

**Promoting a Juvenile Awards Approval Plan:  
Using Collaboration and Selected Projects for Improved Visibility and  
Findability to Promote Juvenile Collections in Academic Libraries**

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**Abstract:** This article describes a project to promote an approval plan for purchasing award-winning juvenile books. The overall project utilizes a combination of projects for promoting awareness and use of the awards books and the juvenile collection in general. The promotion plan included collaborative work with teacher education faculty, projects to increase the visibility of the juvenile collection in the library, and projects to improve the findability of the juvenile books via the online catalog and an online subject guide. Initial assessment of the plan indicates some success with increased book circulation and increased use of the online guide.

**Keywords.** Collection development, collection management, academic libraries, approval plans, juvenile literature, juvenile collections, case study, children's literature, awards, promotion, librarian-teacher collaboration, academic libraries -- relations with faculty

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## INTRODUCTION

Managing a juvenile collection in an academic library is probably one of the more unique responsibilities to which an academic librarian may be assigned. Unlike many other subject areas and genres, a juvenile collection is a collection for which some patrons may question its value for academic work or for which some may express surprise upon learning that it even exists at a university or college library. On the other hand, students and faculty in teacher education and school librarianship programs benefit greatly from access to a robust collection of juvenile literature for use with course assignments and research.

For academic librarians, especially those who are unfamiliar with collecting children's and young adult literature, managing a juvenile collection may be challenging at first. Beyond learning the nature of juvenile collections, utilizing appropriate selection tools, and investigating stakeholder needs, librarians who select for a juvenile collection may explore additional means to make title selection and acquisition more efficient. They also may consider efforts or projects to increase patron awareness, usage, and appreciation of the juvenile collection and to foster a stronger liaison relationship with teacher education faculty and students. Possible options for consideration may include: developing an acquisition approval plan for juvenile books; initiating collaborative efforts in planning and promotion with education faculty; planning promotional events and library instruction in juvenile literature; designing and maintaining online resources related to juvenile literature in general and to the library's juvenile collection in particular; and working with cataloging librarians to enhance the catalog records to facilitate in locating and selecting appropriate items from the collection. This paper describes a project at Auburn University Libraries to manage the juvenile collection more efficiently and effectively. The

promotion plan includes projects to increase collaboration, visibility, and findability to promote the use of the juvenile collection and especially of the new books acquired through an approval plan for juvenile award, medals, and honors.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Many of the publications on juvenile collections in academic libraries provide descriptions of guidelines, tips and recommendations of resources, the rationale for juvenile literature in academic libraries, discussions about classification and location of juvenile materials, or descriptions of projects involving a juvenile collection in an academic library, especially in cases of projects related to special collections of a particular cultural or historical nature. However, there are fewer publications that focus on projects and issues related to marketing and promotion of general juvenile collections in academic libraries.

As is already noted, the assignment to manage the juvenile collection may appear challenging to academic librarians who have never worked much with children's and youth adult literature and who may have never had any training in juvenile literature. There are publications that provide guidelines or tips to librarians new to this genre. Hirsch (2006) describes a personal account of her initial years as the children's literature librarian and provides some basic recommendations for collection management. Bay (2001) gives a general overview of collecting juvenile literature along with a brief review of the information needs of the primary patrons, education faculty and teacher education students. He also gives recommendations for resources related to reference books, awards, and selection tools. Williams (2011) describes common information needs of education students and the general characteristic of juvenile literature. She

provides several tips and recommendations for planning collection development, assessing the collection, and selecting items. Other publications provide descriptions and recommendations of more specific projects related to juvenile literature collections. Rice-Lively and Immroth (1993) discuss the question of developing a readers' advisory for an academic library's juvenile collection. Morris (2010) describes her study of the preservation needs of children's literature at a university library and provides recommendations for preservation strategies.

Crosetto and Horan (2007) explore the rationale for having juvenile collections in academic libraries by reviewing not only the way the collections meet the needs of faculty and students in education, but also citing examples of how juvenile literature is being used for research in other social sciences and in other academic disciplines. Similarly Williams and Peterson (2009) address one of the newer genres in juvenile literature in a study which investigates graphic novel collections of various classifications of academic libraries. As part of their review they explore the value of collecting graphic novels for teacher education and librarianship programs and the reasons for including this genre in an academic collection.

