



New Selectors and Selecting in New Subjects: Meeting the Challenges

Selector as Entrepreneur

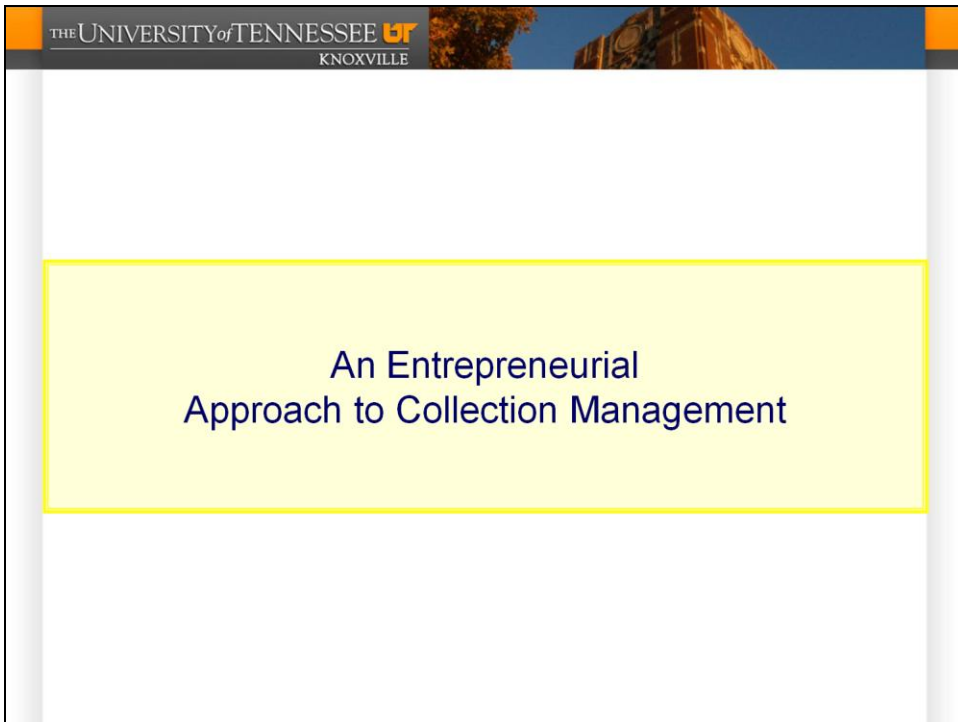
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Association for Library Collections & Technical Services
Collection Management and Development Section

Thank you, Harriet and Ginger, for asking me to present the perspective of a seasoned collection manager as we explore traditional collection development challenges and opportunities for selectors and liaisons in a rapidly changing world. The title, Selector as Entrepreneur, may be a bit overstated.



Entrepreneur in the business sense applies to someone who, according to the *OED*, undertakes an enterprise; one who owns and manages a business; a person who takes the risk of profit or loss. I'm using entrepreneur to convey a spirit of independence where selectors and liaisons take responsibility for their training and invent customized collection development practices that connect clientele with desired information in our digital universe.



Libraries have become digital. Despite huge legacy print collections, ongoing print purchases, and numerous borrowers of print, we must approach collection development in a digital framework. In the next few minutes I will describe an entrepreneurial approach for today's practice of collection development in the digital library framework.

- ***Embrace the digital transition***
- ***Learn collection management functions at your library and get acquainted with your clientele***
- ***Take action to***
 - ***curate resources in the aggregate***
 - ***foster creation of scholarship***
 - ***promote open access***
 - ***exploit networked information systems***

I'll attempt to characterize some current thinking about the digital transition, describe several enduring collection management facets for new selectors to master, and suggest a few entrepreneurial approaches to collection building and liaison for selectors and their leaders. I'm using collection development and management interchangeably, defining collection as all the resources libraries make available to our users—items purchased, locally created or reformatted digital materials, subject guides, social networking tools, and content that's freely accessible in digital collections around the world.

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Librarians will have to...

- Take an active role in creating scholarly publications
- Assert professional principles for free and unbiased access to knowledge
- Understand and fully exploit the potential of the “local” and “immediate.”

