Title

Article title: Assessing University Library Print Book Collections and Deselection: A Case Study at the National University of Ireland Maynooth
Running head: Assessment & Deselection of Print Books at NUIM

Abstract

This article discusses an assessment and deselection project of the modern print book collections in the John Paul II Library, National University of Ireland Maynooth. Following a contextual introduction and literature review, the article outlines the methodology, presents and discusses the results and concludes with lessons learnt. Although this project had its origins in planning for a major extension to the Library, its main aim was to ensure current and relevant print book collections. The purpose of the article is to share experience in the hope of it being useful to other libraries considering a review of print book collections.

1. Contextual Introduction

The National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM) is structured around three Faculties: Arts, Celtic Studies & Philosophy, Science & Engineering, and Social Sciences. These break down into 26 academic departments and 8 research institutes. The Faculty of Theology resides in St. Patrick's College, Maynooth (SPCM) on the same campus. The Library offers services to the staff and students (c.6,500 full-time and c.3.500 part-time) of both institutions and has a branch library on the outreach campus in Kilkenny. The collections date back to the establishment of SPCM in 1795. The manuscript, rare book and pre-1850 collections are held in the Russell Library. The main circulating collections are held in the John Paul II Library. Academic staff play a key role in the development of the collections through their acquisition requests.

While different sections of the modern collections have been assessed at various stages, the main circulating collections have not been assessed in their entirety since the opening of the John Paul II Library in 1984. In 2007/08, almost 40% of the main circulating collections accounted for all items borrowed which is consistent with research reported by Lugg and Fischer (2009). The need for deselection was highlighted in the Librarian's 2007/08 annual report (13). A planned new extension to the John Paul II Library was a major catalyst, not unusual in itself (Crosetto, Kinner, Duhon 2008 30), in moving this forward as expressed in the Library's Strategic Plan for 2009-2011 (3.1.2 17). Subsequently, a survey carried out in May, 2010 confirmed the need to improve the relevance of our collection (Librarian's Annual Report 2009/10 8).

A project proposal for the assessment and deselection of the post-1925 print book collections was approved by the Library Management Team in May 2009. The project's aim was to ensure that the collections would be as relevant as possible in advance of movement of stock as a result of the new extension. At that point, the timeline for the project was two years, the expected 'delivery date' of the new extension. A Steering Committee was set up consisting of the Librarian, the Deputy Librarian and the Librarian with responsibility for Collection

Management. In September 2009, a half-time Assistant Librarian, who reported to the Librarian with responsibility for Collection Management, was seconded to manage the project.

2. Literature Review

The electronic revolution has changed scholarly communication forever (ACRL Research Planning and Review Committee 2012; Hendrix 2010). In the migration from print to electronic, Lewis (2007 6) advises that "our legacy print collections will serve a different purpose and we need to manage them differently". The trend towards removing less used print material and repurposing space for new services (ACRL Research Planning and Review Committee 2010 289-90; Cox 2010 12) is an effort to stay relevant as the mission of libraries change (Lankes 2011 15-6, 157-8). Demas and Miller (2012 174-5) highlight the opportunity to "discard unprecedented amounts of materials" afforded by "the emergence of shared print and digital collections". The need for collaborative and cooperative access to and archiving of print collections is heightened as budgets continue to retract (Boyle 2011; Hazen 2010 119). Assessment of print collections is an essential prerequisite towards local, national and international collection management initiatives.

While core responsibilities of collection management practice that are ideally carried out regularly (Gregory 2011 113, Lambert 2002 21-2 5.1.4, Rogers 2007 9; Williams 1999 220), assessment and deselection are often driven locally by other factors such as requirements for more space (Pidgeon 1995 68; Reed & Erickson 1993 177; Williams 1999 213), budgetary restrictions (Fowles 2004 44) and accountability (Lewis 2007 422; Metz and Gray 2005 273/4; Slote 1997 7). The well-documented benefits of regular assessment and deselection of print collections (Larson 2012 15-6; Slote 1997 3-5; Vogler 2009) are often outweighed by the barriers, perceived or otherwise. These include the size of a collection as a performance indicator (Poole 2009 199; Signori 1985 279; Slote 1997 5), the emotional and political response (Harloe 1984; Manley 2003; Rogers 2007 8; Slote 1997 5-6), the emotional investment in the print collections (Demas & Miller 184), the "sacredness" of books in our culture (Goldberg 2011; Rogers 2007 8; Slote 1997 6), the traditional personality of librarians as collectors (Lonergan 2008 224, Manley 2003), time (Slote 1997 5), and uncertainty over criteria (Fisher 1984 29; Slote 1997 6). Rogers (2012) excellently narrates the angst involved in approaching assessment and deselection and the determination required to see it through in her blog, 'Attempting Elegance'.

