

WPLC Digital Library Collection Development Policy

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I. Mission & Vision

The Wisconsin Public Library Consortium (WPLC) was created to provide a fiscal and decision-making model for statewide public library cooperation that encourages libraries to collaborate, while exploring and implementing new information technology and issues. This model emphasizes sharing costs as well as knowledge and resources. The Wisconsin Digital Library is a primary project of the WPLC and it is intended to provide Wisconsin public library cardholders access to a collection of electronically published materials in a wide range of subjects and formats.

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 composed of up to two librarians from each Wisconsin partner library system. Each library system director nominates their respective selectors and each selector is appointed to a two-year term. If a selector is unable to fulfill their term, a replacement may complete the appointed term. Selectors must participate in both selection duties and scheduled online meetings. Specific areas of development will be allocated by interest, knowledgeable expertise, and qualification. Selectors will follow collection guidelines approved by the WPLC Digital Library Steering Committee. In addition, library systems are encouraged to designate members to select materials for their unique systems. These selectors are referred to as Advantage selectors and follow the term and collection guidelines outlined by this policy and the WPLC Digital Library Steering Committee.

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 member libraries' 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 current use and demand. 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.

A variety of reading and comprehension levels are also represented in the collection, based on community needs. Materials in languages other than English will be added as determined by community need and title availability. The collection also includes materials that are classified as local content either by an author, publisher or subject matter relating to Wisconsin and the Midwest.

Currently, the collection is comprised of e-books, digital audio books, magazines, and video. New formats can be added upon discussion and recommendation by the Selection and Collection Development Committees, and upon final approval by the Digital Library Steering Committee. Materials 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. Accessibility for all users is an important consideration. The WPLC makes a concerted effort to work with

vendors and publishers who are ADA compliant with their materials, platforms and mobile applications.

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 demand in the general community
- Availability and affordability of titles from vendors and publishers
- 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
- Promote inclusivity in all areas, including, but not limited to
 - Race, ethnicity, and culture
 - Identity and gender
 - Sexual orientation
 - Religion and spirituality
 - Mental and physical health and abilities

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. A balanced collection is also of importance and selectors will take care to not collect an overwhelming amount of titles in a particular genre.

Title availability and affordability are important considerations. 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 some publishers do not allow public libraries to purchase digital editions of titles, and/or place embargoes on new titles for a designated time period. Selectors shall make themselves aware of the various lending models available when selecting titles for purchase.

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
- Accessibility

As a rule, we do not purchase abridged versions of titles. Exceptions can be made on a case by case basis.

D. Patron Recommended Materials

Input from patrons is highly valued and therefore patrons are able to recommend for purchase. It is important to note that due to the very large population this collection serves, the recommendation process has a monthly monetary limit. Titles must fit the criteria for selection described in this policy and must be of interest to a larger audience. The decision to add or not add patron-recommended titles is at the discretion of WPLC selection committee members and is not open to appeal.

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 earmarked for specific e-books or digital audiobooks is accepted, though items must meet the selection criteria outlined above.

F. Deselection

Although a digital collection does not have the same space constraints of a physical collection, deselection, or weeding, is necessary to upgrade the collection in terms of relevancy, usefulness, patron ease of searching and circulation statistics. Deselection 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. The WPLC Project Manager will be responsible for facilitating the review of the WPLC digital collection on a quarterly basis and will determine which titles warrant being deselected. Since deselecting a cooperative collection will affect a large number of libraries, any large deselecting project must be carefully coordinated and communicated to all partners prior to and during the process. Deselecting no longer available and obsolete titles is a process maintained by the content providers and the project manager. In addition, titles may be pulled from the WPLC collection at any time by publishers without prior notice or titles may not be available for re-purchase. Deselecting is also maintained and managed at the local level. All Advantage accounts are required to set up automatic weeding plans to remove titles that have no hold, are expired, and are no longer for sale.

G. Advantage Collections

Public library systems within the WPLC are required to establish individual accounts with OverDrive, known as Advantage accounts in order to receive their allocation of the Holds Reduction portion of the WPLC Buying Pool. System Advantage collections selectors are encouraged to follow the WPLC Collection Policy.

IV. Intellectual Freedom

A. Access to Collections

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. Reconsideration forms will be received by the WPLC Project Managers and shared with a Selection Advisory Committee made up of active Consortium and Advantage selectors. The selectors will review reconsideration forms and check titles to make sure they follow the Collection Development Policy.

A recommendation will be made by the Selection Advisory Committee to the Digital Steering Committee Chair as to how to proceed with the title(s) in question and the Chair will present the recommendation to the Steering Committee for a decision.

V. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the WPLC Selection Committee and the WPLC Collection Development Committee who will recommend changes or revisions to the WPLC Digital Library Steering Committee on an as needed basis. The WPLC Board reviews and makes final approval.

Initial policy drafted and approved by WPLC Board, Jan 2012.

Policy revised and approved 2015, 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2023.