As part of a survey study, Frierson-Adams (2001) discusses issues with classification of juvenile fiction and the selection of locations for housing a juvenile collection in the library. She also explores data regarding the use of the collection by university-affiliated patrons as well as by outside users. She concludes that libraries should evaluate how classification and collection housing are meeting patron needs and that they should make adjustments that are consistent and effective for patron use. In another article, Frierson-Adams (2002) provides concise guidelines for cataloging juvenile monographs for academic libraries using USMARC format and in accordance with AACR2R rules.

A significant portion of the literature relates to specific projects in academic libraries. Concerning collection promotion, Charnigo and Suther (2007) describe an annual event during which the juvenile titles acquired within the past year are presented to attendees along with information about the library's juvenile collection. Attendees enjoy refreshments, browse the new titles, participate in book readings, and watch a preview of the most recent winner of the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Video. In regard to collection evaluation, Nevin (1994) reports on a children's literature evaluation project using a user satisfaction survey and checking the collection against a number of significant annual lists of recommended titles. However, Nevin notes that her survey results indicate that user dissatisfaction with the children's literature collection generally stemmed from cataloging and shelving issues and not from the selection of books in the collection.

A number of other publications describe projects to develop more specialized juvenile collections, including popular culture titles (McCombs 1993), Native American children's literature (Bingham 2004), German language children's literature (Armstrong 2003), and a special collection of children's books, most of which are first editions (Uhl 2004).

Some publications provide recommendations based on successful projects in acquisition and promotion of juvenile collections. Hirsch (2008) describes the effective use of acquisition and weeding, accessibility, book displays and exhibits, along with library instruction to promote the collection to both students and faculty. Thornton (2010) gives similar recommendations, but focuses on a project which uses an automatic acquisition plan to expand the collection to include a greater representation of international or global children's literature. The project described in this paper is similar to those of both Hirsch and Thornton in that it reports on a combination of

projects to promote awareness and use of approval plan acquisitions and of library resources on juvenile literature.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This article describes a project for developing and promoting the Auburn University Libraries' Juvenile Collection, a circulating collection of more than 50,000 titles with publications dating from 1850 to the present. The collection is maintained and developed to serve the needs of students and faculty in the teacher education program, the school librarianship program, and any other program that may be researching topics related to juvenile literacy. To meet those needs, the primary purpose for the juvenile collection is to provide access to titles that are currently popular for use by educators in K-12 classrooms and school libraries.

The project was planned and implemented by the Auburn University Libraries' Education Librarian in collaboration with faculty in the College of Education and the Libraries' Monographic Services Coordinator. Prior to beginning the project, the librarian only acquired juvenile titles for the collection via firm order. Juvenile books were selected primarily in four ways. Purchase requests from faculty and/or students were few and were usually accepted and filled. The librarian examined the juvenile collection for areas where it needed updating and additional development. He also read book reviews in the literature and reviewed book slips from the primary book vendor. Finally the librarian developed a list of eight children's and young adult book awards, medals, and honors from which he would order titles each year.

The project began with the intention to make the process of ordering and receiving the award books more efficient. The primary book vendor offered an approval plan for which the

librarian could build a profile from a list of 133 awards, honors, and medals. The librarian could indicate the award or honor for which he wanted to receive the books and the ones for which he wanted to receive slips. This would allow him the option to move the bulk of juvenile award selections over to the plan in order to be more efficient.

An additional purpose for switching to an approval plan was to expand the number of awards, medals, and honors that the library was to receive annually and therefore build a more robust collection. Acquiring a larger number of books annually would represent an increase in the cost of developing the juvenile collection. The fact that some students in the past had indicated that they were unaware of the juvenile collection at the library was a concern when considering the increase in spending that the plan would require. At the time, there also were not any library instruction sessions on juvenile literature being scheduled nor were there any promotional events in the Libraries for education students taking courses in children's and young adult literature. Finally the education librarian and his colleague in Monographic Services recognized the need to enhance the catalog records and other online resources to facilitate the patrons' ability to locate information about juvenile award books and the juvenile collection in general. With the intention of promoting better awareness of the books and encouraging higher usage, the librarian initiated the discussion for setting up the approval plan and promoting it to patrons.

### *Collaboration*

To begin the process of building the approval plan profile, the librarian scheduled a number of collaborative meetings with the book chair from the College of Education, whose

specialization was children's media and school librarianship. During the meetings twenty-six awards and honors were selected for receiving the books automatically through the plan.

Previously only the books for sixteen awards were purchased annually. Thirty-four other awards and honors were chosen for notification by slips. Subsequently, the profile was completed and submitted to the book vendor to set up the account.