Now in its 4th edition, Slote's *Weeding Library Collections: Library Weeding Methods* (1997) is the standard printed work on the topic. Slote (1997) gives extensive analyses of possible formulae for assessing material based on publication dates and circulation data and is a good background into the theoretical justification for the use of such data. In terms of the details of applying formulae, Larson's CREW (Continuous Review Evaluation and Weeding) method, revised and updated in 2012, is a useful and practical reference work, taking into account its US public library focus. It gives guidelines for broad Dewey areas and formulae based on publication date and circulation data.

A key message highlighted in the literature is the issue of communicating the project to relevant stakeholders (Harloe 1984; Lugg 2 Jan. 2012; Metz & Gray 2005; Pidgeon 1995; Rogers 2007 8-9; Williams 216-7). Metz & Gray (2005) deal with this very comprehensively,

listing clear criteria, flexibility, and a quick response to concerns as part of an overall strategy. Harloe (1984 266-7) and Williams (1999 217) recommend involving the academic staff in the assessment process. Some libraries are now using their websites (Crumb and Crane Libraries at SUNI Potsdam 2012) and blogs (Wesleyan University Library) very effectively to communicate their deselection projects.

A useful synopsis of assessment and deselection appears in the recently published *Collection Development and Management for 21st Century Library Collections* by Vicki Gregory (2011 113-129). The ALA Weeding Library Collections fact sheet (2012) and the Sustainable Collection Services Knowledge-Base (Lugg, et al 2011-) provide extensive references on collection assessment and deselection.

3. Methodology

It was agreed that a pilot project would be undertaken in Computer Science to develop and test a methodology. Computer Science was chosen as it is a modern science subject that is developing and growing very rapidly and some deselection had already been carried out. Researching the deselection/retention criteria, refining the generation of deselection lists, informing and updating stakeholders and the detailed preparation of the methodology all took place during the pilot phase. The resulting methodology was used throughout the project as a template for other subjects and adjusted according to each subject's parameters. It included a checklist for assessing material and was also used as a training guide. Academic staff were initially informed of the need to assess and deselect the print collections by the Librarian's presentations on the 2007/08 Annual Report and the Strategic Plan 2009-2011 made to Academic Council and the Academic Support Services Committee.

The methodology can largely be divided into three broad action areas – list generation, assessment and record amendment & removal of deselected material as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – Methodology workflow

3a. List generation

A combination of the age of the material and the borrowing history were used to create initial deselection lists. Each subject was researched to determine an appropriate cut-off publication date and last borrowed date. This was approved by the Librarian with responsibility for Collection Management.

The Library uses the Dewey Decimal Classification System. The Library Management System, Aleph's Reporting Centre (ARC) was used to generate a list of items based on broad Dewey classes and filtered by publication date and last borrowed date. Pre-1925 material was filtered out at this stage as this material was being assessed in a separate project for Special Collections. Recent acquisitions were also filtered out at this stage. The resulting list was exported to Excel where it could be easily sorted and formatted to requirements. Lists were sorted by author for easier assessment by academic staff and sent electronically.

Before lists were sent out, academic departments were given advance notice by email. The email included a link to the Library's Collection Development Policy (2001). Depending on feedback, presentations were made to library representatives (each academic department has a library representative), academic departments or faculty. The presentation addressed the two most common concerns: the incorporation of in-library (i.e. non borrowed) usage and the implications for cognate subjects. The deselection criteria were outlined and assurances given that material identified for retention by the academic staff would be retained. This mirrors the very active role academic staff have in the selection process. Details were also given about where the deselected material went and academic departments were invited to highlight deselected material they might like to retain locally.

