Managing Collections for the Small, Rural Library

Introduction

Librarians working in small, rural libraries today are faced with a unique set of challenges as they manage their library collections. Working with a small staff, and sometimes even solo, rural librarians have the responsibility for developing and managing library collections for their communities, often with a very limited set of funds. This annotated bibliography has been prepared to assist librarians working in small, rural communities in their collection management activities. The bibliography contains both print and online resources, including books, scholarly journals and articles, and web-based resources. Information can be viewed by selecting an item from the menu to the left of the screen or by scrolling down the page. Items included in this bibliography are categorized by content type and alphabetized within each section.

Books


This guidebook provides simple calculations, formulas, and measurements necessary to come up with statistics to analyze and manage a library collection. Measures of timeliness, relevancy, use percentages, user profiles, and comparisons can help librarians determine the quality of their library collections. Collections, as discussed in this guidebook, include not only the traditional concept but also materials beyond the walls of the library. Topics covered in this guide include management objectives and techniques for
gathering and analyzing collections as well as the areas of decision making surrounding storage, discarding, and retention. In *Booklist*, Long writes, “Building on respected models, the authors have produced a practical guide for managing and evaluating small library and school media center collections. ... Templates provide investigation and reporting techniques that are manageable for a small staff or one-person library” (p. 1782). For libraries managing collections in small, rural libraries, this book may prove to be a valuable resource.


This book provides a basic explanation of reference services for those with little formal library training working in small, rural libraries or others who wish to brush up on their skills. Among the many topics covered, *Crash Course in Reference* includes suggestions for purchases and maintenance of the reference collection and provides information on how to join a network of reference librarians who can provide assistance when an answer is not readily available. This title has received many positive reviews, including a glowing review by Williams (2009) in *Reference & User Services Quarterly* who stated, “*Crash Course in Reference* is an affordable, must-have resource for public libraries of all sizes and is of particular interest for training new staff” (p. 315).


This manual discusses a range of topics relating to librarianship in small libraries, including chapters on cooperative services, programming, and fund raising. In *American Libraries*, Flagg writes, “The charm and challenge of librarianship in small libraries is being a generalist and a quick study on any aspect of work... (This book) on small libraries may help librarians in such environments” (p. 622). Whether serving in a small, rural or emerging public library, this handbook will prove to be a valuable resource.


Written specifically for small and rural librarians, this reference guide is a comprehensive resource for developing and maintaining a small but strong reference collection. This guide provides complete annotations for the fundamental reference sources small libraries should include in their reference collections. At the time of publication, most titles suggested in this
guide were priced under $100 with a top price of $200, so encyclopedia sets are excluded. This guide also provides a listing of titles which can be used to enhance or update the reference collection. In *American Libraries*, Bourdon (1999) writes, “Although geared for small libraries, the advice of “Madame Audrey” would benefit libraries of all sizes” (p. 104). If developing, updating, or enhancing a small, rural library’s reference collection, this title should be considered.


This manual, written for librarians or paraprofessionals who may be part of a limited staff (or the only staff) in a library, should be considered as a resource by any librarian working in a small, rural library, including those who are responsible for collection management. Part I of the manual covers challenges faced in different kinds of libraries that have few resources. Subsequent sections cover budgeting, public service, collection development, and computers and automation. Numerous forms, policies, and other items augment the text. In *Booklist*, Hogan writes, "Whether the reader is a new librarian who is starting his or her first administrative position or an experienced librarian who wishes to improve management skills, this manual should prove useful" (p. 64).


This book, targeted towards the one-person library, will prove to be a valuable resource for all librarians working in small libraries, including those responsible for collection management. The author provides advice about management, budgeting, time management, customer service, marketing, money saving tips, and much more. In particular, Part 2 of this book will be of interest to those responsible for collection development. It includes a 220+ page annotated list of resources organized into subject categories. This book has been recommended by Carlin (2008) in *Collection Building*, who stated, "In order to address the lack of preparation for work as an OPL, this book is the ideal companion. It is recommended for all those establishing a library or upgrading their information service, and those wishing to improve their personal effectiveness" (p. 90).

**Scholarly Journals** ([back to menu](#))

Recommended by *Magazines for Libraries* for librarians responsible for collection development, "*Collection Building* provides well researched information on collection maintenance and development" (Jackson, 2009). Providing relevant information for librarians in all sectors, *Collection Building* covers views, trends, and methodologies for expanding and managing library collections. This journal, international in scope, has been published quarterly since 1978 and includes papers which have been accepted after blind review by two reviewers.


