

Collection Development Policies & Strategies Columbia University Libraries April 2019

I. Goals of Collection Development Policies & Strategies

The policies and strategies outlined in this document, and those to which it links, provide structured principles for ensuring that (a) collections have the greatest impact on research, teaching, and learning; (b) the Libraries is fulfilling its role in the long-term stewardship of the resources in its vast and growing collections, and (c) the choices made with regard to collections acquisition and management reflect and advance the mission and goals of Columbia University and the Libraries. These overarching principles are put into context within each of the [subject-specific collection development policies](#).

Questions about this set of policies, or any other matter relating to Columbia University Libraries' collecting practices, can be submitted to CST@library.columbia.edu.

II. History of the Collections

For an outline of Columbia University Libraries' rich history of building collections, please refer to [History of the Collections](#).

III. Diversity in and of Collections

The properties and characteristics of all collections within the Libraries reflect the University's institutional mission over time, and we recognize that both general and special collections have conventionally been founded on, influenced by, and biased toward embedded cultural, societal, institutional, and educational norms.

Today, the Libraries' collections are dynamic, responsive, and purposefully developed to realize the value of collections that have defined the Libraries' strengths in the past as well as resources that have been traditionally overlooked. Collections are being shaped and continually enriched in ways that advance access to heritage materials representing varied contours of knowledge, diversity of content, diverse identities of creators, experiential diversity (including the creator's abilities and affinities), and cognitive diversity.

In order to successfully fulfill our service and stewardship mission, those who are charged with developing collections employ strategies for acquiring, describing, and managing resources that go beyond normative structures, collections types, and established canons. Our decisions are informed by new curricula developed to meet the needs of a more diverse student body, new and emerging areas of research being conducted by a broad spectrum of researchers, including graduate students and newly-hired faculty, as well as by perspectives from the diminished or entirely lost voices of historically oppressed, marginalized, and underserved populations and communities. We apply these strategies to the general library collections, to Distinctive Collections, and to disciplines and fields of practice established at Columbia University, such as [web collecting](#) and [oral history](#), which were founded in part on these very values and principles.

Collections decisions (acquisition, location, retention, preservation, conservation, digitization, investment in open access) are evaluated against criteria that reflect the varied, evolving, and increasingly interdisciplinary curricula and research at Columbia. Decisions balance quantitative measures for assessment (cost per use; publication date; circulation and other usage data) with qualitative measures that integrate ethical and values-based considerations by librarians in order to promote preservation of and access to the widest range of cultural, scientific, and historical resources possible.

IV. Distinctive Collections

Columbia University Libraries' holdings contain some of the world's most remarkable and prominent collections of recorded knowledge. These Distinctive Collections encompass but extend far beyond traditional special collections to include resources in all formats, from objects that preserve some of the earliest forms of writing to modern archives and, increasingly, non-print formats such as film, audio, and born-digital resources. While the majority of this policy is intended to guide the acquisition and management of general collections, the values and principles represented apply as equally to building and evolving our Distinctive Collections.

Columbia's Distinctive Collections have been built over many decades; the commitment to them is enduring and marked by sustained resource investment (inclusive of investments in staff expertise, collection acquisition, processing, storage, and long-term stewardship). Primarily concentrated in [Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library](#), [The Burke Library at Union Theological](#)

Seminary, Global Studies Division, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, and C.V. Starr East Asian Library, the Libraries' Distinctive Collections acquire, preserve, and provide access to collections that significantly distinguish Columbia University from peer institutions. While critically and strategically important to Columbia's teaching and research strengths, the constituency for Distinctive Collections extends beyond campus to a global community of scholars.

In the context of Columbia University Libraries, the term distinctive is defined several ways:

- individual items in all formats (e.g. rare books, cuneiform tablets) that are rare, unique, and may carry significant artifactual and/or financial value or are so fragile as to require special care and handling;
- archives where the integrity of a collection, and Columbia's stewardship of it, serves to authenticate the contents as primary sources¹;
- collections that are so comprehensive in scope as to constitute a collective resource that is not duplicated elsewhere.

