

WEEDING WITH THE CREW METHOD

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Presented for the Northeast, Central and Western MA Regional Library Systems

DEFINITION OF WEEDING (*Also known as culling or deselection*)

The process of removing books and other materials from the library's collection that are:

- In dilapidated physical condition
- Contain outdated or inaccurate information
- Otherwise do not fit in with the scope of the library's collection

Just as *gardens* are weeded **to prevent unwanted plants** from choking and inhibiting the growth of the useful plants growing there, *libraries* are weeded **to provide room** for the growing collection of materials.


CREW - Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding


(View *The CREW Method* online at www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/pubs/crew)


BEFORE WEEDING...

- ✓ **Evaluate** part or all of the collection
- ✓ **Become familiar with** the library's materials selection policy
- ✓ **Become familiar with** goals for the collection. (See sample goals statements)

ALSO CONSIDER:

 The library's roles in the community and resultant goals (*see Planning for Results service responses*)


 The library's long range plan

 The needs and demands of the library's community of users

How does a particular item relate to others on a subject?

\$\$\$\$ Available funds

Cooperative agreements with other libraries

 Is the library considered an archive or local history center?

WEEDING CRITERIA

WHAT SHOULD BE WEEDED?

- **Books and materials of poor content** (outdated and obsolete, trivial subject matter, mediocre writing style, inaccurate or false info., unused sets, repetitious series, superseded editions, not on standard lists, self-published materials, and materials with biased, sexist or racist views or terminology)
- **Books and materials of poor appearance** (materials that are worn out, ragged, poorly bound, poorly printed, shabby, with torn pages, soiled or mutilated, small print or poor quality pictures, scratched or brittle media, missing parts or pages, dated cover art)
- **Unused materials** (have not circulated in 3-5 years, duplicate copies, unindexed periodicals, unused volumes in sets or series)
- **Topics and formats no longer within the priorities of the collection** (unneded subjects, more books than are needed on a single subject, unused formats, subjects no longer of interest to the community)

Remember the MUSTIE Guidelines!

M	=	<u>M</u>isleading
U	=	<u>U</u>gly
S	=	<u>S</u>uperseded
T	=	<u>T</u>rivial
I	=	<u>I</u>rrelevant
E	=	May be obtained <u>E</u>lsewhere

Weeding Formula:

X/X/MUSTIE

1. Copyright date
2. Circulation

WEEDING CRITERIA (For All Materials)

- Date/Author
- Publisher
- Physical condition
- Additional copies
- Shelf-time
- Replacement expense
- Other books available
- Relevance of subject to the community

ADDITIONAL WEEDING CRITERIA (Juvenile and YA Materials)

- Format
- Reading level
- Current interest in subject matter
- Jacket art and illustrations
- Use in the school curriculum

ADDITIONAL WEEDING CRITERIA (Periodicals)

- Current use
- Circulating older titles
- Indexing available
- Space available
- Full-text availability in online databases

DO NOT WEED

- Local history
- Works by local authors
- Works with local settings
- Volumes of sets and series that have special merit
- Older reference volumes that augment editions

Weeding Responsibility

Although staff and volunteers may bring physically worn, outdated, and little used items to the attention of the library manager, *the library staff responsible for collection development should make the final judgment on what will be weeded.*

STEPS FOR WEEDING

PRELIMINARY STEPS

1. Make weeding a part of library policy
2. Read shelves
3. Check the library's holdings (inventory) - *May be done prior to or concurrent with weeding efforts.*

THE PROCESS

4. Gather usage statistics for the collection
5. Gather weeding tools:
 - corresponding shelf list drawer or computer printout
 - disposal slips or note pad
 - pen and shelf marker
 - the CREW manual
6. Examine the collection item by item; assign disposal slips to weeded items
7. Check weeded items against standard indexes

FOLLOWUP

8. Treat books according to their slips
9. Promote low circulating materials (displays)
10. Incorporate weeding into each year's routine (create a schedule)

WEEDING CHILDREN'S MATERIALS

TYPES OF MATERIALS

- **Juvenile Fiction** – *Be ruthless! Popular interest is the primary criteria*
- **Young Adult Fiction** – *Teens often prefer paperbacks or Playaways*
- **Picture Books** (easy readers) – *Evaluate on the merit of story and illustrations*
- **Nonfiction** – *Outdated materials should be discarded; don't be caught in the "anything is better than nothing" trap!*

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Simplified Classics (abridgements)** – *Evaluate carefully for quality writing and illustrations*
- **Series Books** – *Consider all genres, including beginning readers and nonfiction; keep up with series order*
- **Older Titles** – *Shabby or worn titles should be discarded; replace older award winners with newer editions*
- **Older Editions** – *Replace with newer, more attractive editions*
- **Geography** – *Titles more than 5 years old may be misleading and inaccurate*
- **Science, Medicine and Inventions** – *Topics change rapidly! Discard if more than 10 years old*
- **Text Books** – *Do not include unless there is strong support from the community*

Limited budgets make it impossible to develop extensive children's collections. Instead, concentrate on "best books" lists featured in library literature

WEEDING REFERENCE MATERIALS

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Weed older editions *when superceded*
- Evaluate materials periodically
- Different replacement schedules
- Consider different formats:
 - ✓ Print resources
 - ✓ Websites
 - ✓ Databases
 - ✓ Microforms

TYPES OF MATERIALS

Almanacs

- Rarely useful after two years
- Older editions may be retained for historic research (depending on the needs of the community)
- Should be updated annually
- Older editions can be transferred to the circulating collection, then discarded each year