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The Changing Nature of Collection Management in Research Libraries
Joseph Branin, Frances Groen, and Suzanne Thorin

23

Nearly a decade ago, *Library Resources & Technical Services* (LRTS) published a landmark article by Joe Branin, Frances Groen and Suzanne Thorin in January, 2000. “The Changing Nature of Collection Management in Research Libraries” proved to be an amazingly accurate prediction about the landscape of collection development in the digital age.

The authors recognized the transformational nature of technology not just on the library, but on its host institution. Because of the library’s centrality to research and learning, a digital world, argued Branin and colleagues, requires librarians to create new and expanded roles for themselves in the scholarly communications system.

“Librarians will have to play a much more active role in the creation of scholarly publications, whatever new multimedia and hyperlinked form those publications might take. They will have to assert aggressively their professional principles for free and unbiased access to the world of knowledge in the face of trends to commercialize and restrict access to information. Perhaps the most critical and difficult task facing knowledge managers will be to understand and fully exploit the potential of a networked, digital information system to overcome the narrower perspective of the ‘local’ and the ‘immediate.’



Ultimate Collection Development Goal:



**Freely accessible, integrated, and
comprehensive record of serious
scholarship and knowledge**

“In the twenty-first century, knowledge management librarians just may achieve an ultimate goal: a freely accessible, integrated, and comprehensive record of serious scholarship and knowledge.”

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Sandler



Campbell



Atkinson



Lewis

- **Complete migration from print to electronic collections.**
- **Accelerate transition to digital publishing.**
- **Retire legacy print collections as trusted digital archives become available.**

These themes would be eloquently echoed in subsequent writing by Mark Sandler, Jerry Campbell, Ross Atkinson, David Lewis, and others throughout this first decade of the new millennium. I'm completely invested in their collective vision that includes goals such as the following: **[See handout]**



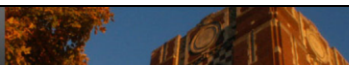
Goals for the 21st century collections librarian

- **Divide responsibilities among research libraries for archiving print.**
- **Develop strategies for reappropriating the content that libraries have purchased, but that resides on publishers' servers.**
- **Define core titles comprising each subject area so libraries can collectively divide responsibilities for collecting different advanced materials.**
- **Redevelop the library as an informal learning space and provide quality learning space.**



More goals for the contemporary collection manager...

- **Embed resources and expertise into systems and tools that students and faculty use in their daily lives.**
- **Reposition library tools, resources, expertise.**
- **Offer virtual reference service.**
- **Teach information literacy.**
- **Subject specialists focus on customizing and marketing collections held elsewhere, rather than on building generic onsite collections.**



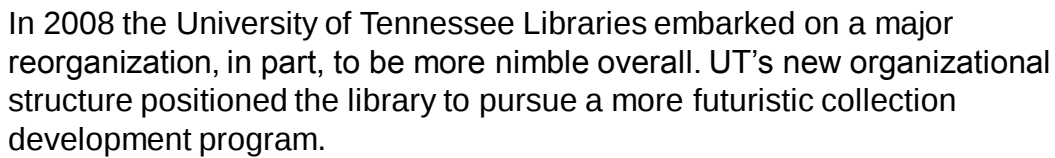
Recognize the inevitability of this transition and embrace it.

- **Become less attached to producers of commercial content and more attuned to the needs of those who consume it.**
- **Library specialists help to build portals and virtual collections that reflect widely varying understandings of a subject corpus.**
- **Migrate from purchasing materials to curating content, including open access content. A growing body of evidence shows that authors increase the impact of their articles when they are available through an open access mechanism.**
- **Subject librarians assist and support faculty to create and collect digital content.**

- **Repurpose resources that are now used to purchase materials.**
- **Collect and digitize archival content.**
- **Maintain digital repositories.**
- **Establish alternative channels of scholarly communication.**



Considered together, these goals form an exciting and coherent digital agenda for collection librarians. We have yet to create the internal organization in libraries and supporting programs in our professional associations to pursue this agenda, though many librarians recognize the goals as fundamental to achieving “a freely accessible, integrated, and comprehensive record of serious scholarship and knowledge.”