Following the pilot, it was decided to approach the project faculty by faculty, and to complete the deselection of Science before progressing to the Social Sciences. An advantage of this approach was that the area likely to yield the highest percentage of deselected material (i.e. the Sciences) would be completed first. Completing one faculty would be a milestone achievement and could demonstrate the careful methodology to other faculties. Where possible, lists were sent to academic departments within a faculty concurrently. This allowed the Library to address the issue of cognate subjects and interdisciplines (Gregory 2011 114-5). For example, relevant sections in the 330s were previewed by the Department of Sociology as well as the Department of Economics. In addition, it helped to manage the workflow as academic departments responded within different time periods.

3b. Assessment

Initially, material was assessed at the shelves prior to sending lists to the relevant academic department. This approach was taken to avoid giving lengthy lists to academic departments which might have been a disincentive to engage with the process. The drawback of course was that some material had to be assessed again based on feedback from the relevant academic department. This was reviewed upon completion of the Sciences, with a view to accelerating the process for the Social Sciences as there was concern about reaching the project's target end date. Following the review, it was decided to send deselection lists to academic departments in advance of any assessment by the Library. This approach proved far more efficient and the positive level of engagement was encouraging. The main advantage was in having departmental feedback to hand when assessing the material at the shelves.

It was necessary to allow 4 to 8 weeks for academic staff to review the lists. Ideally the list would be collectively annotated in electronic format. When returned, the lists could then be resorted into location number order for examination at the shelves. They were then printed and bound and became the 'bible' on which all subsequent work was based. The lists were printed in an eco-friendly font, Century Gothic (Cattermole 2010), and were ring-bound as the best on-campus solution for ease of use and preservation.

When assessing material at the shelves consideration was given to the following criteria in conjunction with annotations from academic staff:

- Relevance to the curriculum
- Standard or seminal work
- Historical or archival interest
- Literary and artistic value
- Provenance – bookplates, inscriptions, signatures, annotations
- Authored or edited by a past or current member of NUIM or SPCM staff
- National interest – material in the Irish language, authored by an Irish person, published in Ireland
- Local interest
- Candidate for Special Collections – limited edition, binding, private press, pamphlet, ephemera
- History of the collection – founding collections and bequests, older location stamps
- Multiple copies – Whereas, single copy titles were deselected, at least one copy of multiple copy titles was retained
- Editions Not all editions were necessarily retained. Assessment was complicated by reprints with corrections, extended or combined versions and significant changes between editions
- Condition – best physical condition, hardback in preference to paperback, presence of accompanying material where appropriate

A decision was made at the outset that checking electronic availability would be beyond the remit of the project. However, surrogates and monetary value were occasionally checked out to ensure correct choices were being made where any doubt existed. The use of citation analysis as an assessment tool (Gregory 2011 117) was considered. Due to the wealth of information already gathered and the impracticality of using citation analysis in a project of this size, it was not utilised. Ephemera found in books were noted for Special Collections. Material was assessed at the shelves using the printed rather than the electronic version of the list. Apart from the fact that sockets were in short supply and were not conveniently located, it was felt that consistency and evaluation would be much easier to manage using the printed list.

Items being deselected were highlighted in blue or green on the list to differentiate between records where all items were being deselected, typically single copy titles and records where only some were being deselected, typically multiple copy titles. This information was needed at the record amendment stage. The list was annotated with very brief notes for items being retained. Where items were not on the shelves at the time of the assessment, the list was annotated accordingly. No further search was made for these items. Any item being deselected was labelled with a yellow label and returned to the shelves. This facilitated

monitoring of in-library usage (Lugg 17 Apr. 2012) prior to removal and easy review of deselected items. It also served as a storage space until deselected items were removed and enabled easy identification for staff removing them from the shelves.

The final stages in the methodology can be divided into two independent processes that can operate concurrently – record amendment and removal of deselected material.