Since its beginning in 1980, this scholarly journal has been devoted to the many issues surrounding the provision of library services to rural communities. *Magazines for Libraries* suggests, “This journal should be in every library science collection and in libraries serving rural populations” (Katz and Sternberg-Katz, 1995). Full-text access to *Rural Libraries* articles published from 1981 through 2002 is available at [http://jupiter.clarion.edu/~csrl/rural.htm](http://jupiter.clarion.edu/~csrl/rural.htm). Beginning in 2003, *Rural Libraries* is available in full-text mode through membership in the [Association for Rural & Small Libraries](http://jupiter.clarion.edu/~csrl/rural.htm).

**Scholarly Journal Articles** ([back to menu](#))


This article, published in the scholarly journal, *Collection Building*, discusses how libraries have and can address the digital divide through collection development. It provides specific examples of services and programs that have been implemented with this objective in mind. The importance of partnering among various institutions in order to address the digital divide is stressed. Having been frequently cited in the literature both nationally and internationally, this article should be considered an important resource for librarians attempting to address the digital divide through collection development in rural and/or underserved areas.

This article, published in the scholarly journal, *Collection Building*, discusses how four libraries in East-Central Illinois established a model cooperative collection development project, specifically for the purpose of determining if the theory of cooperative collection development could actually be put into practice in the case of small, rural libraries. The project proved to be very successful, demonstrating that theory can work in real situations. Small, rural libraries facing underfunding, inadequate or underdeveloped collections, and long delivery times for interlibrary loans may find cooperative collection development a practical solution to their problems. This article discusses not only the project, but also the methods used to assess collections as well as the process of writing cooperative plans. Though written in 1994, this article will be a valuable resource for today's librarians working in small, rural libraries, as it presents a model which can be used in developing cooperative collections between libraries.

**Web-based Resources**

**Blogs**


The author of the blog, *Rural Libraries ~ Collection Development*, recognizes that book selection and collection development remain as essential tasks for the rural librarian. The blog aims to be a forum for sharing and discussing the unique nature of collection development in the rural library. While a relatively new blog with its earliest posting listed as September, 2009, it should be considered a valuable resource for rural librarians. Each posting is thorough and carefully cited with quality references. Some of the recent blog posting titles include: *Collection Development Training and Professionalism – Some Basic Concepts*, *Facing Limitations*, *Rural Library Sponsorship*, and *Community Considerations*.

**Databases**


The *Rural Library Resources Clearinghouse* is a simple-to-use, searchable database, available on the World Wide Web, developed by the Rural Library Initiative in California. The Clearinghouse is an online archive of materials and resources developed to help California's rural libraries serve their users more efficiently. The goal of the Clearinghouse is to eliminate the need to "reinvent the wheel" for every new policy, project, procedure, etc. needed at...
the local level. Although developed primarily to benefit rural public libraries in California, the Clearinghouse is open to all libraries, anywhere in the country, at no charge. The Clearinghouse maintains search categories for accessibility, collection development, fund raising, market research and communications, partnerships, programs, reference, and volunteerism. It is a useful tool for all individuals working in small, rural public libraries, including those responsible for collection management. Some of the many topics covered in the collection development section of the Clearinghouse include: sample collection development policies suitable for a small public library, online tutorial for collection development training, introduction to adding e-books and audio e-books to a collection, weeding, and much more. The American Library Association’s Committee on Rural, Native, and Tribal Libraries of All Kinds has recognized the value of this resource and has included a link on their "Of Special Interest" page of their website.

Listservs (back to menu)


The Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL) Listserv is a forum for national and international discussions relating to rural library services in all demographic settings. The listserv is open to ARSL members. ARSL membership information can be found at [http://www.bcr.org/ARSL/membership.html](http://www.bcr.org/ARSL/membership.html). In addition, archives of ARSL listserv messages are available to everyone (no membership required) at [http://bcr-lists.org/pipermail/arsl-l/](http://bcr-lists.org/pipermail/arsl-l/). Rural and small librarians involved in collection management will find many valuable thread discussions to peruse among the archives including information about funding opportunities, resource clearinghouses, marketing, best book lists, conference information, and much more. The listserv of the ARSL (an affiliate of the American Library Association) should be considered a valuable and trustworthy resource for all librarians in small and rural libraries.


The Collection Development Listserv, managed by the University of Southern California, is a moderated national discussion list devoted entirely to collection development issues. Though many of the participants work in academic libraries, there is information which will be of value to smaller libraries as well. To join the list, send an email to: listproc@usc.edu. In the body of the message include subscribe COLLDV-L (your name). Leave the subject line blank and do not include a signature block. Among the many topics covered are collection assessment, budgeting, cooperation, planning
and policies. A comprehensive archive of discussions is available at: http://serials.infomotions.com/colldv-l/ and includes messages dating from 1996 to the current month. Participation on this list is recommended by many libraries and library schools across the nation including the Library of Congress, Arizona State Library and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In addition, this listserv is included in an online list of websites which relate to the textook, Developing Library and Information Center Collections, 5th Edition.


