration to enhance usability. Ranganathan has given full detail of selection in different disciplines like humanities, arts and craft, social science, pure science and biological sciences. In one of the messages, he stated that 'in a generalist library be it a public library or children's library book selection should include a good deal of popular books and periodicals on the latest thought in the different subjects in the natural sciences written with flair and with plenty of illustrations but free from the jargon or technical details and yet without loss of accuracy.

Second Law (Every Reader His Book): Every reader has a right to read and get his reading and research material in the library, which may not be possible for the library to acquire. In such circumstances, the volume of the demand is normally taken into account. Dewey's motto is applicable in such circumstances where libraries have budget constraint best books to the largest number at the least cost. In the present context when possession and ownership of resources are not so important, library should be in a position to provide access to such material from external resources. The resources acquired in the library should serve the majority of the users. At the same time, specific needs of limited number of users also cannot be ignored. Every user his resource, which means that everyone should get his resource. Individual as well as collective demands both are important. In case of financial constrain, demand theory which is based upon value, volume and variety may resolve the problem.

Third Law (Every Book Its Reader): Second law gives emphasis on reader whereas third law's approach is on the book. Second law is based upon users' actual demand. Third law emphasizes on selection of only those information resources that have probability of use in present and future. Most of the messages of second law are also applicable in third law. Selectors should anticipate the probability of resources to be used which depends upon the vision of the library staff to anticipate such requirements well in advance. Book selection in any library should be based on the probability of use by the readers and should never be vitiated by considerations of patronage. This law demands that probability of demand should be ascertained by way of knowing reading interests of the community, course curriculum, intellectual level of users, languages and subject areas. Present as well as future demands should be taken into consideration. Overall requirement of this law is to anticipate mainly the requirement and probability of resources likely to be used by the potential users.

Fourth Law (Save the Time of the User): The time lag between the release of the book by the publisher and availability of the same to the reader in a library should be reduced to the minimum. This is a challenging job where professionals engaged in acquisition of library materials shall have to keep abreast with the new titles and take steps to procure them as soon as possible. Advance announcement by the publishers of their forthcoming titles may also reduce the time. This law also demands that there should be definite rhythm in selection

process. Bulk order should be avoided particularly during the closing of financial year. Libraries normally place order 2-3 times in year. However, it should be weekly or monthly process so that information sources are acquired as and when required. It is a common experience that acquisition of resources are often delayed due to wrong policy of approval by the committees. Librarians do not enjoy the autonomy of placing order without the approval of the committee(s) or other competent authorities. The library committee does not meet frequently as required. In the modern context, selection of resources and placing order using electronic media are implied which can reduce the time in acquisition and processing of resources. Automation is good compliant to forth law which reduces a lot of time in procurement and processing of the material to make them serviceable.

Fifth Law (Library is a Growing Organism): Library grows in collection, staff, users and many other ways. These may require more and more space which most of the libraries may be able to provide. Implication of this law is that traditional libraries should change into hybrid or electronic libraries where some of the collection would be in a digital form. Ranganathan had suggested that book selection has to resort to micro reprography form, which is now digital form. As such, it prescribes that digital resources should also be selected and acquired to solve the space problem. Since acquisition of library materials also includes maintenance, therefore, this law demands that some of the existing resources should be digitized or converted into reduced forms to save the space. The emphasis of Fifth Law is more for maintenance and management rather than selection. Every library should have weeding out policy to save the space. All libraries should also weed out periodically unwanted and infrequently used books and periodicals, so that the remaining information resources may be effectively managed.

Acquisition and Management of Information Resources

Acquisitions or Library Acquisitions according to Robertson, (2015) is the process of selecting and acquiring selected materials for library and information centers in all formats including digital items and maintaining the necessary records related to acquisitions. Horava (2005) reported that acquisition of information resources into the academic library is focused on satisfying the information need of the university's population. In order to achieve its aims, the library actively seeks and encourages the full participation of members of the university, most particularly, academic and research staff, in the selection of information resources into the library. The range of library suppliers is used to ensure the best available possible service and contractual terms for effective management of information resources. The library may also enter into collaborative agreements with other institutions to acquire material that is beneficial to the University through effective management (Ameen, 2008). Acquisitions is also used to refer to the functional department (Acquisitions Department) responsible for all aspects of obtaining materials for libraries. The acquisition department undertakes a function of selection, ordering, evaluating and funding, acquiring books and non-book material for the library through approved methods for the library such as purchase, gifts, exchange or any other arrangement.

Selection and Management of Information Resources

Selection is an important aspect of acquisition because it involves a statement about users and needs; subjects, topic or mission to be dealt with and type of information sources to be acquired. Selection aids and tools which will help in selection and formats for a balanced collection that meets the need of user community. Information resource selection is used as a generic term covering the selection of both book and non-book information resources for the

library. As a result of the overwhelming increase in the amount of information materials, there is need for the careful selection of library information materials as no library can purchase all the materials needed. It is necessary to choose quality library materials that are relevant to the needs of the users at a relatively low cost. According to the World Encyclopaedia of Library and Information service (1993), “selectors must identify the range of what is relevant, distil out those that are timely, pertinent, and finally prioritize and makes decision according to acquisition plans (the practical application of a collection development policy) and within the confines of budget allocation”. Those involved in the selection of the library materials should consider the acquisition policy of the library and the amount of money made available in the budget.