3c. Record amendment & removal of deselected material

Record amendment was divided into 3 phases – item deletion, the addition of a 590 field to each record and suppression of records with no items remaining. The decisions around the record amendment stage were largely guided by the desire to ensure an accurate catalogue record and to provide an audit trail. While lengthy and detailed, the process combined to facilitate any retrospective review, analysis, evaluation or audit, and above all, to ensure transparency and accountability. It was also reversible should the need arise.
The electronic deselection lists were updated with the assessment decisions recorded on the hardcopy lists. Deselected items were deleted to keep records as 'clean' as possible for easier finding and retrieval. It was also necessary to delete items to ensure the accuracy of future reports required for annual reports, performance measurement and other management statistics. The barcode of each deleted item was retained in a different section of the Library Management System thus fulfilling future audit requirements.

An indexed 590 note field was globally added to each record. This note took the generic form: CPP 2010-2011 [Subj] [MMM YYYY]. The generic part of the note allows a grouping of all records if required in the future. The second part of the note refers to the subject and the date the items were deleted. This facilitates future audit requirements in that it gives context to the deleted barcodes and differentiates them from other barcodes that may have been deleted for other reasons.

The green highlighted items, i.e. those with items attached, were deleted from the electronic lists resulting in a list of records where all items had been deselected. It was important to suppress these records from the public catalogue and yet retain them as an archive and for future audit requirements. This was achieved by globally adding a generic text field.
Deselected material was removed from the shelves concurrently with record amendment. While both were dependent on the completion of assessment, a decision had been taken at the pilot stage not to wait until records were amended before removing deselected items. It was felt that the methodology included sufficient checks and balances to ensure that the recorded information for each item was accurate, thereby eliminating the need to have the deselected item in hand during the record amendment stage. This proved successful as the project progressed. Segmenting the work also meant that some processes could be taken on by other library staff. For example, desk staff deleted items from records and shelving staff boxed deselected material for removal.

Material was prepared for collection by removing all items with yellow labels, stamping them 'WITHDRAWN' and boxing. Collection was arranged to coincide with this. During the pilot stage of the project, the many options available for dispersal of deselected material (ALA 2012) were explored. Services such as Better World Books were not as well established in Ireland in 2009 as they are now. Finally, the services offered by an Irish bookseller were chosen as they satisfied most requirements such as flexibility of collection, a nominal

payment that the Library directed to the University's Student Support Fund and immediate closure after each transaction. One extra advantage of the relationship with the bookseller was the option to have some items returned on the two occasions that was required. Conscious of the opportunity to be eco-friendly, cardboard boxes that delivered newly acquired books and periodicals were reused to box deselected material.

4. Results

4a. Deselection rates per subject

Percentage deselection rate per subject (Dec 2012)
Subject (total no. deselected) & percentage deselected

