

## Book Reviews

**Book title:** Collection Development Policies: Academic, Public, and Special Libraries

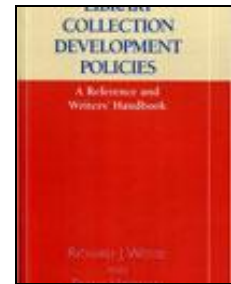
**Type:** book

**Author:** Hoffmann, Frank W & Wood, Richard J

**ISBN:** 0810851806

**Publisher:** Scarecrow Press

**Publisher's Description:** Hoffmann (library science, Sam Houston State University) and Wood (director of libraries, U. of South Alabama, Mobile) compile a guide for students and librarians on collection practices, incorporating issues and methods spawned by the internet and electronic publishing.



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**Reviewer:** Sheila Corral (*University of Sheffield*)

**Book Rating:** 3/5

### Review

Although promoted as the first title in a new series, this volume is in effect a revised and expanded version of the authors' Library collection development policies: a reference and writers' handbook (1996). Like its predecessor, it aims to provide comprehensive guidance to librarianship students and practitioners on the compilation of collection policies by examining their key elements and rationale, using real-world examples as illustrations. The book has two parts: chapters 1-26 deal with 25 different components of collection development policies and chapters 27-31 deal with policies for electronic resources or 'virtual collection development'. The authors are respectively a library science professor and a university library director (in the United States ).

Part one discusses the content of each policy component in turn, drawing on professional literature (mainly textbooks on collection development) and giving examples of contemporary policy extracts from different types of academic, public and special libraries. The vast majority of examples come from North America , with the rest of the world represented by an Australian state library, one New Zealand public library and just two UK institutions – the National Art Library (Victoria and Albert Museum ) and National Library of Wales – among the 84 libraries listed in the inventory of policies used. The examples mentioned point to another weakness in coverage, namely the limited, even peculiar, interpretation of the term 'special library' in this book, which includes national, state and specialist college libraries, but no examples from the private sector (for example, industrial or commercial organisations).

Part two adopts a different arrangement and approach, with a chapter on 'Policy components for online electronic resources' contributed by another author, Jane Pearlmuter, and policy extracts placed in a separate chapter, rather than being interspersed with discussion. The two remaining chapters discuss 'recent issues' not covered in the policies examined (such as 'big deals', embargoes, e-books and digital rights management) and resource sharing in the digital age.

The text concludes with two appendices, a bibliography and an index. Appendix A provides an A-Z list of

libraries whose policies have been excerpted, while Appendix B contains a list of 26 American Library Association intellectual freedom documents, of which 23 are reproduced in full. The former is useful, but the need to devote 38 pages to the latter is questionable, especially given their availability on the web. The four-page bibliography lists many more items than are cited in the text, but it was disappointing to find the most recent reference was 2002 and only nine of the 64 items were published in 2000 or later. The index runs to eight pages, but a quick check revealed gaps and lapses: important concepts discussed in the narrative (for example, censorship and filtering) were missing and the choice of terms indexed was often surprising (for example, 'cooperative storage', but not 'storage'; 'publisher or other partnerships', but not 'partnerships').

Despite its evident shortcomings, this book is a useful niche contribution to the field of collection management and could serve as a primer for students and practitioners tasked with developing or revising a collection policy. The use of separate chapters for different policy elements makes it easy to use as a reference work, but the outdated bibliography (which includes several superseded editions) significantly reduces its academic value and professional credibility.

## About the Reviewer

Professor of Librarianship & Information Management

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