Collection Development at the Crossroads:
The Intersection of Changing Technologies & Evolving Roles

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INTRODUCTION: WORKFLOW ANALYSIS PROJECTS

THE QUESTION

How can library personnel best collaborate to support a collection development program encompassing books and serials in a variety of continuously-evolving formats?

Why emphasize evolving technologies?

- Much of our workflow was developed at a time when print was the norm, and e-resources were seen as "exotic" or at least as the exception. We sought to examine how we might redesign our workflow to more effectively handle material in a variety of formats.

Why emphasize collaboration?

- Our library operates under a collegial management system of shared governance. We sought to investigate the extent to which our workflow reflects that cooperative model, and to look for new opportunities for collaboration.

- We also sought to examine how our workflow might best support a collaborative model that takes advantage of each participant's strengths and allows each to pursue interesting and challenging work.

PARALLEL WORKFLOW ANALYSIS PROJECTS

In order to explore the intersection of changing technologies and evolving job responsibilities, librarians at Gustavus Adolphus College conducted parallel workflow analyses:

- The systems librarian coordinated a collection development workflow analysis

- The e-resources librarian coordinated an e-resources management workflow analysis

A Homegrown Approach

- Many of our staff members attended a MINITEX workshop on workflow analysis in fall 2008, and brought back to the library a sense of excitement about the ways workflow analysis might help us improve our processes and free up space for new projects.

- Hiring an outside consultant to conduct a comprehensive analysis of library workflow was not an option, so we decided to see what we could do with a home-grown workflow analysis project.

<div align="center">**WEEDING PROJECT**</div>

THE QUESTION

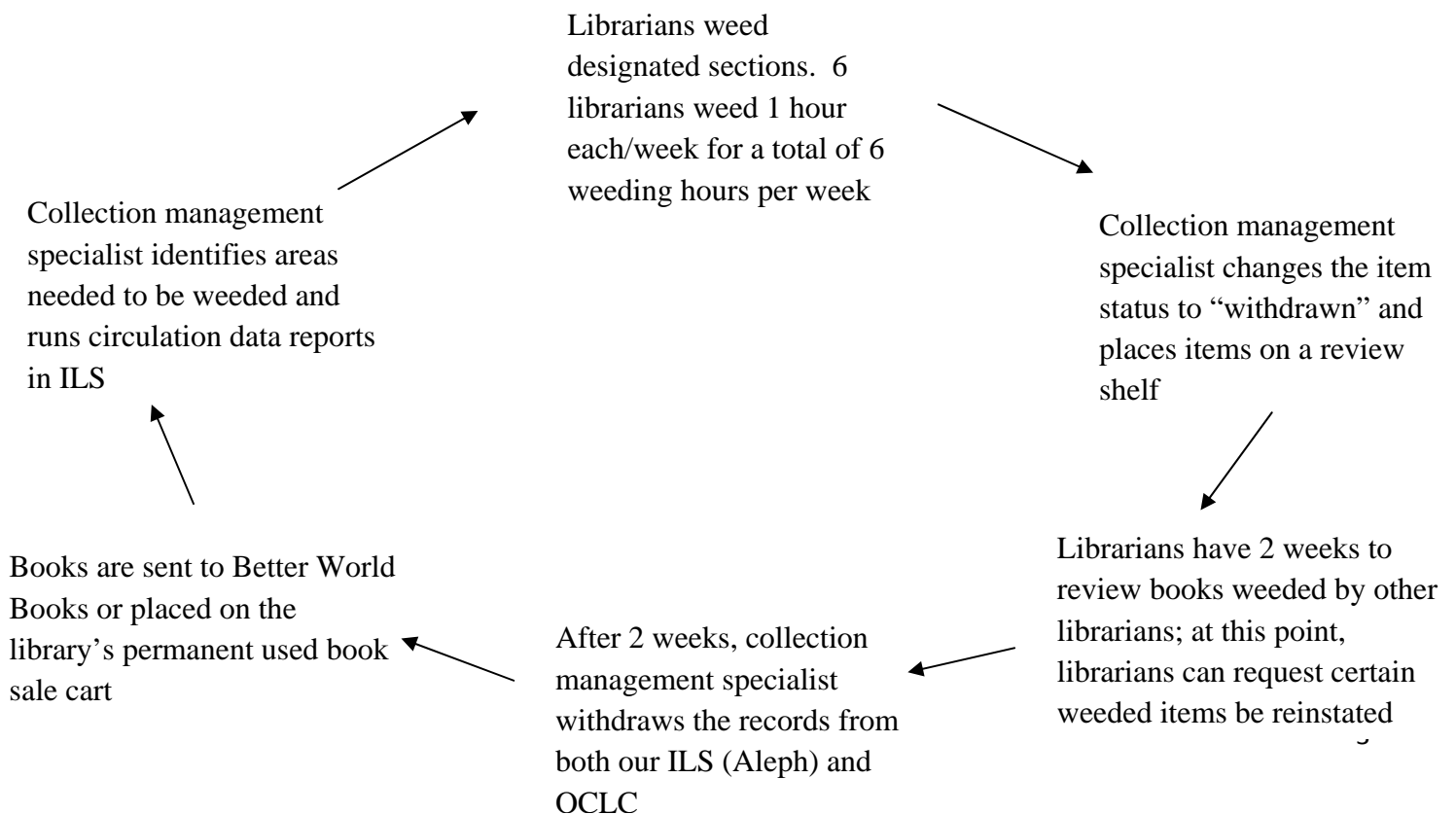How can library personnel best collaborate to create an efficient and effective weeding plan?