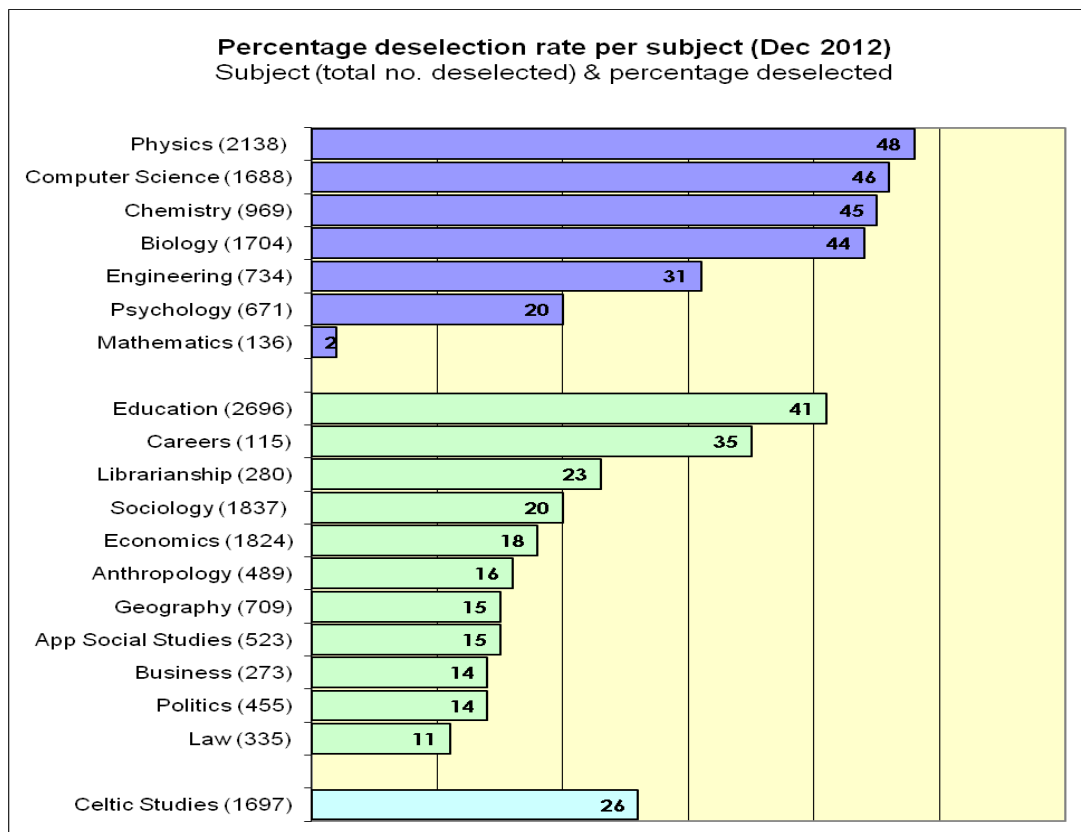| Subject	%
Physics (2138)	48
Computer Science (1688)	46
Chemistry (969)	45
Biology (1704)	44
Engineering (734)	31
Psychology (671)	20
Mathematics (136)	2
Education (2696)	41
Careers (115)	35
Librarianship (280)	23
Sociology (1837)	20
Economics (1824)	18
Anthropology (489)	16
Geography (709)	15
App Social Studies (523)	15
Business (273)	14
Politics (455)	14
Law (335)	11
Celtic Studies (1697)	26

Figure 2 – Percentage deselection rates per subject arranged by faculty

By the end of December 2012, 8% (20,028 items) of the main circulating print collections had been deselected, freeing up 630 metres. Figure 2 shows the deselection rates for each subject completed to date. The deselection rate of a typical science subject was over 40% with Engineering, Psychology and Mathematics at 31%, 20% and 2% respectively. The deselection rates for the social science subjects were typically either above or below 15% with Education at a much higher 41%. The sole humanities subject assessed at the time of preparing this article was Celtic Studies. Considering only multiple copies were assessed in Celtic Studies its deselection rate of 26% was very high compared to Mathematics, the other subject where only multiple copies were assessed. The difference can be explained by different purchasing histories resulting in a higher extant proportion of multiple copies relative to the total number of items in Celtic Studies.
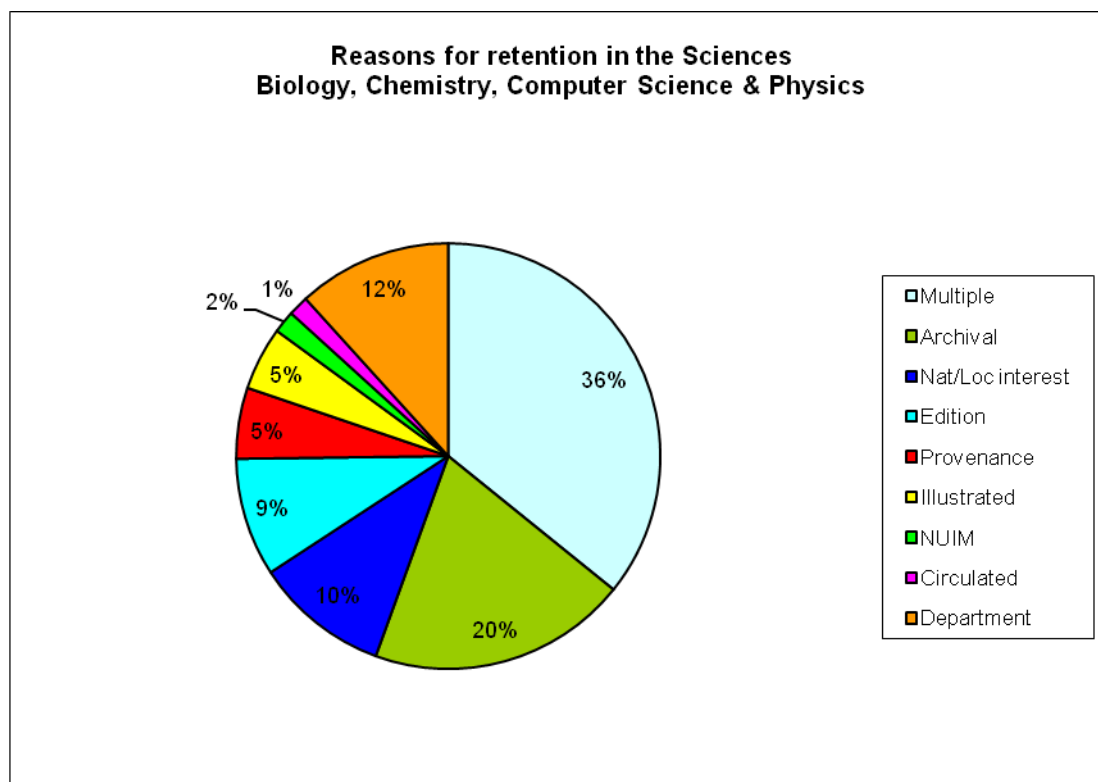
4b. Reasons for retention