Following the start of the approval plan, the librarian contacted the course instructors for teacher education classes in children's media and young adult literature to discuss the plan and to propose possible collaborative efforts in the future. The instructors agreed to encourage students to use the approval plan books and the rest of the juvenile collection, especially when needed for their course assignments. The instructors also accepted an invitation to schedule library instruction sessions on juvenile literature for their classes. As a result, library sessions began to be presented during which the students were informed about the juvenile collection, the award books on the approval plan, and appropriate print reference resources for juvenile literature. The sessions also informed students about the library's online resources, including the online subject guide, the library databases, and useful websites. Lastly, some of the course instructors expressed interest in developing future collaborative activities and assignments that would encourage more student use of the collection.

### *Visibility*

As noted before, it had not been uncommon for university students to state that they were not aware that the Libraries had a juvenile collection. In fact, some education students were searching for juvenile books at other libraries (school and public libraries) or purchasing them



from local bookstores. Even some faculty were not fully aware of what books were part of the juvenile collection and how the selection of new titles was being done. Other than a colorful sign identifying the location of the collection, there were few visible indications of where the collection was housed and what it might contain. The start of the approval plan appeared to be an appropriate opportunity to improve the visibility of the collection and promote its use.

The first step for promoting the newly acquired books was a special book display located in a space near the main entrance to the library. The Marketing and Public Relations office in the Libraries printed and mounted a new colorful sign to promote the display and to inform patrons that the books were award-winning children's and young adult books. For additional visual appeal, the dust covers from the new books were kept and some of them were used to in the display for decoration. Since the artwork on many dust covers was not presented on the book covers, this allowed patrons an opportunity to appreciate them.



**Figure 1** Children & Young Adult Book Display in the Library Main Lobby



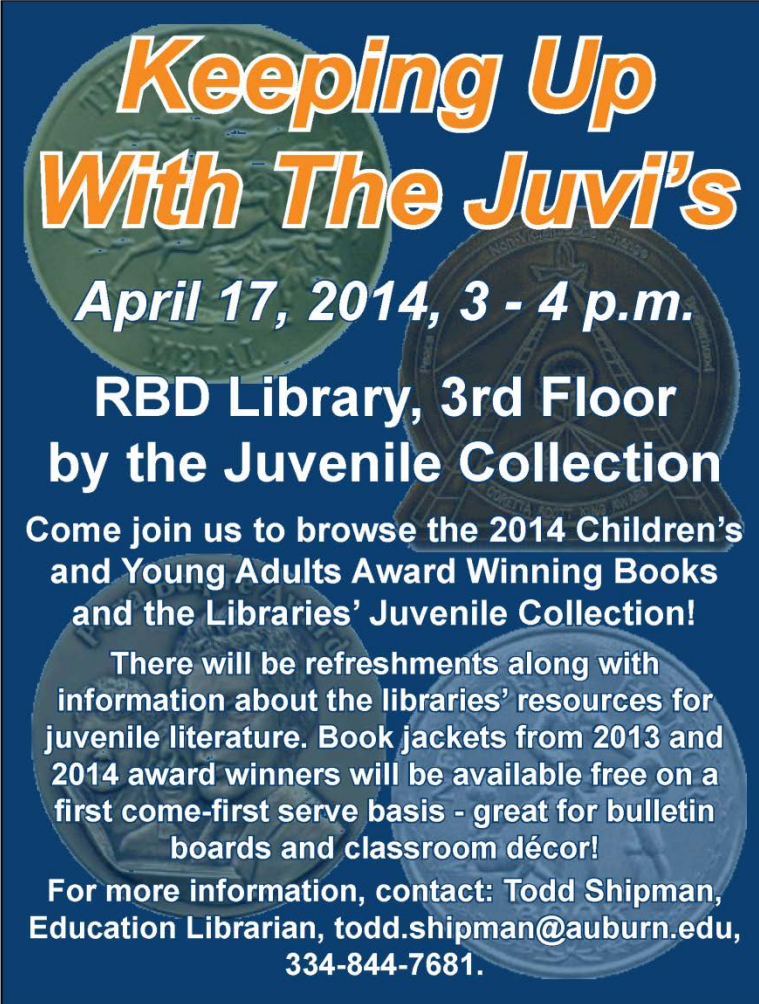
**Figure 2** Sign for Children & Young Adult Book Display in the Library Main Lobby

The dust covers also helped patrons to have a better visual recollection of the titles in the display, especially in cases where the book itself may have been checked out at the time. The book display remained in that location for the duration of the academic term. Then the books were relocated to the juvenile collection.