V. Responsibilities of Librarians & Curators

With their own deep discipline and subject area expertise, Columbia University Libraries' librarians and curators build research collections in a wide array of formats in support of the work of students, faculty, and researchers. Through relationships with the University's academic departments, librarians and curators understand fields of study and teaching, research specialties, and current curricular needs of the academic departments in their subject areas, as well as broader evolving research trends at Columbia and in their respective disciplines. With curricular needs in mind, librarians and curators collect newly-published materials, historical collections, and primary source materials to fill collection gaps and/or address emerging scholarly needs. Librarians also promote awareness of these resources, in courses and to individual researchers, by providing instruction and support for their use. In addition to building collections locally, librarians and curators foster strategic partnerships with other academic institutions to build shared collections and expand access to materials. These shared collections also inform decisions on what to acquire and maintain locally. A key component of a librarian or curator's role is strategic fund management of the Libraries' collection budget, including collaborating with other librarians to identify ways to acquire resources across disciplines. Librarians, curators, and the Libraries' administration are expected to continually assess and ensure that

fund allocations reflect the evolving needs of users and the collections themselves. This work requires consideration for the balance between funding the initial purchase investment and factors contributing to the total cost of acquisition and the Libraries' responsibility to preserve, conserve, digitize, and make accessible these materials throughout their lifecycle. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- ongoing maintenance fees;
- projected price increases for ongoing subscriptions;
- costs related to making resources discoverable and accessible as close to the point of acquisition as possible, whether this is achieved through purchasing metadata records, outsourcing metadata creation, or performing in-house metadata provision and/or archival processing;
- preservation and conservation costs;
- storage requirements for both physical and digital resources.

VI. Faculty Involvement in Collection Development & Management

Columbia University Libraries values the close relationships that faculty have to both collections and their library liaisons. The Provost's Advisory Committee on the Libraries (PACL) is the primary faculty group through which new collections policies, major revisions to existing policies, and substantial collection management decisions are evaluated. PACL endorsed the first iteration of this set of collection development policies and strategies in April 2019, after which the Libraries has committed to reporting major proposed changes in collections policies to PACL for review and discussion in advance of implementation. Each academic year, the Libraries will also provide the PACL with a summary of the Libraries' work to continually refine and improve its collections policies and strategies, and to invite opportunities for PACL to engage in that process over time. Collections building and management are also directly informed by faculty and students actively voicing questions, concerns, suggestions, and research priorities. All Columbia faculty and students are also invited to participate in the collection development process at any time through consultation with [librarians and curators](#).

VII. General Collection Development Principles, Values, Criteria

The Libraries develops collections in support of the curricular and research programs of the University. As with the Libraries' Distinctive Collections, its

general collections have been built over many decades and include an impressive variety and wealth of material. However, the Libraries does not have sufficient resources to comprehensively acquire everything published in all areas pertinent to the University's scholarly endeavors.

Librarians and curators apply the following general principles and criteria when evaluating items for acquisition or removal from the collections. Each of these criteria will represent greater or lesser significance depending on the discipline/subject area and the resources available to support the total cost of acquisition. Adhering to these principles and criteria further ensure that the Libraries' collecting decisions are made with purpose and intentionality. Please refer to [subject-specific collection development policies](#) to see how these principles and criteria are applied in context.

Immediate and enduring value. Investing in particular titles or collections is evaluated within the context of the Libraries' mission to serve the current needs of the University's programs, and as a long-term steward of cultural and scientific heritage, including such factors as:

- positive impact on and relationship to current research and teaching needs (those represented by existing collection strengths, by established and emerging curricular programs, and/or those needs communicated by faculty and student researchers);
- authoritativeness or reputation of the author, editor, publisher, producer, etc.;
- unique or rarely-held by other libraries or cultural/scientific organizations;
- artifactual interest, such that the item in its original published format, or marks of former use/ownership it carries, enables distinct opportunities for scholarship and teaching;
- quality of the physical condition of the item (collections in tangible formats must meet the Libraries' [Preservation Policy](#)).

Print/physical formats vs. electronic formats. The Libraries recognizes that the shift from print to electronic publication formats is different across disciplines and communities of practice, and is sometimes different for monographic literature than it is for serial/journal/periodical literature even within a discipline.