Evaluation and Management of Information Resources

Evaluation is the major way of accessing the adequacy and sustainability of the collection in the library as it helps the library to be relevant and useful to its clientele. Evaluation of library resources are the integral part during acquisition because it helps to determine from time to time the materials that needed by students or users. Evaluation is an essential part of Library acquisition process. In fact, Evaluation is a cardinal principle of collection building (Eze and Eze, 2006). The fulfillment of university library objectives does not end with just the acquisition of library materials. These resources acquired are continually evaluated and managed to determine how adequately they meet the needs of the users. To do this, the librarian needs to have a comprehensive data on how researchers actually work and what materials they need to use. Collection evaluation is crucial to ensuring efficient, effective and usable collections. Collection evaluation according to Spiller (2001) is the process of identifying the strength and weaknesses of a library’s resources and attempting to correct existing weaknesses while maintaining the strength of the resources through effective management.

Ordering and Management of Information Resources

Ordering in library management has to do with acquiring information resources for the usability of the community the library is serving. Since the library cannot build its collection purely on the basis of gifts and exchanges, acquisition by purchase becomes inevitable. Egwa (2010) states that ordering is acquiring information materials from the vendors and this is done when the librarian is sure of the material to be ordered after going through/checking to ensure correct identification of all the bibliographic data of each item to be ordered.

Funding and Management of Information Resources

The most important factor in document selection is funding. Proper planning of finance is basic to good acquisition work. Every library works according to its budget. The total fund of the library will include separate provision for books. The amount thus set apart for books is the fund placed at the disposal of the Acquisition Department (Nwoke, 2009). Generally, libraries require adequate funding to enable them to fulfill their obligations to the clienteles. According to Ubogu and Okiy (2011), services of libraries cannot be provided optimally without the necessary funding as it is essential for a library to possess the resources that will enable it to meet its goals. The amount of funding given to libraries directly influences the quality of services provided.

Conclusion

Library is established to serve the information needs of students, researchers, lecturers, and the entire educational society. This information needs is serviced through purchase, donation/gifts, resource sharing and legal deposit of the information resources. Proper management of these resources enables effective acquisition of library resources in any academic library. Information resources management contributes directly to accomplishing organizational goals and objectives. As a result of this, effective management of the information resources should be enhanced to ensure the satisfaction of the information needs of the users.

Recommendation

1. The library should solicit for book donation and fund from Non-government organizations (NGOs) and prominent individuals to enable it provide accurate information for the community.
2. The acquisition librarian should be encouraged to participate in book selection process and necessary training be given on collection development.
3. More information resources should be purchased and should be manned by professionals.
4. The management of the library should encourage deposit of publications by authors to the library so as to boost information resource acquired through legal deposit.
5. Resource sharing should be enhanced to boost the collections of the library.

REFERENCES

- Ameen, K. (2008). Developments in the philosophy of collection management: a historical review. *Collection Building*, 24(4), 112-116.
- Egwa, G. (2010). *Collection Management Basics*. Sixth Edition. Libraries and Information Science Text Series. Libraries Unlimited; Oxford, England. 2012. pp. 103–130.
- Eze, I. O. and Eze, J. U. (2006). *Acquisition Process in Academic Libraries*. Administration of Academic Libraries: A Book of Readings. UCO.
- Horava, T. (2005). Access policies and licensing issues in research libraries. *Collection Building*, 24(1), 30-46
- Ode, E.O & Omokaro, D.A (2007). *Basic Principles and Practice of Librarianship*. Makurdi: PSG-Franc Publication.
- Osagie, O. (2008). Faculty opinion as collection evaluation method: a case of Redeemer's University Library. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*, paper 221. Retrieve from <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/221>.
- Ranganathan, S.R. (1931). *The Five Laws of Library Science*. Librarianship studies & information technology. Permanent website: [https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.\\$b99721](https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.$b99721). Available at: <https://www.librarianshipstudies.com/2017/09/five-laws-of-library-science.html>
- Robertson, S. (2015). *Library Acquisitions*. Librarianship studies & information technology. Available at: <https://www.librarianshipstudies.com/2015/05/acquisitions.html>
- Spiller, D. (2001). *Book Selection: Principle and Practice*. London: Longman Press.
- Ubogu, S. and Okiy, G. (2011). *Funding in Academic Libraries*. Academic Publishers Nigeria Limited. 29-41.
- World Encyclopaedia of Library and Information service (1993). *ALA World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services*. Edited by Wedgeworth, Robert. Amer Library Assn Publishers, USA.