In addition to the book display, a special event was planned to promote the acquisition of the new books and improve awareness of the location of the juvenile collection. The librarian scheduled the date of the event in collaboration with the course instructors in the effort to hold the event at a time when most of their students would likely be able to attend. Students and faculty from the teacher education classes were specifically invited, but general announcements for the event were also posted in the library and on selected library webpages. The event was designed to be a “come and go” activity for patrons to take the opportunity to examine the winners of the awards, medals, and honors. The event did not include a spoken presentation or formal program. The books were relocated from the display to tables in the area near the juvenile collection. They were grouped and labeled by awards. Handouts with information about library resources on juvenile literature were also provided along with refreshments. As an additional incentive for attending the event, the dust covers were placed on nearby tables and attendees were invited to take them to use for classroom decoration.

## *Findability*

As part of the plan for promoting the new books from the approval plan, enhancements were made to the catalog records and to the library online subject guides in order to improve the findability of the new award-winning books along with information about them and other juvenile literature. Previously the catalog records for a significant number of juvenile books included notes providing Lexile scores, information related to the Accelerated Reader and Reading Counts literacy programs, and awards information.

The image is a promotional flyer for a special event. It features a dark blue background with several circular medallions in shades of green and blue, some containing text and others with intricate designs. The main title 'Keeping Up With The Juvi's' is written in a large, bold, orange font with a white outline. Below the title, the date and time 'April 17, 2014, 3 - 4 p.m.' are displayed in a white, sans-serif font. The location 'RBD Library, 3rd Floor by the Juvenile Collection' is also in white. The event description, 'Come join us to browse the 2014 Children's and Young Adults Award Winning Books and the Libraries' Juvenile Collection!', is in white. A paragraph of details follows, mentioning refreshments and book jackets. Contact information for Todd Shipman, Education Librarian, is provided at the bottom in white.

**Keeping Up  
With The Juvi's**  
**April 17, 2014, 3 - 4 p.m.**  
**RBD Library, 3rd Floor  
by the Juvenile Collection**  
**Come join us to browse the 2014 Children's  
and Young Adults Award Winning Books  
and the Libraries' Juvenile Collection!**  
There will be refreshments along with  
information about the libraries' resources for  
juvenile literature. Book jackets from 2013 and  
2014 award winners will be available free on a  
first come-first serve basis - great for bulletin  
boards and classroom décor!  
For more information, contact: Todd Shipman,  
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334-844-7681.

**FIGURE 3** Announcement for “Keeping Up with the Juvi’s” Special Event.

Although the notes in the records, especially the notes for award-winning books, were helpful for the findability of the items in the catalog, the plan for promoting the new awards books called for additional enhancement to the records. For all titles acquired via the approval plan, the notes about the selected awards were checked and additional notes added when needed. Most importantly, however, all the new books would have the note “Jaward” added to the records. This note would allow patrons to find all of the juvenile award books received via the approval plan with one simple search.

A new online subject guide for juvenile literature was created as another tool to improve the findability of the new awards books, the other titles in the juvenile collection, and the libraries’ related online resources. The guide included lists of award-winning books for each year that libraries had received titles via the approval plan. Links to library databases for children’s literature and literary criticism were also provided and included additional links to free internet websites containing reviews of juvenile books, lists of earlier award-winning titles, and information on reading levels and Lexile scores. Given the lack of familiarity that some patrons may have with browsing the PZ call numbers from the Library of Congress Classification system, tips were provided for patrons to help them browse the stacks, particularly when searching by author. Lastly the guide provided a list of selected reference books on juvenile literature as well as links to juvenile e-journals in the online catalog.