For some areas of scholarship, print publications remains primary and critical to supporting the work of students and faculty. In many areas of the world, print is not merely the most reliable but is often the *only* available format. Some areas, while slower to move to electronic formats, are seeing a gradual but steady move in that direction; the Libraries carefully monitors this evolution for its impact on collecting decisions, and will be responsive over time to changing needs and preferences of students and faculty. For yet other areas of collecting, the shift to electronic has been well established by both publishers and scholars alike, and preference is given to monographic and/or serial collections in electronic format.

When electronic access becomes available in sustainable, affordable, and persistently- accessible platforms, the Libraries will weigh carefully whether or not to move to e-only access. The Libraries will generally continue to acquire the print format when there are demonstrable and substantive differences in content, when canceling the print would negatively impact scholarship and/or stewardship, or when faculty have expressed important reasons for the Libraries to continue to support acquisition and/or retention of the print (or other tangible, physical formats, including microfilm) in certain disciplines. Consideration of the constraints of space and financial resources will also be important factors in determining which formats to acquire and/or retain from existing collections over time.

Because disciplines within and across the humanities, social sciences, and the sciences can be quite different from one another, please refer to [subject-specific collection development policies](#) to see how these principles and criteria are applied in context.

Data-informed collections decisions for licensed electronic resources. The Libraries evaluates collections against data that can characterize the impact the resource might have on users. Specifically, and wherever possible, the Libraries arranges for trials of new electronic resources to gauge interest in and usage of collections in advance of possible acquisition. Turn-away statistics from vendors are also gathered, when available, to assess potential interest.

Accessibility. As our investment in electronic resources grows over time, it is incumbent on the Libraries to ensure that the information and communication technologies it acquires with Columbia resources are accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. The Libraries makes every attempt to ensure that the technology platforms we invest in, and the content provided within them, follow evolving national standards for accessibility. Vendors should adhere to the

U.S. Access Board's [final rule](#) on accessibility requirements for information and communication technology, covered under Section 508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act, and follow [guidelines](#) set forth by the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative.

Ownership vs. access. The Libraries is cognizant of its dual responsibility to use the University's funds judiciously and to serve the needs of its users over time. To these ends, the Libraries strives to acquire collections that result in perpetual ownership of those products. In some cases, perpetual ownership is either not available or not affordable, but leasing options exist. Leased access will be considered when resources are important to scholarship at Columbia. In all cases, the conditions of access (e.g., read only, ability to make copies of extracts, download of full content) will be weighed carefully by librarians in the context of the users' needs.

Comprehensive collecting. While comprehensiveness may be a characteristic of some distinctive collections, comprehensive collecting is not the aim of the general collections. The strengths or weaknesses of current holdings in each subject area—relative to the University's priorities, the available funding, the national reputation of and reliance on Columbia as a steward of collections in particular areas, and the scope/scale of collections available in the marketplace—are continually evaluated by librarians and curators. While building on established collection strengths is important, the Libraries is also cognizant of the need to evolve the collections alongside the evolving University profiles of research and teaching; in this way, collection weaknesses may be as significant a factor in acquisitions decisions as collection strengths.

Consortial holdings. The Libraries partners in programs that enable research libraries to achieve more comprehensive subject coverage across a network of libraries, in order to serve the diverse needs of users across those networks, and in ways that can only be accomplished collectively, not by one library alone – both through resource sharing (e.g., Borrow Direct; inter-library loan) and shared purchasing of collections. The holdings of libraries with which Columbia has strategic shared collections and/or cooperative borrowing agreements must be considered when making selection decisions. Consortial opportunities may override local requests for ownership when economies of scale provide 'compelling reasons for doing so (e.g., purchase price; storage requirements or impact; anticipated usage). See also '[Shared Collections & Collaborative Collection Building](#)'.

Textbooks. The library does not maintain a collection of course textbooks. The [First- Generation Low-Income Partnership](#) (FLIP) program, operated out of Butler Library, provides access to textbooks as a service to the community, but is not covered under this collection development policy.

Collections/items for individual researchers or departments. By default, the Libraries acquires collections for access and use by the entire Columbia community, and enters into all collection development activities and negotiations with this aim in mind. The Libraries does not acquire materials (via either purchase or gift) for which access or use would be restricted to specific individuals. In extremely rare cases, licensing terms for an electronic resource may limit access to specific Columbia University departments or communities when those departments are financing its acquisition.