University of Tennessee Libraries Collection-Related Goals



- Emphasize liaison with academic departments and special programs.
- Expand unique local digital collections & services (e.g. IR, digital publishing).
- Add freely accessible web content to collections.
- Increase resource selection in the aggregate.





UT establishes publishing service to showcase and preserve campus scholarship, creativity

Dean of Libraries, Barbara Dewey, has asked librarians to emphasize liaison with academic departments and special programs. Further, UT plans to expand unique local digital collections and services through digital publishing; add freely accessible web content to our collections; and increase selection in the aggregate. UT librarians are grappling with the most practical ways to incorporate new goals into our collection development work. On one level we continue traditional liaison to academic departments with instruction, reference service, and selection. There are subtle changes, however. Besides selecting individual items, we're buying more books in the aggregate through approval plans and digital collections, and journals in the aggregate through big deal packages. E-resource selections incorporate consideration of several access issues. We're formally exploring ways to expand our virtual library. As our digital agenda evolves, I believe we'll continue to pursue several traditional collection development tasks that new selectors will need to master.

Enduring Collection Management Practices

- **Library policy development**
- **Collection budget management**
- **Resource selection**
- **Location/retention decisions**
- **Collection assessment**
- **Communication with vendors, publishers, and library clientele**



Library policy, collection budget management, and communication with vendors, publishers, and library users inform a selector's work. Collection work is and will continue to be a highly collaborative library function. Besides providing liaison to several departments in one or more colleges and interdisciplinary centers and programs, collection librarians are involved with nearly every function in the library from information service to technical support.



While a new selector may feel overwhelmed by the breadth of responsibilities, training a new colleague can be equally daunting for a supervisor who has so much to teach while attending to ongoing commitments. The new selector who learns collection development practices independently, as well as from the supervisor, will soon be performing routine tasks and ready to begin thinking like an entrepreneur. I offer you the following strategies for learning collection development at the local level in any discipline.

Collection Policies Official, Anecdotal, Implied

- **Read materials related to collection policies and practices on library web site and in paper files.**
- **Talk with colleagues for anecdotal information about local CD philosophy.**
- **Understand the rationale driving collection policies and procedures.**

Learn the library's explicit and implied collection policies. The library's collection policies and practices, written and unwritten, provide the context for your work. Read materials on the library's website and other historical files related to the subject areas of your responsibility. Talk with colleagues about the recent past and listen for anecdotal information that may help you develop an understanding of the library's philosophy about collections. Try to understand the rationale for library policy and procedure.

Budget Savvy

- **Find out the amount of your budget and the library's expectations for accountability.**
- **Discover how your library makes selection and retention decisions for database subscriptions.**
- **Get your mind around the recordkeeping and reporting about collection encumbrances and expenditures.**
- **Study a complete year of collection reports.**
- **Predict your needs. Justify requests for more money.**

Find out what your budget is and the library's expectations for accountability. Discover how your library makes selection and retention decisions for database subscriptions as well as one-time purchases that often come with an ongoing maintenance fee. Get your mind around the recordkeeping and reporting. Learn to distinguish encumbrances and expenditures. Study a complete year's report of this information, particularly end-of-year summaries, to predict your needs and to justify requests for more (or less) money.



Collection Financial Practices

- **Learn your library's strategy for managing cost increases.**
- **Find out if you will receive funds to supplement your collection allocation.**
- **Determine if you are expected to cancel subscriptions to stay within budget.**

Learn your library's strategy for managing cost increases, especially if you are responsible for selecting and managing journals and other serials. You may receive an annual supplement to your collection allocation, or you may be expected to cancel subscriptions to stay within the same budget from year to year. Nearly all libraries expect collection managers to spend no more than the money allocated.

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Liaison: Your Top Priority

Through relationships with faculty and others, you ...



- Build trust
- Make wise collection decisions
- Offer instruction at the right time
 - Gain access to students
- Solicit content for the digital repository
- Answer questions about:
 - ~ instructional design
 - ~ research
 - ~ scholarly publishing
 - ~ intellectual property.