For individuals working as solo librarians in small, rural communities or special libraries, participation in the Solo Librarians Division discussion list is strongly recommended. Participation on this listserv will not only help librarians gain valuable insights into collection management, but will also provide opportunities to learn about new resources, current articles, Web 2.0, and share ideas with others who walk in similar shoes. Participation may be via email, Internet subscription, or in digest format. Specific subscription instructions are available on the listserv instruction page. The Solo Librarians Division of the Special Libraries Association aims to share ideas, problems, and solutions unique to isolated librarians or information collectors/providers who have no professional peers within the organization. This discussion list is recommended by the Library of Congress and is included on their webpage, Library and Information Science: A Guide to Online Resources.

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Anyone working as a librarian in a small, rural library, including those responsible for collection management, should consider subscribing to The Rural Library Services Newsletter. Published since 1997 by the Paulding County Carnegie Library in Ohio, this newsletter reflects trends and issues which concern rural libraries across the United States and Canada. Topics in past issues have included weeding, marketing, staff management, programming ideas, circulation issues, national conference information, and much more. The newsletter is currently published 6 times a year and subscriptions are $30/year. A 15% discount is offered to members of the Association for Rural and Small Libraries. Archives of issues dating back to 2005 are available as PDF files through Web Junction. Included on the American Library Association's list of Resources for Rural and Small Library
Communities, this newsletter should be considered a valuable resource for all librarians working in small, rural libraries.

Web Pages (back to menu)


Librarians working in small, rural libraries, including individuals responsible for managing library collections, should consider the website of the ALA Committee on Rural, Native, and Tribal Libraries of all Kinds to be a valuable resource. Included in the website is a comprehensive list of relevant publications and resources for rural, native and tribal libraries. In addition, the committee has compiled useful links to sites focused on best practices and funding sources for these types of libraries. There is an Advocacy section on the website which includes valuable tips, toolkits, and other resources for winning financial support for rural libraries. Rural librarians should not only consider utilizing the resources available on this website, but becoming an active member of the committee as well.


Collection Development Training for Arizona Public Libraries, sponsored by the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records, is an online training website designed for librarians and other staff in public libraries who are new to collection development or who wish to refresh their knowledge about a particular aspect of collection development. While the online tutorial was developed primarily for staff working in Arizona's small and rural public libraries, it is a valuable resource for anyone working in a small library or information center in any state. Each activity is presented as a separate section with links to helpful Internet sites, lists of books, articles for further reading, and definitions of key terms. At the end of each training module is a voluntary self-assessment quiz to review and confirm what has been learned. Libraries throughout North America have included links to this online tutorial for their collection development staff including the South Dakota State Library, the Southern Ontario Library Service, and the State Library of Louisiana.

The website for the Association for Rural & Small Libraries is a valuable resource for all librarians working in a small and/or rural libraries, including those responsible for collection management. As stated on their website, "The mission of the Association for Rural and Small Libraries is to provide a network of people and materials to support rural and small library staff, volunteers, and trustees to integrate the library throughout with the life and work of the community it serves." An affiliate of the American Library Association, the Association for Rural & Small Libraries offers extended benefits to ARSL members, though provides valuable resources to nonmembers as well. Included in their website are links to grant opportunities for small and rural libraries, a bibliography of useful resources, upcoming conference information, as well as links to useful networking sites such as ALA Connect, the ARSL Facebook page, Twitter, LinkedIn, and much more.

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Library Success: A Best Practices Wiki is a valuable resource for all types of librarians. This wiki is intended to serve as a clearinghouse where librarians share their ideas, information, innovations with technology, and successful programs. Meredith Farkas, the creator of the wiki, originally developed it "to be a venue where people can share ideas with one another and where librarians can learn to replicate the successes of other libraries." Included among the many content areas is a section devoted specifically for Materials Selection and Collection. This section covers several topics including selecting, organizing, and weeding library collections, important considerations for all libraries, large or small. This wiki is a popular resource, with over 680 web pages linking to it. In addition, the American Library Association has included a link to this wiki on their Virtual Reference Annotated Bibliography.

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http://libproxy.uncg.edu:2424/ulrichsweb/Search/fullCitation.asp?tab=6&navPage=1&serial_uid=84310&issn=01604953

