

WPLC Collection Development Policy

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I. Mission & Vision

The Wisconsin Public Library Consortium (WPLC) was created and is intended to provide Wisconsin citizens with access to a collection of electronically published materials in a wide range of subjects and formats. It also intends to maintain a decision-making and fiscal model for public library cooperation that will allow libraries to collaborate, to explore and implement new information technologies and issues, sharing the costs as well as the knowledge and resources.

II. Purpose

This policy acts as a guide for selectors in order to ensure comparability of collection depth and breadth between collection areas and similarity of selection criteria among selectors within the centralized collection management framework. This policy intends to assist selectors in building collections that are responsive to the community's informational and recreational reading needs, while still meeting the mission and goals of both the WPLC and public libraries.

This policy also informs the public of the principles upon which collection development and management decisions are based. This policy describes the role of selection and management in the mission of the WPLC to serve a statewide community of library users. It defines the scope of the collection, provides a plan for continual and strategic development, and identifies strengths in the collection. It connects selection decisions and collection management to intellectual freedom principles.

III. Collection Development

A. Collection Responsibilities

Ideally, the WPLC Selection Committee is comprised of 34 consistently active members, 2 librarians from each of the 17 library systems in Wisconsin. Each library system nominates their respective selectors and each selector serves a two-year term. If a system has a lack of nominees, nominees will be selected from a system in the same geographic area as the original nominating system. Selectors must participate in both selection and monthly meetings. Selection for specific areas of development will be allocated by interest, knowledgeable expertise, and qualification. The Selection Committee will be divided into two subcommittees: Adult and Young Adult/ Children's selection. Selection Committee members will be asked to provide input into titles to be weeded based on criteria named in the Weeding section (F) of this policy.

B. Scope of Collection

The WPLC is funded by its member library systems, also known as Partners. Partners of the WPLC pay into the consortium and any partner library system has access to the digital collaborative collection and as such, their library card-holders are authorized users. Library system partners may choose to ask their member libraries to contribute to the WPLC payments as they deem necessary and appropriate. The community served by this collection is incredibly diverse and as such, the collection must reflect the needs, interests, and viewpoints of this large community in its entirety, taking into consideration access needs in a digital environment.

The collection is broad, current, and popular. This collection is not concerned with being completely comprehensive and some subject areas are collected in greater depth than others, as a reflection of their current popularity. The WPLC aims for a balance of popular materials and those in line with the institutional goals of public libraries. The materials chosen support general interest in a broad range of categories. This collection is intended to serve the general patron instead of the researcher. Titles selected reflect contemporary significance instead of long-term enduring value.

The current focus of the collection is on popular genres in the fiction collection with an emphasis on romance, mystery, and science fiction, focusing on best sellers. Non-fiction materials consist of a mixture of best-selling titles covering popular subject areas as well as materials of an educational or instructional nature. Non-fiction subject areas include, but are not limited to; biographies, travel, business, health, computers, and historical materials. The collection intends to portray different viewpoints, values, philosophies, cultures, and religions in order to serve the varied statewide community. A variety of reading and comprehension levels are also represented in the collection, based on community need. This collection of popular materials supplements local library collections and the emphasis on large numbers of popular titles allows for less local spending on quickly out-of-date best sellers.

Currently, the collection is comprised of e-books, audio books, music and video. Materials, both e-books and audio books, are selected to support a variety of computer systems and e-reader hardware in multiple prevailing formats in order to serve the differing needs of individual users.

C. Selection Criteria

The following criteria are taken into consideration when selectors are choosing materials. An item need not meet all of the criteria to be selected.

- Identified, expressed, or anticipated need in the general community
- Availability of titles from vendors
- Contemporary significance, popular interest or permanent value
- Attention of critics and reviewers
- Prominence, authority, significance, and/or competence of author or creator
- Timeliness and accuracy of material including new editions of existing materials.
- Relation to existing collections, such as titles in a series.
- Statement of challenging, original, or alternative point of view
- Authenticity of historical, regional, or social setting
- Suitability of subject matter for youth
- Appropriate reading level for youth

Public demand for an author, title or subject is an important criterion. All requests from patrons for specific authors, titles or subjects will be considered.