Get to know your clientele, their information needs, their search preferences, and their culture in general. Liaison may be your most important responsibility: through relationships with faculty and other constituents, you build trust and learn what you need to know to make wise collection decisions, offer instruction and programming at the right time, gain access to students, to solicit content for the digital repository, and answer faculty questions about instructional design, research, scholarly publishing and intellectual property. Collaboration with faculty is key to truly enhancing teaching and research on campus.

Collection Development: A Highly Social Activity

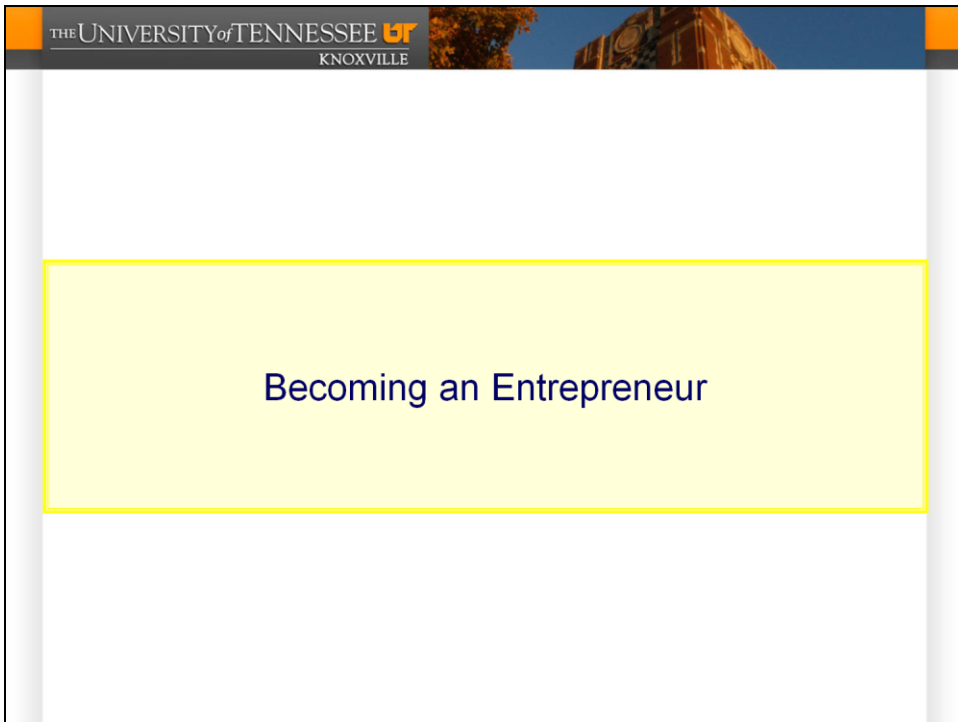


- **Get acquainted with materials vendors and publishers.**
- **Help faculty and students understand publishing trends and economics.**

Collection development is a highly social activity. You'll interact with nearly every library department and become acquainted with materials vendors and publishers. Increasingly, selectors help faculty and graduate students understand publishing trends and economics.



You will be asked by faculty or students in your subject areas about intellectual property issues. While you may consult experienced colleagues, being knowledgeable about the basics of SPARC and its author's addendum, Create Change options, the existence of Creative Commons licenses, and the NIH mandate for open access publishing will enhance your credibility with scholars.



As you master local collection development practices, you'll observe many ways technology can connect your clientele with information they need. After all, this is the enduring goal of collection building, and the digital environment stimulates entrepreneurs. Fortunately, most of us are not in a situation envisioned by Jerry Campbell who, several years ago, fantasized about relieving all the Duke University reference librarians of their duties so they could reinvent a meaningful service portfolio.



Don't become marginal!



However, if we do not actively direct our energies toward digital library goals, selectors and subject librarians may become increasingly marginalized.