Figure 3 – Reasons for retention in the Sciences

Throughout the project, deselection lists were briefly annotated with the reasons why an item was retained. This data was collated and analysed early in the project but was discontinued as a time-saving measure. Deselection lists had already been filtered by publication date, last borrowed date and recent acquisitions. For the subjects analysed, application of the remaining criteria resulted in 22% of material on the deselection lists being retained. Figure 3 represents the reasons for retention as a percentage of material retained. The highest proportion of material (35%) was retained to fulfil the policy of retaining one copy of multiple copy titles. 20% of material was retained due to the archival or historical value of the item. 10% was retained as the material was of national or local interest. 9% of material was retained to fulfil the policy of retaining the most recent edition of multiple editions. 5% or under accounted for material retained because of the provenance of the item, the illustrative content, the connection to members of university staff or circulated following identification for deselection. At this point in the project, academic staff viewed the deselection lists after all criteria were applied and a further 12% was retained at the request of academic staff.

While interesting and potentially useful, these figures must be interpreted with an awareness of the number of variables such as the age of each collection, departmental ordering policies, numbers of students, budgets, cost of material and departmental retention rates.

5. Discussion

Considering the imperative on libraries to assess their print collections in the face of changing missions, the barriers to deselection noted in the literature are becoming difficult to defend. Non-solutions, such as compact shelving, off-site storage, extensions and new buildings only delay the inevitable (Lonergan 2008 224). Making the assessment of the modern print collections (post-1925) a strategic goal with the core aim of improving currency and relevance was a decisive step towards putting this issue on the agenda. The extra space promised by a new extension was to provide a new and different matrix of facilities (Library, National University of Ireland Maynooth, 2012).

5a. Outcomes

The collections assessed by the project have been made more relevant to current curricular needs through the removal of outdated and irrelevant material. Space is used more efficiently and effectively in that expensive shelf space (Courant and Nielsen 2010) is not taken up by under-used resources. A more inspiring and motivational learning and discovery environment is created by what could be termed the 'white space' effect (Boulton 2007) where cluttered, overcrowded shelves are replaced by calm 'white' space. This contributes to the achievement of "an environment conducive to learning, study and work" as expressed in the Library's Strategic Plan (2009-2011 17). Material is easier to locate and browse on the shelves, thus searching time is saved. Re-shelving time is decreased in deselected areas. In addition, the time spent making minor adjustments to the shelves in order to fit in newly acquired material is considerably reduced. The project also served as a shelf-check as the person assessing the material had to ensure that the material was in accurate shelf order to assist in locating items on the list. Slote (1997 5, 86-7) found that "increased usage is one of the major benefits of weeding". Preliminary research into this has shown that this has not been the case for this project. The trend away from the use of print towards electronic resources, particularly in the Sciences, is an obvious factor. The number of items requiring re-shelving over the last 10 years decreased by 40% (Librarian's Annual Report 2002 – 2012). It is possible that use of core titles may have increased but this would require research at a more granular level. This could be further correlated to deselection rates.