The plan is a work in progress – we are analyzing the new procedures in terms of workflow as we are in the process of developing and implementing them.

MOTIVATING FACTORS

- Although librarians have weeded the collection on an as-needed basis throughout the years, **the collection is overdue to be weeded systematically**.
- As a teaching library, our collection is tied directly to the curriculum. As the curriculum grows and evolves, the library collection must be positioned to do the same. Developing a weeding program through the lens of workflow analysis allows us to **respond proactively to changes in the curriculum now and in the future**.
- We desire to build a weeding plan that **draws on available tools** (such as circulation data) to help inform decisions about the collection.

WORKFLOW ANALYSIS

Step 1: Document the weeding process

Librarians weed designated sections. 6 librarians weed 1 hour each/week for a total of 6 weeding hours per week

Collection management specialist identifies areas needed to be weeded and runs circulation data reports in ILS

Collection management specialist changes the item status to "withdrawn" and places items on a review shelf

Books are sent to Better World Books or placed on the library's permanent used book sale cart

After 2 weeks, collection management specialist withdraws the records from both our ILS (Aleph) and OCLC

Librarians have 2 weeks to review books weeded by other librarians; at this point, librarians can request certain weeded items be reinstated

Step 2: Identify what works and potential areas of concern

<u>What works</u>

- Librarians complete a weeding form (included below) to indicate what they weeded and how long it took. There is also space to indicate which librarian reviewed each set of weeded materials. The collection management specialist can also use the form to keep track of procedures. The tool allows employees to communicate with each other about what area was done, where to start next and who did the weeding.

- The collection management specialist changes the item process status to "withdrawn" in the catalog before books are placed on the review shelf in the staff workspace area. (This does not delete the records.) Since books will sit on the review shelf for at least 2 weeks before being deleted, this allows us to keep the catalog up-to-date. Patrons viewing records of books on the review shelf will also see the item process status of "withdrawn."

- The review shelf itself allows the books to be housed and reviewed after they have been weeded (but before they have been deleted). This provides for multiple eyes to consider books being put forward for weeding. The weeding forms are also housed at the review shelf, making it a one-stop shopping area for weeding questions.

- The collection management specialist keeps detailed records of everything that has been withdrawn. The data allow us both to further study weeding procedures and to analyze how our collection evolves during this project.

<u>Potential areas of concern</u>

- ILS-generated call number reports, which include circulation data, are complicated to use. The reports are not sorting correctly by call number, making it very difficult to check how many times a particular title has circulated.

- Items with attached order numbers (usually standing orders) in the ILS require extra steps to withdraw, complicating the workflow.

- Finding time to weed continues to be a challenge, especially when staff members are stretched thin already by other demands.

TOOLS UTILIZED - WEEDING

- Our collection development policy provides direction for weeding criteria; during the initial steps of this process, we realized the policy needs to be updated.
- The weeding form (below) is used by librarians and the Collection Management Specialist to communicate about weeding endeavors.

Procedures for weeding:
1) Write the date weeded and initial.
2) Write the call # range and time spent weeding (NOTE: this is only for purposes of workflow analysis)
3) Give the truck with weeded items to Melissa so that the item process status can be changed.
4) Melissa will put the items on the review shelf along with a deadline date of 2 weeks in which the items must be reviewed, after which time the items will be withdrawn.