VIII. Digitization Policies & Strategies

The Libraries is committed to the preservation of and global access to its collections, and to these ends, it strategically and actively selects collections for digitization. Please refer to the Libraries' Digitization Policy for more information.

Please also refer to [Digitization & Copying Services](#) for information on requesting the reproduction of items in the collection.

IX. Open Access Principles for Collection Development

In support of open access, the Libraries adheres to the following principles:

- when appropriate and advantageous, the collections budget may be applied to activities or initiatives that advance local, community, and scholarly open access goals, including those that do not result in specific resources being acquired for Columbia's owned collections (e.g., institutional membership in an organization that aids, promotes, develops, aggregates, and/or provides open access to content);
- collecting librarians systematically evaluate, select, support, and promote the use of open resources, whether as an alternative or in addition to existing traditional resources;
- licensing and acquisitions agreements entered into by the Libraries should not prevent Columbia's scholars from using open access repository

and distribution systems,

X. Gifts in Kind

Columbia University Libraries is unable to accept all materials offered, acquiring only those that are within the scope of its collections policies and targeted growth areas. Please refer to the Libraries [Gifts in Kind Policy](#) for specific information on conditions for accepting gift materials.

XI. Collections Management & Evaluation

A. Preservation

Please refer to the Libraries' [Preservation Policy](#) for specific information on preservation of both physical and digital collections.

B. Duplicates

The Libraries acquires single copies of resources, except in rare cases when sufficient demand for multiple copies is known, can be reasonably projected, or where the item possesses particular artifactual value. The decision to collect multiple copies is carefully balanced against a variety of factors, including specific requests from faculty and researchers demonstrating need for multiple copies, the total cost of acquisition, storage options or constraints, number of holdings across libraries generally, and the broad ecosystem of partnerships through which users may borrow or otherwise access the same or similar collections (e.g., opportunities for inter-library loan that will reasonably and affordably meet needs of users in a timely manner; availability of electronic surrogates of print materials, whether through open access or library-supported subscriptions).

C. Deaccessioning

Accessioning an item or collection requires a formal decision to acquire it, either through a purchase or gift agreement, and these collections are recorded in the appropriate bibliographic or archival management tool. Decisions to remove items from the University's collection are made within the context of the Libraries' core mission to steward the preservation of human knowledge over time, and with careful consideration of the potential impact on research and teaching. Decisions are purposeful and made with the broadest and most inclusive input possible. Given the increasingly

interdisciplinary nature of scholarship, candidates for deaccession are made known to all of the Libraries' subject specialists and curators well in advance for their assessment and feedback. Librarians and curators are encouraged to contact faculty to provide input on these decisions.

Decisions to deaccession items from the general collections, like decisions to acquire new titles for the collection, are made within the context of the collection policy, so that the integrity of the total collection is not impaired, but in fact may be enhanced when unneeded materials are removed from the collections.

All decisions are made with care, and placed in the context of practices in the field. Factors that influence decisions to remove items from the general collection are also factors that may, inversely, influence a decision to instead retain or replace them, and may include:

- continued relevance to the academic profile of the University and the collecting profile of the Libraries;
- the physical copy is disintegrating or otherwise no longer serviceable in its print/tangible form (in these instances, either a preservation photocopy is made, a digital surrogate created or obtained, and/or the item is evaluated for replacement);
- the item is on an obsolete format (in these instances, the Libraries will generally take steps to digitize materials on obsolete formats in advance of deaccessioning, except when already readily available via other means; the Libraries will generally retain items on obsolete formats, even after digitization, if the item is unique or not widely held by other libraries, and/or the original format itself has artifactual or scholarly value); superseded editions/volumes evaluated as having limited scholarly value;
- electronic duplication with perpetual ownership and/or access (e.g., direct purchases, Project MUSE, JSTOR, HathiTrust);
- multiple copies of low-use titles across multiple Columbia library locations;
- widely held by partner institutions whose collections are readily accessible to Columbia's users (e.g., Columbia's partners within ReCAP, Borrow Direct, and MaRLI);

- widely held by libraries across Columbia's broader national network of resource sharing/inter-library loan partners.

U.S. federal government documents are deaccessioned in accordance with protocols established by the [Federal Library Depository Program](#).