5b. Feedback

Evaluation is ongoing and the feedback to date has been very positive. The most encouraging endorsement of the project was the initiative taken by one academic department who highlighted the potential for deselection in the printed resources in their area. Feedback from library staff, especially the Shelving Team, has also been equally supportive. Some Subject Librarians plan to seek feedback when all their subjects have been completed. The fact that there was no negative feedback from the user community in itself can be interpreted as a measure of success. A few requests for deselected material were received in the interim period between removal of items from the shelves and record amendment. In these incidences, the situation was generally resolved by directing to more up-to-date holdings covering much the same content and it was not necessary to re-order the material.

5c. Communication

Many of the cultural, emotional and political challenges of assessment and deselection were overcome through transparent communication with stakeholders. In addition to the positive feedback, we also gained additional benefits from a proactive engagement with academic staff.

Moving from the Sciences, to the Social Sciences and finally to the Humanities, it was anticipated that concerns might increase based on the continued relevance of print resources to the Humanities (Hazen 2010 117). In fact, the opposite was the case. Factors that might have contributed to this include giving as much information about the project as early as possible and anticipating and addressing concerns as they arose. It is also likely that as the project progressed there was a greater awareness of the details of the project which might also have allayed potential concerns.

The project gave the Library an opportunity to promote further updating of the collection by encouraging spending of budgets and consideration of e-books. It provided an excellent way of advertising the print collections, especially in the few incidences where lists of the full collection were requested. For example, one member of academic staff said the list had been very useful as it highlighted library holdings and would inform course reading lists. This demonstrates the usefulness of such lists for marketing the collections.

The process of evaluating the lists also gave academic staff the opportunity to see how the collection is currently being used and by extension how students are supporting their own learning. For example, another member of academic staff was surprised to see a title that he had recommended to his students appeared on the deselection list. He acknowledged that while the students obviously did not heed his recommendation they still got good results. While some may have bought the book, it was unlikely that they would all have bought it. It confirmed his observations that students are searching independently for information in a variety of sources which, he suggested, needs to be acknowledged and factored into the student learning experience.

5d. Cost analysis

Time or staff resources are another barrier to assessment and deselection. Lugg (16 May 2011) has estimated that the cost of deselection is €4.14 per volume. This compares well with the €4.26 average annual cost of storing a printed book in open shelving calculated by Courant and Nielsen (2010 91). The costs of this project can mostly be quantified in terms of staff resources. In addition to the half-time Assistant Librarian, a Library Assistant worked 25% of the week on the project from September 2010 to February 2012. There were also occasional Library Assistant hours allocated to the project and considerable support from other library staff. While a calculation could be made based on work done to date, the usefulness of this is arbitrary. For example, an estimate of how much time it might take to complete the Social Sciences based on previous subjects (17 minutes per metre of shelving) generally proved inaccurate due to the variability surrounding each subject. These variables included the time spent researching a subject, communication with the academic departments, the number of potential items for deselection on a shelf, the ratio of editions, multiple copies and single titles on a shelf, the number highlighted for retention by the relevant academic department, the final number of records to be amended and staff training.

Another way of analysing the costs is the depth of the assessment of the collection. Assessing a collection using circulation and date of publication data alone is quite crude but would have made for a much quicker and therefore less costly, at least in the short-term, project. However, in the long-term, this may have proved short-sighted. Incorporating departmental feedback and additional retention criteria made for a much more robust and credible exercise. This was important for advocating the project and has laid a good foundation for the future of the print collections. It also assists in making the decision-making as objective as possible, another barrier to deselection cited in the literature.

