

# **Collection Development Policy of the Schurz Library Reference Department**

## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Purpose**

The reference collection development policy statement is a guideline for the acquisition, maintenance and evaluation of reference materials in the Schurz Library reference collection.

### **B. Institution and Clientele Served**

The reference collection of the Schurz Library is a resource for the patrons of the library, as well as a rich source of information for reference librarians to use when answering library user's questions. The primary users are the students, faculty, librarians and staff of IUSB. Reference works are intended to be consulted for relatively short periods of time; and many are complex enough that patrons require some assistance in their use. This reference collection is the nucleus of the Schurz library collection. Reference materials and reference service are available to all of the patrons of Schurz library.

### **C. Mission Statement of the Reference Collection Management and Development Program**

The goal of the reference collection management and development activities is to acquire and maintain, in various formats, the reference information resources necessary to support the scholarly and teaching mission of the campus. Reference resources are defined as materials which are intended to be consulted for short periods of time, and not read in their entirety. Therefore, in order to maximize access to these resources, the collection is non-circulating. In addition, because of the complexity of many of these materials, the reference desk is located within the reference collection so that the reference librarians can easily assist in the use of these materials.

### **D. Intellectual Freedom, Censorship and Copyright**

In selecting and retaining works for the reference collection, the Schurz Library personnel adheres to the principles of intellectual freedom. In addition, the collection development staff avoids censorship in the collection. These principles are advocated by the ALA. It is important that the reference collection be timely, accurate and unbiased. The Schurz library also adheres to all applicable copyright law.

### **E. Brief Overview of the Collection**

*1. History* - The Schurz Library reference collection developed in conjunction with the general collection. Reference works are updated on a regular basis, in order to remain in synchrony with the overall collection.

2. *Broad Subject Areas* - The major subject areas emphasized in the reference collection are those of the university curricula. In addition, there are a number of basic reference works in areas not emphasized in the general collection which provide background information on those areas.

3. *Collection locations* - The Schurz Library Reference Collection is housed on the main floor of the Schurz Library. The reference desk is located in the reference room.

#### **F. Organization of the Collection Development Program**

1. *Staffing and responsibilities* - Collection development decisions are made by the Head of Reference in consultation with other librarians. Every effort is made to have a well-rounded reference collection. Materials are selected for inclusion in the reference collection based on content, rather than the format or value of the material. The Head of Reference reserves the right to place materials in either the reference collection, or the general collection based on principles of maximum utility to the largest number of patrons.

2. *Liaison with user groups* - The recommendations of faculty and the collection coordinators are given serious consideration.

#### **G. Budget Structure and Allocation Policy**

The budget for the reference materials comes from the library materials budget. Additionally, the Head of Reference will include some materials purchased with departmental allocations in the reference collection.

#### **H. Relationship to policies and programs for Collection Management**

1. *Preservation and Replacement* - Decisions on preservation of damaged materials and replacement of lost, stolen or damaged materials are based on use and condition of the materials, and of the availability of the information in the same or other formats. Because reference materials are the nucleus of the library collection, and many of the materials are critical for the academic mission of the campus, lost and damaged reference materials are replaced in as timely a manner as possible.

2. *Deselection* - Deselection is based on recommendations from the librarians, and on use, format and condition of materials. It is especially vital that the reference collection be regularly reviewed for outdated materials. These materials are discarded or moved to the general collection on a regular basis.

3. *Access* - There is access to the reference collection at all times the library is open. The reference collection is non-circulating.

### **II. General Collection Management and Development Policies**

## **A. Types of Publications**

1. Content - Inclusion in the reference collection is based on the content of the material, and its intended use, rather than its format. The number of potential users is a critical consideration when allocating finite resources to an expensive reference resource. In addition, the style and presentation of the material should not inhibit use of the material. The types of materials include:

a. Indexes: General and subject specific periodical indexes are included in the reference collection. Subject specific indexes are selected based on the depth of the periodical collection in that discipline. Broadly based indexes with a larger potential usage are generally selected over narrower indexes. Ease of use, cost, space, number of access points and alternative access through on-line searches are considered when selecting the format of an index.