Entrepreneurship = Initiative

Selector/Liaison Job Description

- **Deliver resources and services online.**
- **Synthesize and aggregate digital resources.**
- **Help create new publications.**
- **Wed print collection management to new storage and electronic access and delivery options.**
- **Maintain and preserve the record of knowledge.**

A single distinguishing quality of entrepreneurship is initiative. An entrepreneur incorporates the local library culture and priorities in linking individual goals to the distributed learning and research environment of the assigned disciplines. The job description for selectors and liaisons in the digital library is to:

Deliver resources and services online

Synthesize and aggregate digital resources

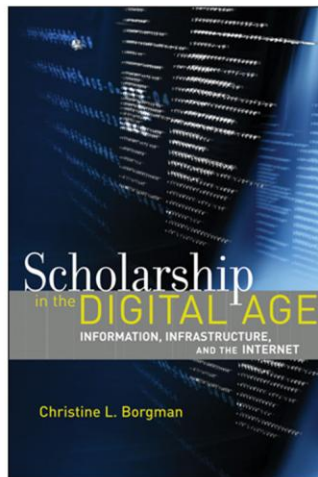
Help create new publications

Wed print collection management to new storage and electronic access and delivery options

Maintain and preserve the record of knowledge

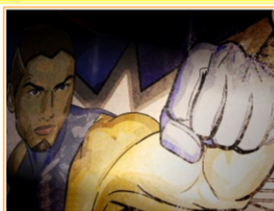
Here are some ideas for approaching these tasks in an entrepreneurial way:

Read Christine Borgman's *Scholarship in the Digital Age* to understand different disciplines and the big picture of information technology.



Read Christine Borgman's *Scholarship in the Digital Age* (MIT Press, 2007) to appreciate how far libraries have come toward being digital and the importance of developing a digital library infrastructure. Reflect on the diverse cultures of scholarly disciplines.

Selector as Entrepreneur



- **Learn about the discipline of your clientele.**
- **Participate in at least two disciplinary-related programs each semester.**
- **Devise a plan to include open access resources in the collection.**
- **Encourage researchers to consider open access publishing.**

Learn as much as you can about the disciplines you serve. Find out who is publishing and the subjects of their research. Where are they publishing; where does their data reside; what are the applications for their research; and how are they involving students in their projects?

Participate in at least two disciplinary-related programs with faculty and students each semester. These may be departmental research seminars, conferences sponsored by a department, thesis/dissertation defenses, departmental meetings, or community-wide lectures or performances.

Formulate a plan, in collaboration with at least a segment of your clientele, for improving access to scholarly resources freely available via the internet. High quality open access resources exist that would enhance your library's collection. How can you make them visible?

Each semester encourage at least a half dozen authors to review the SPARC Author's Addendum or consider open access journals or amend publication contracts to enable inclusion of the final manuscript in a digital repository.

Actions such as these will make you central to the digital library collection development agenda. You will become a well-informed and well-connected subject librarian with the insights and experience to deliver online services and content, to synthesize and aggregate digital resources, create new publications, connect print and electronic collections, and preserve them. Being where your users are makes you visible to them. Being engaged in their world will stimulate your imagination to build a more robust, integrated collection than clientele may ever think to request.

Supervisors of Entrepreneurs



- **Encourage risk-taking.**
- **Celebrate accomplishments.**
- **Articulate a 21st century vision often.**
- **Lead discussions about research practices and discipline cultures.**
- **Encourage librarians to incorporate entrepreneurial activities into annual goals.**
- **Require annual reports that describe faculty research interests, campus initiatives, and selector's progress in building collection access to the universe of scholarly resources.**

Supervisors who wish to encourage entrepreneurial selectors can initiate one-to-one and group discussions about disciplinary research practices and cultures. Consider encouraging librarians to incorporate entrepreneurial activities into their annual goals. Require annual reports that describe research interests of clientele, campus initiatives in the subject area, and progress the selector is making to build a collection encompassing the universe of scholarly resources in a discipline. Promote imaginative approaches by thinking big, encouraging colleagues to take risks, celebrating accomplishments and learning from experiences. Articulate the vision for 21st century library collections often.

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Thank you for listening!

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The comments I've presented will soon be in the University of Tennessee's digital repository, Trace. If you should be a selector/liaison to an information science program, I'll appreciate your considering it for addition to your collection.