Balanced against the cost of keeping low-use material on the shelves or in storage and the overall benefits of deselection, it seems not unreasonable to suggest that the return on

investment far outweighs the costs. The project has mostly fulfilled its strategic objective in that the collections likely to yield the greater percentage of deselects have been completed and there have been additional benefits such as enhancing the experience of the user community, future-proofing the print collections and increasing engagement with academic departments.

6. Conclusion

In concluding, it might be useful to evaluate the project in terms of what worked well and what might have been done differently and to explore how the project might move forward.

6a. What worked well
- The strategic expression of the project in the Strategic Plan 2009 -2011 followed up by interested staff being seconded to the project contributed hugely to its positive implementation.
- The amount of time that went into the planning and pilot phases ensured that problems were solved early on and the methodology was fully tested.
- The methodology was divided into clear distinct tasks and was very detailed. This enabled easy management of workflow, efficient use of resources and a consistent process.
- Having policy-based retention and deselection criteria provided objective and strategic guidelines for staff making assessment decisions.
- Inviting academic staff, who are already involved in the selection process, to assess material allowed them to continue their involvement and to influence the deselection process. It also helped to allay any concerns about the project.
- Combining quantitative data with feedback from the academic community ensured a comprehensive and credible process.
- Feedback from the academic community assisted library staff in making assessment decisions.
- Retaining deselected material on the shelves prior to removal and the arrangements with a local bookseller provided the perfect solution to the "time and space" (Pidgeon 1995 69) considerations in disposal options.

6b. Considerations for future assessment and deselection projects
- While communication and consultation worked well, it might have been enhanced by a blog.
- The two-year timeframe proved unrealistic, which seems to be the experience of other such projects (Crosetto 2008 31, 42; Reed & Erickson 1993 178). The methodology was reviewed and changed which improved efficiency.
- Item-level assessment at the shelves required an investment in staff training that was more suited to staff that were working on the project long-term. Staff working a few hours a week and for shorter periods such as one or two months in the summer felt they did not have enough time to build up experience and momentum.
- Involving other libraries, either locally or nationally, to fulfil the broader responsibility of preserving the printed scholarly record via a shared print repository could have been an alternative approach. This would have added an extra layer that would most certainly have required a greater time and resource commitment (Gillies & Stephenson 2012) than the Library could allocate at the time. Comprehensive assessment criteria ensured that the project was carried out responsibly.

- Engaging the services of external agencies such as OCLC's WorldCat Collection Analysis (Henry et al 2008; OCLC) or Sustainable Collection Services (Lugg, et all, 2011-), while considered unsuitable at the time, might be interesting to test for effectiveness and compare with the in-house approach.
- Matching against e-book holdings would have ensured items were not duplicated electronically. At this stage in the development and adoption of e-books and given the time limits on the project, it is uncertain that the return on investment would have justified the use of scarce resources.

6c. The future

Although the main catalyst for this project was the new extension, it is expected that this work will continue as a normal library activity, perhaps as part of the work of Subject Librarians in partnership with the user community. The end of the formal project, marked by the completion of the new extension, is a timely opportunity to revise the Collection Development Policy (2001), in all its facets - elective and non-elective selection, assessment, retention, and deselection. This will be essential to ensure that assessment and deselection criteria are in line with strategic collection management goals and broader collection management developments and initiatives (Demas & Miller 2012, Gregory 2011 204, Henry 2010). In addition to incorporating a revised Collection Development Policy, the project methodology will require adaptation for use by Subject Librarians. It will need to recognise the workflow of Subject Librarians, cognate subjects and the increasing interdisciplinary nature of research and knowledge creation. Using the assessment process as a marketing aid and as an instructional tool (Dickinson 2005 24) are potential areas to explore.

As the traditional model of ownership of printed resources decreases, the potential suitability of other access models through collaboration and cooperation increases, both with other libraries in Ireland (CONUL Committee on Cooperative Collection Development 2002; CONUL Collaborative Storage 2006) and internationally (Centre for Research Libraries; Copac 2012; OCLC Research)

The project has laid the foundation for a new phase in the development and use of print collections in the 21st century. However we proceed, the challenge for the future remains – "to make choices which will help us maintain the strength and distinction of our collection in order to meet the needs of our present and future user community" (Collection Development Policy 2001).

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