Title availability is another important consideration. Given the volatile world of digital rights and publishers, it is important to note that although titles may be available for purchase to consumers from various outlets, they may not be available to WPLC patrons because certain major publishers do not allow public libraries to purchase digital editions of titles, and/or place embargos on new titles for a designated time period. In addition, titles may be pulled from the WPLC collection at any time by publishers without prior notice.

In addition to content and availability criteria for selection, given the digital nature of this collection, selectors must also take into consideration format factors. The following criteria will be considered.

- Affordability
- Appropriateness of format
- Illustration rendering in books for youth or in graphic novels
- Narrator's qualifications for audio books
- Stability of content
- Titles with simultaneous use rights

As a rule, we do not purchase abridged versions of titles. Exceptions can be made on a case by case basis, if a high demand title is only available in an abridged format or if the title is a patron request.

D. Selection Tools

Selectors target items heavily used in print, items with high circulation numbers, items with a high number of holds, items with a large number of interlibrary loan requests, and items with recent publication dates. Additionally, user satisfaction and demand in similar subject/genre areas will also be given consideration.

Standard selection tools that may be used to identify items for selection are as follows:

Standard collection lists, recommended lists, award lists, recommended/"notable titles," and professional journal reviews. Professional journals given preference, along with any other nationally recognized library-oriented journals are as follows:

- Booklist
- School Library Journal
- Library Journal
- CCBC Choices
- New York Times Book Review
- Publisher's Weekly
- VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)
- Wisconsin Book Watch

Given the digital format of all materials in this collection, selectors must consider both content and form. Traditional library review sources, such as those listed above, are more than sufficient for the content of the material, though standard professional reviews for format of materials are, at times, lacking. Since well-written books do not necessarily transfer well to either audio book or e-book format, selectors will make use of these format reviews as they become more readily available, though at times, selectors must rely on content reviews alone because of the lack of format reviews. Selectors will keep in mind ease of use and accessibility of selections.

E. Gift Policy

Given technical and licensing limitations as they stand today, the WPLC is unable to accept gifts of personally purchased e-books. Donated money ear-marked for specific e-books or audio books is accepted, though items must meet the selection criteria outlined above.

No conditions may be imposed relating to any gift either before or after its acceptance by the WPLC with an understanding that donated materials are subject to the same selection, evaluation, and disposal criteria as material selected for purchase.

F. Weeding

Although a digital collection does not have the same space constraints of a physical collection, weeding is necessary to upgrade the collection in terms of usefulness, patron ease of searching and circulation statistics. Weeding also allows for greater review of the collection, helping to determine gaps and deficiencies, assisting selectors in creating a collection that is more responsive to patron demand and need. Since weeding a cooperative collection will affect a large number of libraries, any weeding project must be carefully coordinated and communicated to all partners prior to and during the process. The WPLC Project Manager will be responsible for facilitating the review of the WPLC digital collection on a yearly basis, and make recommendations to the WPLC Board on further actions to be taken.

IV. Intellectual Freedom

The WPLC aims to provide a collection with information spanning a broad spectrum of opinions. The WPLC directs patrons to the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to View statements. These principles guide the materials selection policies.

Selection decisions are based on the merit of works as they relate to the mission and goals of the WPLC and its partners. Works are selected to meet expressed and anticipated needs of the statewide community. These works are inclusive of statewide cultures and opinions, not just the opinions of a particular community. Selectors are located all across the state to ensure a fair and balanced collection. Variety and balance of opinion is sought in all collections.

The library recognizes that some materials may be controversial or offensive to an individual, but maintains that individuals can apply their values to only themselves. Parents have the responsibility and right to guide the values of their children. An opinion represented in the collection is an expression of the libraries' commitment to intellectual freedom and not an endorsement of a point of view or opinion.

B. Request for Reconsideration policy

Patrons wanting to communicate their concerns about materials in the WPLC digital collection, should be directed to a reconsideration form available on the WPLC website. Any requests will be directed by the WPLC Project Manager to the WPLC Chair for discussion. A recommendation for action will be made by the WPLC Chair to the WPLC Board.

V. Review of Policy

This policy will be revisited by WPLC Selection Committee who will recommend changes or revisions to the WPLC Board on a yearly basis.