Examples: *World Almanac and Book of Facts, Information Please Almanac*

Dictionaries

- Unabridged dictionaries may be retained indefinitely (unless worn from use and replaceable with the same edition)
- Specialized dictionaries (e.g., abbreviations, slang, acronyms) should be updated regularly
- Older editions can be retained and added to the circulating collection

Examples: *Random House Unabridged Dictionary, Merriam-Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, Dictionary of Synonyms (special), Dictionary of Native American Art (subject)*

Encyclopedias

- Considered outdated after five years
- May be added on a rotating schedule (e.g., purchase *World Book* in year 1 and *Britannica* in year 3 or 4)
- Should be supplemented with online and CD-ROM formats when possible (e.g. www.worldbookonline.com offers full text access to editions dating back to 1922 for \$49.95/year per workstation)

Directories

- Normally discarded when newer editions arrive
- Several years' worth may be retained if space permits and usage warrants
- Exceptions to this rule are city directories and local telephone books—these may be useful for genealogical research and can be kept indefinitely (Note: they should be housed separately from the current editions)

Examples: telephone books, *Official Congressional Directory*

Atlases

- Geographical atlases should be replaced when updated (usu. revised every 5 years)
- Older editions may still be useful to historians, **but** these should be housed separately (most patrons will not check the copyright date, assuming that the library has provided the most current information)
- Relatively inexpensive road atlases can be replaced annually

Handbooks

- Subjects in the humanities (music, art, literature) may be retained indefinitely and supplemented with newer texts
- Social science reference tools are considered outdated after ten years (outmoded theories and practices are usually revised in this period)
- Notable exceptions containing significant historical data are *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* and *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*
- Science resources are generally outdated in five years
- Exception: texts on botany and natural history can be retained for longer periods

Examples: *Peterson's Guide to Birds of North America*, *Oxford Companion to...*, Bible and Shakespeare concordances

Indexes

- Most print indexes have been replaced by online databases (e.g., EBSCO's *Masterfile Index*)
- Print indexes may still be useful for locating citations in older periodicals
- Older editions of *Granger's Index to Poetry* can be kept if they contain out of print volumes retained by the library

WEEDING NONBOOK MATERIALS

CONSIDERATIONS:

- The market often drives purchasing decisions
- High use = high damage
- Primary weeding criteria are user demand and physical condition

TYPES OF MATERIALS

Compact Disks (CDs) and DVDs – *Evaluate on currency, usage, physical condition, duplication and alternative formats*

Videocassettes – *Adult movie titles are no longer available; phase out as they become damaged and demand lessens*

Audiocassettes – *New titles are only available through donations and aftermarket sellers, such as eBay; weed titles that have not circulated in over a year and as they become damaged and difficult to replace*

Video Games – *Weed platforms no longer available for purchase, damaged items*

Book/Tape Sets (Juvenile) – *Use the same criteria for juvenile books; replace lost audiocassettes or add books to the collection*

Websites – *Links on the library's webpage should be reviewed and evaluated often*

Equipment – *Keep as long as there is user demand and formats are retained*

Phonograph Records – *May be making a comeback! Weed any records that have not circulated in the last two years*

Art Prints – *Weed any that have not circulated in the past year*

WHAT TO DO WITH WEEDDED MATERIALS

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| ▪ REBIND | ▪ PROMOTE | ▪ TRADE |
| ▪ MEND | ▪ SELL | ▪ RECYCLE |
| ▪ REPLACE | ▪ DONATE | ▪ DESTROY |

Think You May Have Something Valuable? Check:

Alibris (www.alibris.com)

Bibliofind (www.bibliofind.com)

Powell's Books (www.powells.com)

Bookfinder (www.bookfinder.com)

REASONS FOR WEEDING “*Don’t these books have historical value?*”

TO SAVE SPACE--relieves overcrowded shelves; removes the illusion of a well stocked library

TO SAVE TIME OF USERS AND STAFF--improves access and availability; improves efficiency

TO MAKE THE COLLECTION MORE APPEALING--increases circulation; increases level of service

TO ENHANCE THE LIBRARY’S REPUTATION FOR RELIABILITY AND UP-TO-DATEDNESS--maintains credibility

TO PROVIDE A CONTINUOUS CHECK ON THE NEED FOR REPAIRS

TO PROVIDE CONSTANT FEEDBACK ON THE COLLECTION’S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

OBSTACLES TO WEEDING

- 🔒 **PROCRASTINATION** – *I'll get to it one of these days...*

- 🔒 **STAFF RESISTANCE**

- 🔒 **NEGATIVE REACTIONS OF USERS 🗑️ & ADMINISTRATION**

- 🔒 **RELUCTANCE TO ADMIT SELECTION MISTAKES** (*Oops!*)

- 🔒 **TIME CONSUMING** – *now WHEN was I supposed to get to it?*

- 🔒 **COST** \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

- 🔒 **“SACREDNESS” OF THE LIBRARY COLLECTION**

- 🔒 **FEAR**

- 🔒 **SOMETHING IS BETTER THAN NOTHING** – *Isn't it?*

OTHER WEEDING ISSUES

🕒 TIME FRAMES

🗒 FREQUENCY (all at once vs. a little at a time)

👥 SHARING THE PROCESS (weeding “bees,” asking for advice)

SUNLINK WEED OF THE MONTH CLUB ARCHIVES

(www.sunlink.ucf.edu/weed/)

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Arizona State Library Collection Development tutorial
www.lib.az.us/cdt/weeding.aspx

Idaho State Library Alternative Basic Library Education (ABLE) Program
Libraries.Idaho.gov/page/alternative-basic-library-education-able



Start weeding today! It's NEVER too late!