Procedures for Reviewing: Check through the items in a section and check near your name. Pull aside any items that should not be withdrawn.

Weeded By Initial			Weeding (Minutes)	status changed		
						Barbara Dan Julie Edi Anna Michelle Jeff

INITIAL FINDINGS

- Initial findings point to a definite **need to investigate other products**, like OCLC's Collection Analysis, that would help us better analyze our collection. Due to a tight budget, we will need to explore alternatives that are less expensive. We will want to see if there are any open source products that could meet our needs.

- **Time will always be an issue**. Librarians will need to find ways to prioritize weeding among our many other duties. We will also continue to support the collection management specialist as she balances weeding with her other responsibilities.

- Library faculty work with other faculty across campus to build our collection. Every academic department orders books for the collection. How might we **involve faculty as we weed our**

collection, drawing on their expertise to purge outdated material and point out gaps in the collection?

E-RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PROJECT

THE QUESTION

How can library personnel best collaborate to develop an effective and efficient e-resources management program?

- We define e-resources broadly to include electronic databases and indexes, e-journal packages, individual e-journals, electronic reference works, and e-books.

- Our goal is to identify strategies for developing a more streamlined, efficient, and effective workflow.

MOTIVATING FACTORS

- **Changing technologies, changing roles:** As we move to an increasingly electronic collection, we see both a need and an opportunity for more collaboration between the e-resources librarian and serials manager.

- **Strategic planning:** An e-resources management workflow analysis is the first initiative in our new strategic plan for e-resources management.

TOOLS UTILIZED

Workflow Analysis Worksheet *(please be specific and enter as many steps as needed)*

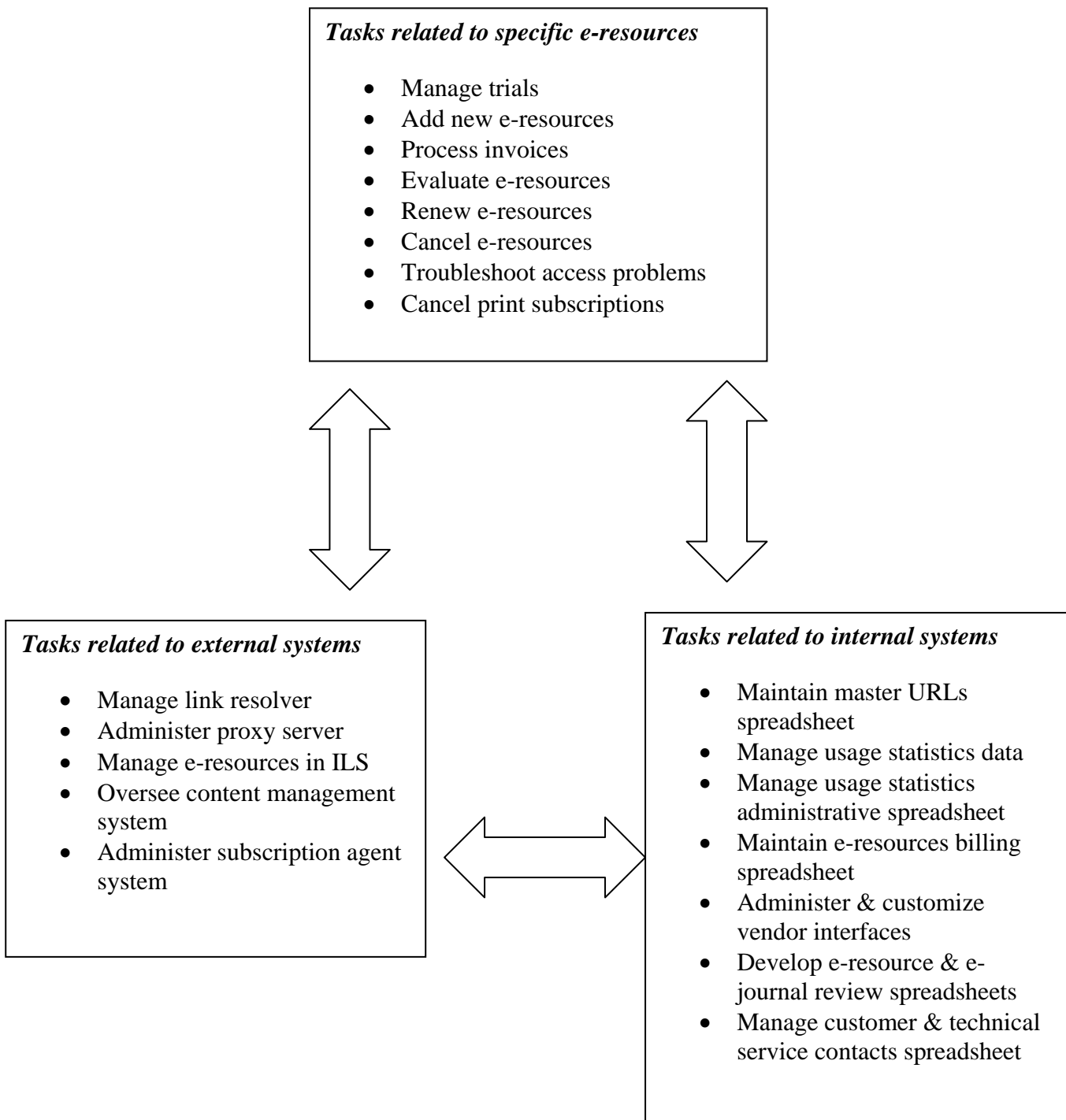| Task Name:					
Related Tasks:					
Task Goal:					
Task Frequency:					
Task Personnel:					
Other Personnel Consulted:					
Documentation Consulted:					
Recommendations:					
Step #	**Description**	**Why?**	**Frequency**	**Personnel**	**Notes/Questions**