D. Replacement

Materials that are declared lost or missing, or in poor/unusable condition will be replaced at the discretion of the appropriate librarian, in accordance with the collection development policies in effect at that time. Factors described above that may influence decisions to deaccession materials from the general collection may well apply to a decision to instead replace materials due to their physical condition or lost/missing status.

E. Collection Locations

The commitment of the University to provide shelving space for physical materials is both a significant capital investment and a significant annual operating cost. As collections grow, space must be made available to house them. In 2000, Columbia University entered into a partnership with Princeton University and New York Public Library to build a high-density, preservation-quality storage facility called [The Research Collections and Preservation Consortium \(ReCAP\)](#) that would both preserve and share collections across partner institutions. In 2019, Harvard University Library joined the ReCAP partnership as a full member.

Location decisions are not made in an automated fashion. Librarians and curators apply a variety of criteria to strategically manage which materials are housed on campus and which are housed offsite at ReCAP. Location decisions are a careful and continually evolving balance between space management and fulfilling the needs of research and teaching, with the needs of the latter taking precedence whenever possible.

It is not an expectation that all criteria for determining location are the same across all subject areas. The rationale for locating items at ReCAP for one subject area may well be the same reason for locating items on campus in another subject area. Please consult individual [collection development policies](#) to see the strategies and criteria applied within any given subject area in determining locations.

Common criteria for locating an item **on campus** include, but are not limited to:

- high use;
- newly-acquired / newly published;
- used in current research or teaching;
- specific languages in each subject area;
- major presses;
- faculty authors;
- canonical/core titles;
- critical editions;
- major authors;
- current (or high use) reference materials.

Common criteria for locating an item **at ReCAP** include, but are not limited to:

- the condition or nature of the item requires it be housed in a secure, long-term [preservation environment](#);
- low use (as defined in each subject area);
- specific languages in a given subject area;
- highly specialized subjects;
- not actively used in current research or teaching;
- older imprints where variation in edition is not of scholarly interest;
- print books and print journal runs that are available online;
- minor presses;
- minor authors.

Librarians and Curators will consult with faculty in the event of a major

relocation to ReCAP. Faculty and researchers are invited to confer with [liaison librarians and curators](#) for more information on how location decisions are made within particular collections, disciplines, and subject areas, as well as to submit requests that an item's location be changed.

XII. Shared Collections & Collaborative Collection Building

University libraries strive to collect broadly and deeply across many subject areas, and from throughout the world. Amidst a global proliferation of both print and electronic resources, research libraries face unprecedented challenges in maintaining robust, world-class resources for current and future generations of researchers. In the area of print materials, it is clear that one university cannot accomplish these goals alone. Columbia University Libraries has taken a leading role in the development of collaborative collection development initiatives in order to ensure that, collectively, Columbia and its partners extend and maximize both collections budgets and consortial resource sharing networks in ways that will capture and preserve more of the world's intellectual and cultural heritage.

Shared collections agreements among participating libraries ensure broad and deep subject, geographical, and language coverage, while reducing unnecessary duplication of efforts and resources. Working closely with our ReCAP and IvyPlus partner libraries, we are ensuring that our increasingly international students and faculty, present and future, will have timely access to the broadest possible array of resources.

These efforts are directly facilitated by the established, sophisticated technologies of our resource-sharing networks, such as ReCAP and Borrow Direct. Such networks enable users at partner libraries to easily identify, request, and borrow print materials in the holdings of other institutions. See also [‘Consortial holdings’](#).

XIII. Growing Collections for New Disciplines, Programs, and Areas of Research at Columbia University

The academic programs, departments, and curricula across Columbia University continue to evolve. The Columbia University Libraries will strategically respond to evolving growth areas on campus, especially those that have un/underfunded collections needs. Through close collaborations with academic departments, faculty, students, post-doctoral and other non-faculty researchers, the Libraries

will track growth areas, reallocate funds from the collections budget to purchase, license, or create materials to support research and learning, and assess the use of collection materials in support of new areas.

XIV. The Libraries' Expectations of Collections Vendors

Columbia University Libraries takes seriously its role to expend University resources responsibly. The Libraries is committed to ensuring access to all users regardless of ability and to holding vendors accountable for maintaining sustainable acquisitions models. The Libraries uses its prominent leadership voice in the community to advocate for effective business relationships with vendors and for affordable enhancements to their products and services.