b. Maps and atlases: A number of different types of atlases are collected which support the curricula of IUSB classes. The collection also includes national and international maps from the Government Printing Office and from National Geographic Magazine. In addition, the map collection includes basic and local maps and atlases to answer general reference questions.

c. Dictionaries and Gazeteers: A large selection of English language dictionaries is included in the reference collection, as well as foreign language dictionaries from several of the major European and world languages. In addition, discipline specific dictionaries and gazetteers are collected, when available, for subjects which support the curriculum. Other specialized dictionaries which enhance the general collection are included. For example, visual and acronym dictionaries are kept in the reference area.

d. Encyclopedias: General and subject specific encyclopedias are collected. Each year, a new edition of a major general encyclopedia is added to the collection.

e. Statistical resources: Statistical resources on a wide range of subject matters are collected. Special attention is paid to the source and the reliability of the data included in these reference works.

f. Government Publications: A selection of heavily used, mainly statistical, government publications are included in the reference collection. Most other government publications are housed in the government documents area.

g. Vertical file: The reference librarians maintain a small vertical file which contains ephemeral material of primarily local interest.

h. Handbooks: Those handbooks intended for ready reference, and not for lengthy perusal are included in the reference collection.

i. Directories: Directories of professional, business, government and education organizations, as well as select local and telephone directories are kept in the reference area. Additional telephone directories are available on-line from the Internet, or from other electronic sources.

j. Bibliographies: General bibliographies are housed in the reference collection. Bibliographies of specific subject areas are kept in the reference area if they are frequently used, or require some assistance to use.

k. Campus materials: Campus materials, including but not limited to: The Bulletin, the Indiana University Faculty/Staff Telephone Directory, the IUSB Faculty/Staff Directory, class schedules, campus events listings and the Update are kept in the reference area.

l. Handouts - The reference area also has a large collection of handouts including library guides, instructions and bibliographies. These handouts are available for patrons to take home.

2. Format - Primary emphasis is given to the content of reference resources, rather than the format. Printed, electronic and microform materials are included. Consideration is given to cost, ease of use, and access points when selecting a format.

The library collects only content-rich electronic resources. Preference is given to electronic formats which are compatible with hardware and software currently in use. The policies on electronic formats need to be updated frequently because of the rapid rate of change in this area. Therefore, a separate collection development policy informs decisions on electronic resources.<sup>1</sup>

The Schurz library values the Internet as an important source of information. Both public use, and reference access to the Internet is supported in the reference area. The library also maintains a homepage on the Internet which acts as a clearing house for many of its electronic reference services. Careful research is done to determine what resources are available on the Internet before including a equivalent source in another format in the reference collection.

## **B. Selection criteria**

Every effort is made to have a well-rounded, authoritative collection in the subject areas covered by the academic units on campus, and to have general works which should be a part of any standard collection. Preference is given to English language materials. Foreign language materials, other than those supporting the foreign language course work, are only considered when a comparable source is not available in English.

Timeliness of material is especially critical in reference works. Selectors of materials for the reference collection should be cognizant of recent developments in scholarship and global changes which necessitate the updating of reference materials. For most reference works, only the most recent are kept in the reference area. Works of potential historical usefulness may be transferred

to the general collection.<sup>ii</sup> The exceptions include indexes, in which the entire run is retained in reference.

In addition, it is imperative to maintain unbiased works in the reference collection. As much as possible, works which treat controversial subjects should represent all viewpoints in an unbiased manner.

The following criteria, in order of priority, are used to select materials:

1. Necessary for support of curricula
2. Works reviewed in standard guides for college libraries. Consideration is given to works deemed excellent for academic libraries by ARBA, BookList's Reference Book Bulletin, Library Journal and Choice Magazine. Consideration is also given to reference works published by prestigious academic publishing houses.
3. Quality of materials
  - a. Timeliness
  - b. Authoritativeness
  - c. Accuracy
  - d. Objectivity
  - d. Inclusion in recognized bibliographies
  - f. Projected use
  - g. Ease of use
  - h. Cost
  - i. Durability
4. Relevance to collection levels outlined in detailed analysis of the collection
5. Potential number of simultaneous users
6. Multiple access points
7. Necessary to answer frequently asked reference questions.

## **ENDNOTES**

---

i. Electronic collection development

ii. Weeding