

CCM tools: the wider context

One aspect of the CCM project has been to act as a focus for community discussion of issues relating to the regional and national context within which the CCM tools are used. These issues are being highlighted by the opportunities the facilities provide for assessing individual documents and collections more easily as well as in new ways. The following Leeds case study extract illustrates the way local collection management activity can give rise to wide ranging questions regarding the wider context within which that local activity is taking place, as well as the implications for local policy discussion.

The Leeds case study is available in full on the CCM project blog at: <http://copac.ac.uk/innovations/collections-management/>

Leeds case study 3: Detailed investigation of material selected for stock withdrawal (extract)

Leeds University Library nursing stock (classmark Health Sciences WY) was recently weeded as part of our ongoing cycle of 'stock editing'.

- ❖ A list was created in the Millennium Library Management System, containing all items at this classmark which hadn't been borrowed for 5 years
- ❖ The Faculty Team Librarian inspected the shelves with item list and made decisions to keep or withdraw based on the usual considerations, including:
 - item not used recently (already established)
 - content dated/no longer relevant to the department
 - poor academic quality
 - poor physical condition

As a result an initial set of 105 books were identified for withdrawal and disposal.

Case study using the Copac Tool to investigate the decisions

In order to understand the impact of our withdrawal decisions, and as part of our larger piece of work on assessing our collections, we decided to further investigate these 105 items using the Copac Tool and other catalogues.

Procedure:

1. We ran a file of ISBN numbers through the Copac Tool to create a profile of the 105 items (82 titles) which were selected for withdrawal. We decided to use 5 copies nationally as our cut off point, and further investigated the 24 titles in fewer than or equal to 5 libraries (including Leeds). We found:
 - ❖ 4 of the 24 books were in Leeds only
 - ❖ 6 were at Leeds + 1 other Copac library
 - ❖ 5 were at Leeds + 2 other Copac libraries
 - ❖ 6 were at Leeds + 3 other Copac libraries
 - ❖ 3 were at Leeds + 4 other Copac libraries

2. We looked at details of where these books were held, as shown in Copac. We supplemented this with WorldCat, in an attempt to see beyond UK research libraries and get an impression of the true national and global distribution of the books. We found that:
 - ❖ The rarest of the books was only in Leeds + 4 other libraries worldwide (incl. a UK public library and a non-Copac UK university), according to WorldCat
 - ❖ 2 of the books were in no UK library other than Leeds (according to WorldCat)
 - ❖ The most common of the books was in 722 libraries worldwide

However, this testing raised more questions than they gave answers, relating to the underlying reasons for carrying out pre-withdrawal checks and the mutual interdependencies of research collections as implied by these procedures. They are particularly pertinent within the context of developing a National Research Collection of Monographs.

Wider issues/questions raised by this test:

- ❖ How many holdings nationally do there have to be before we consider it 'safe' to withdraw an item?
- ❖ Should this be left to individual libraries to determine for themselves, or should there be an agreed 'safe minimum' shared by all research libraries aiming to contribute to a 'national research collection'?
- ❖ Can we assume an item is 'safe' if it is in a deposit library such as the British Library, Oxford or Cambridge, as opposed to an 'ordinary' Copac library?
- ❖ If the item is in a deposit library, is one copy nationally enough?
- ❖ If the item is not a UK publication, the deposit libraries are not obliged to keep it, so would it in that case be considered not 'safe'?
- ❖ What if a so-called 'safe' copy is in a poor physical condition? We need the proposed 583 field information to be widely implemented before we can assume one copy is 'safe'
- ❖ Might a book be in libraries in the UK other than Copac libraries, for example public libraries, specialist libraries or other university libraries; and if so, can these be considered 'safe' copies? These libraries are presumably not constrained by the notion of a 'national research collection'.
- ❖ If our copy of an item is the only one in the UK, but the book is widespread around the world, should we feel obliged to keep it?
- ❖ Does it matter which libraries hold overseas copies? Would a copy in the Library of Congress (or any other national library?) be considered 'safe', while a local public library copy somewhere would not?
- ❖ How much does the edition matter? Should we feel obliged to keep a copy of each edition of a work nationally, or only of the first and most recent editions (a common position for individual libraries)?

- ❖ What about items which may have lasting or quality academic interest to a readership outside the area it has been classed in? One of our 24 titles here is:

Poel, C. van der. 1998. *Sharing the journey : spiritual assessment and pastoral response to persons with incurable illnesses*. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press

It has been identified for withdrawal because it is no longer needed by nursing students, but it is the only copy in the UK and could be of lasting interest to other researchers/practitioners nationally.

- ❖ What do libraries do about rare items that are no longer relevant in the classmark/collection they form part of, where they may be an urgent need to save space? Would all libraries commit to finding space for them elsewhere, or would some libraries proceed with withdrawing them? The underlying questions are: how serious is the commitment to safeguard items, and do all staff who might undertake stock editing know about and feel bound by those commitments?