1					

WORKFLOW ANALYSIS - E-RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

We analyzed our current e-resources workflow and made initial recommendations for changes.

We will continue to identify changes that may improve our program, implement them, and then assess their effectiveness.

Sampling of Workflow Analysis Tasks Analyzed

Tasks related to specific e-resources

- Manage trials
- Add new e-resources
- Process invoices
- Evaluate e-resources
- Renew e-resources
- Cancel e-resources
- Troubleshoot access problems
- Cancel print subscriptions

Tasks related to external systems

- Manage link resolver
- Administer proxy server
- Manage e-resources in ILS
- Oversee content management system
- Administer subscription agent system

Tasks related to internal systems

- Maintain master URLs spreadsheet
- Manage usage statistics data
- Manage usage statistics administrative spreadsheet
- Maintain e-resources billing spreadsheet
- Administer & customize vendor interfaces
- Develop e-resource & e-journal review spreadsheets
- Manage customer & technical service contacts spreadsheet

8

INITIAL FINDINGS – E-RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

- **Our workflow needs to support a variety of task types**, including technical, information-gathering, decision-making, and communication tasks.

- **We cannot separate e-journal management from print journal management**; they are intertwined in terms of subscription options (e.g., print with online) as well as subscription terms (e-resource licensing terms may affect print subscriptions).

- **Our e-resources management program is dispersed across too many different locations** (internal systems such as spreadsheets, e-mail folders, and paper files). This arrangement provides too many opportunities for inefficiency, duplication of effort, and errors.

- **An electronic resource management (ERM) system would help centralize our program and make it less dispersed**. We would like to explore the feasibility of a shared ERM system for e-resources (at the database level) and e-journals (at the title level). The architecture for such as system could get quite complicated.

- **The e-resources librarian and serials manager should collaborate more on managing external systems,** such as our content management system, proxy server administration, and link resolver. Such collaboration would have the benefits of cross-training, bringing our individual expertise to the table, and reducing redundancies in our workflow.

- **Our current system for gathering and organizing usage statistics is extremely inefficient and time-consuming**.

- **We need to update our collection development policy** to better reflect the current state of e-resources and to better guide us into the future of e-resources.

- **Our licensing approval system created a bottleneck at the e-resources librarian**. With a clarified and updated licensing policy, the serials manager will handle e-journal licensing and consult with the e-resources librarian if needed.

- **We need to clarify and update our e-resource & e-journal access policies**: what belongs in the ILS, what belongs in the link resolver, what belongs on our subject guides?

- **We identified new opportunities for collaboration with other staff.** For example, our acquisitions manager (who has not to date been involved with e-resources management) will help with adding our e-resources to the ILS, exploring ERM options, and gathering, organizing, and interpreting usage statistics.