To these ends, the Libraries strives to ensure that licensing agreements are evaluated against several criteria, including but not limited to:

- contracts must conform to all applicable laws of the State of New York;
- licenses must allow for inter-library loans (ILL) without restrictions on electronic provision or geographic boundaries (i.e., must allow for international ILL);
- must not contain confidentiality clauses or other restrictions on sharing information about pricing and terms with stakeholders and external parties;
- vendors must ensure their products protect the privacy of our patrons;
- must not restrict Fair Use under United States Copyright Law;
- authorized users include Columbia's students, faculty, researchers, visiting scholars, staff, walk-in, and other authorized users across all Columbia University locations;
- vendors must honor and value Columbia's interests and core values with regards to equity, diversity, and inclusion, with practices and partnerships that ensure preservation and access to the widest range of cultural, scientific, and historical resources as possible;
- in the case of multi-year agreements, include an opt-out clause in the event of financial hardship;

- must provide COUNTER-compliant or other acceptable usage data;
- either remain silent on governing law or agree to governance by the laws of the State of New York;
- contract must be written in English;
- vendors must clearly and accurately describe content made available and content under development;
- vendors and the Libraries must engage in honest, fair, transparent, and flexible negotiation about pricing, open access, rights management, and content/platform use and restrictions, with no hidden fees;
- annual price increases should remain predictable;
- vendors should offer a variety of acquisition models;
- quality metadata records should be made available to ensure that content acquired/subscribed to is discoverable by Columbia users;
- should adhere to the U.S. Access Board's [final rule](#) on accessibility requirements for information and communication technology, covered under Section 508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act, and follow [guidelines](#) set forth by the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative;
- should be compliant with the [NISO Shared E-Resource Understanding \(SERU\) Recommended Practice](#) and be registered in the [SERU Registry](#);
- should permit electronic course packs and e-reserves, and should allow Columbia to use proxy servers to provide access to library collections to authorized users;
- should include provision allowing authorized users to download, extract, store, and index content for the purposes of Text and Data Mining (TDM) for non-commercial, non-consumptive research purposes;
- allowance for Columbia University to deposit at no cost the final version of works from all faculty, staff, and students into the University's institutional repository upon publication, including the products of federally-funded research mandated to be openly accessible to the public.

Library branding is more important than the vendor's or publisher's corporate brands. Our users' experiences indicate a lack of awareness that they are using library-supported, library-acquired resources. Our continued funding for electronic resources and our ability for continued business with vendors and publishers hinges on the following branding characteristics, practices, and principles:

- it is critical that Columbia University Libraries' branding be prominent and consistent across all of our web properties and services.
- the Libraries expects the option to place prominent branding (preferably a Columbia University Libraries banner) on vendor and publisher pages and services, per the [options and requirements](#) outlined by the Libraries;
- advertising should not be placed on pages or services associated with library resources. For the avoidance of doubt, this does not include advertising that is part of the content itself, such as ads found within journals, magazines, archival or primary source material, etc.;
- the Libraries' banner should be the main and largest branding/logo on the page;
- the Libraries' banner should have top left presence, above any vendor, publisher, or product logos or branding;
- the Libraries' banner should be accessible across all pages of the e-resource(s);
- the Libraries' banner should be clickable back to Libraries' home page, <http://library.columbia.edu/>.
- a link to "Ask a Columbia Librarian" should be on the site, <http://www.columbia.edu/cgi-bin/cul/resolve?lweb0031>.

Our strategic goal in making these criteria publicly available is to increase transparency to the Columbia and wider research library communities, and to communicate to our vendor partners the values and expectations to which we hold both ourselves and our vendors accountable. We invite anyone who identifies that a resource is not in compliance with the elements within this checklist to contact [Collection Development and Electronic Resources Management](#).

1 A fundamental principle of archival management is the concept of respect des fonds: the original intellectual order of archival records that was imposed by its creator should be preserved because those records are the product of human activity, decisions, power structures, etc. and, as a result, the parts of an archive (e.g., individual files) are authenticated by their relationships to the larger archive. The implication is that archives are more than random assemblages of discrete items, but rather interrelated pieces of an intellectual whole.