

Library and Collection Background

The collection evaluated belongs to the Starkville Public Library. The Starkville-Oktibbeha County Public Library System consists of three libraries. The Starkville Public Library serves as the main branch and houses Administrative and Technical Services as well as the Local History and Genealogical collection. It serves a population of 49,587 in Oktibbeha County. The library's collection development policy specifies a goal of providing a wide array of materials to serve SOCPLS patrons. The portion of the collection evaluated spans the call number range B ABA through B BUT. This range consists of one hundred and seven titles that are specifically biographies. The collection in this area is very dated, but the library has been working to update the section. The most recent title was published in 2019, but the oldest title was published in 1958. In addition, the librarians revealed to me that they were never allowed to weed the Biography section before because the old director believed "History doesn't change."

Evaluation Criteria

The collection was evaluated based on a combination of the SOCPLS's Collection Development Policy and the CREW's MUSTIE criteria. The SOCPLS's policy for removal includes worn, damaged, dated, and unused items. MUSTIE is an acronym for misleading, ugly, superseded, trivial, irrelevant, or elsewhere. The MUSTIE method overlaps with the SOCPLS's weeding policy in that anything damaged, dated, worn, or unused falls under the categories of ugly and irrelevant in the MUSTIE system. The first pass through the section was based on usage. The library director printed for me a list of books in the Biography section that have not been checked out once in the past 10 years. These were the first books removed from the shelf. The second pass through the section provided a more in depth evaluation of the books in the section.

Weeding Data

See attached excel sheet.

This table includes bibliographic information such as the title, author, call number, date of publication, and publisher. The table also includes the last time the book was checked out, how many times the book has been checked out over its lifetime at the library, and the day the book was added to the collection. Finally, the table includes why the book is being weeded and what the final decision was for the book. Suggested replacement titles can be found under the heading “Replacement.”

Decision Narrative

The Starkville Public Library’s main concern was discarding books that were not being used. The director specifically wanted to dispose of any book that had not been checked out in the last 10 years. Therefore, for the first pass through the section, I removed every book that had not been checked out in over 10 years. These books were then checked to ensure they were not the only book the library had on the subject. If the library had other books on the subject, or if other books were available through the consortium, the book was discarded and given to the Friends of the Library to sell or give away. If the book was the only book available at the library on the subject, it was put back in the collection.

During the second pass through the section, I checked each book that remained to ensure they were not damaged or worn. I also checked to see how many times the book had been checked out in its lifetime. I had two finds that were my favorite. I found a book that had been shoved behind

the shelf. It had been left out of the last probably several inventories and was filled with spider eggs. Another one I found was Hans Christian Andersen and His World, it was purchased before 1972. Was put in the digital catalogue in 1972 and has been checked out 6 times in 49 years.

The library's priorities were updating the section. Therefore, replacements were suggested based on this priority using Goodreads as a guide. If a book had a newer version, the newer version was suggested for purchase. If the book did not have a newer version, but another book on the same subject could provide up to date information, the newer book was suggested for purchase. Finally, if no new version nor any newer book was able to be found, books suggested for purchase came from Amazon's list of the top best selling biographies.

Conclusion

The most difficult part of this project was tying in what the library wanted with what the requirements for the project were. The Starkville Library's weeding policy is straightforward. They simply wanted me to pull any books that had not been used in 10 years. The entire biography section has hundreds of books that have been sitting on the shelves for decades. Those books need to be pulled first before the library do a more indepth weeding based on the MUSTIE method.

Bibliography

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