INITIAL FINDINGS – PARALLEL WORKFLOW ANALYSIS PROJECTS

Evolving technologies

Finding: Our collection development and e-resources management workflow analyses both suggest that we need **improved systems to support a more effective workflow**.

Next step: Improve existing systems and explore new ones.

- Work with consortial office to improve ILS reports in order to better support collection development efforts.

- Explore affordable or open source collection analysis tools and electronic resource management systems (that can potentially support *both* databases and e-journals).

Finding: We need to **clarify and update our collection development policy** to support both book weeding projects and e-resources collection development.

Next step: Revise our collection development policy.

- It should not only reflect our current physical and electronic collection but also be flexible enough to accommodate changing technologies.

Finding: Many aspects of our workflow are too closely tied to an **outdated print-based model**.

Next step: Explore ways to expand our workflow to more effectively encompass print and electronic formats.

- Create a collection development program for books that more effectively considers e-books, electronic reference titles, and other electronic material.

- Explore systems that will help the serials manager more efficiently manage both print and e-journal subscriptions. Expand the serials manager's role to allow more autonomy in terms of managing e-journals, rather than treating them as a special category of material about which she needs to consult with librarians.

- The ILS access policy needs to be connected to a broader access policy that also includes points of access such as the content management system, link resolver, and others.

INITIAL FINDINGS – PARALLEL WORKFLOW ANALYSIS PROJECTS

Collaboration

Finding: Many systems at first glance seem to belong only to the workflow of collection management or e-resources management; but upon further examination, we find many instances of **overlap and possibilities for collaboration**.

Next step: More closely examine the intersections of collection management and e-resources management workflow. Explore potential benefits of more deliberate collaboration in these areas.

- Systems of potential overlap include the ILS, link resolver, WorldCat (as an e-resource subscription that actually includes the content of our catalog), and others.

- We can collaborate to clarify our access policy for the ILS, including what material we will catalog and at what level of detail.

- Collection management and e-resources specialists can learn from each other. For instance, if our book collection becomes increasingly electronic, e-resources specialists can share with collection management specialists their expertise regarding e-resource access, licensing, and ownership issues.

- Increased collaborative work will lead to fewer information bottlenecks, more cross-training, and we hope, to increased efficiencies and innovation as individuals bring their respective expertise to a project.

Finding: We identified opportunities for collaboration with staff that will contribute to a more effective workflow, with the added benefit of **taking better advantage of staff skills and expertise**.

Next step: Explore changes that will contribute to both a more successful workflow and more interesting work for staff.

- Our serials manager's role is expanding her role to include expanded responsibilities for e-resources management, including participating in proxy server and link resolver administration and coordinating licensing for e-journals.

- Our acquisitions manager (who has not to date been involved with e-resources management) will help with adding our e-resources to the ILS, exploring ERM options, and gathering, organizing, and interpreting usage statistics.

- Expanded and more challenging work for staff both creates more interesting work for them and supports the library's strategic initiative of providing a career path within the library for non-faculty staff to grow in their professional responsibilities.

INITIAL FINDINGS – PARALLEL WORKFLOW ANALYSIS PROJECTS

Collaboration, continued

Finding: In both our collection development and e-resources management programs, we are looking for ways to **better collaborate with classroom faculty** to build and weed our collections.

Next step: Explore ways to collaborate on gathering and organizing information to support collection development decisions for books, journals, and other resources in both physical and electronic formats.

- Our library is currently engaged in a comprehensive review of library support for the disciplines, in which we provide faculty with a view of our collection as a whole, including book orders and allocations, print and e-journal subscription costs and usage statistics, and e-resource cost and usage statistics.

- When this resources review process is complete, we will evaluate it to determine what worked, and how we might improve our information-gathering, organization, and communication processes in the future.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

- **Determine timelines for next steps**. The best intentions will flounder without a clear plan and timeline to move forward. We will determine which steps to pursue next, when, and how.

- **Share results with all library staff**. Our collegial management system provides for both autonomous and collaborative work; we need to be deliberate in sharing our initial findings with all library staff, ensuring buy-in for both these projects and continuing workflow analyses. Sharing results with all library employees further allows us to draw on collective wisdom for plotting next steps.

- **Finalize assessment plans**. As we continue to pare the collection and face difficult collection development decisions within tightening budgets, the library must demonstrate how it continues to manage our resources in a responsible manner. Assessment data indicating results are essential.