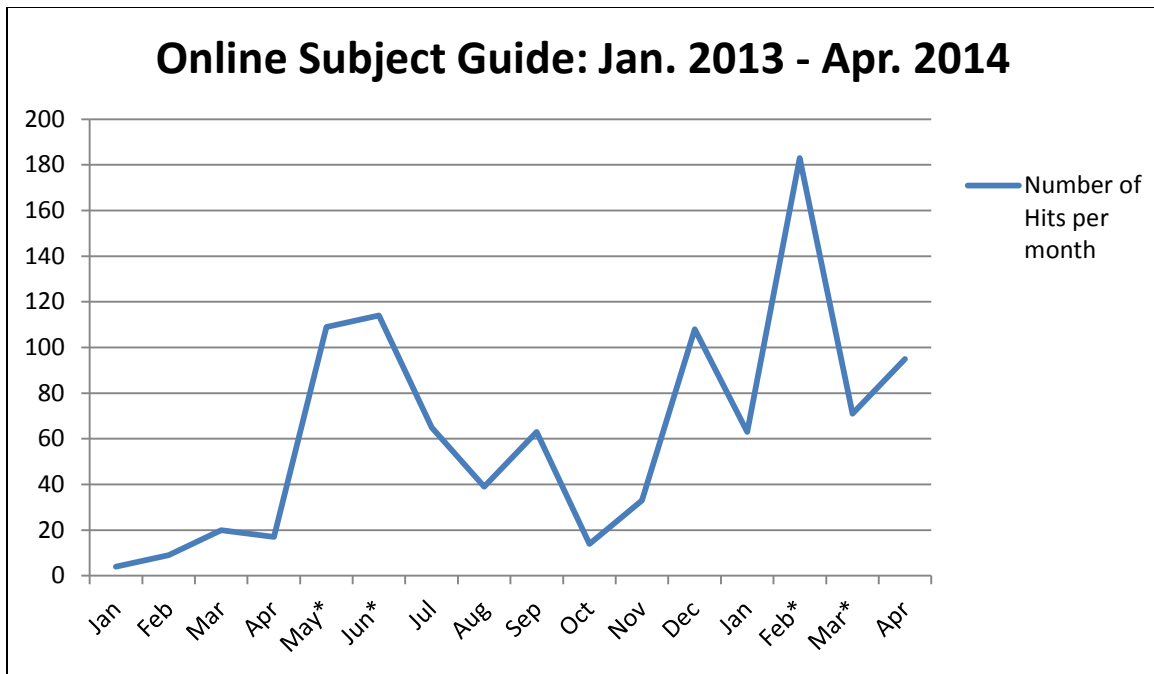
### *Initial Assessment of the Plan*

The initial assessment of the plan was made using two sources of data: the circulation data for the new books and the usage statistics for the online subject guide. The year prior to the start of

the approval plan the library purchased 102 juvenile books with 33 of them being winners of the eight selected awards, medals, or honors: the Caldecott Medal and Honors, the Coretta Scott King Book Awards, the Mildred L. Batchelder Award, the Michael L. Printz Award/Honor for Excellence in Young Adult Literature, the Newbery Medal and Honors, the Pura Belpré Award and Honors, the Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Award/Honors, and the Theodor Seuss Geisel Medal and Honors. Of the 33 books, 21 (63.6%) circulated at least once during the twelve months following acquisition. For the first year of the approval plan, 215 award books were acquired representing twenty-six awards and honors. Regarding the books representing the same eight awards purchased the year before, the library acquired 32 titles with 29 (90%) of them having circulated at least once during the first twelve months.

**TABLE 1** Circulation Data for Eight Selected Awards

<b>Selected Awards</b>	<b>2012 number of titles acquired</b>	<b>2012 number of titles circulated at least once</b>	<b>2012 percentage of titles circulated at least once</b>	<b>2013 number of titles acquired</b>	<b>2013 number of titles circulated at least once</b>	<b>2013 percentage of titles circulated at least once</b>
Caldecott	4	4	100%	6	6	100%
Coretta Scott King	4	3	75%	7	7	100%
Batchelder	2	1	50%	1	1	100%
Printz	5	2	40%	5	5	100%
Newbery	3	1	33.30%	4	3	75%
Pura Belpré	6	4	66.60%	3	2	66.60%
Sibert	5	3	60%	4	3	75%
Theodor Seuss Geisel	4	3	75%	4	4	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>63.6%</b>	<b>32*</b>	<b>29*</b>	<b>90.6%*</b>
<b>*Totals for 2013 are reduced by two to reflect duplication. Two titles each received two of the selected awards for 2013.</b>						



**FIGURE 4** Usage Statistics for Online Subject Guide: January 2013–April 2014.

The increase in circulation of titles for the eight primary awards seemed to indicate that the combination of the various efforts to promote the approval plan books and the juvenile collection had achieved some initial success.

The usage statistics for the library online subject guide for juvenile literature also appeared to indicate that the library instruction sessions were instrumental in increasing student awareness of the online guide and consequently the library’s juvenile approval plan books. Usage data showed that during the first twelve months following the start of the approval plan there were 958 instances of users accessing one of the pages of the online guide. It is probable that the effort to present the online guide during library instruction sessions was instrumental in increasing usage. Prior to the start of the library instruction sessions, the guide averaged 12 hits per month. After the sessions began to be presented regularly, the monthly average increased to 68 hits a month. Regarding the use of the guide as it related to the approval plan acquisitions,

the pages containing the lists of the award books purchased on approval plan were accessed 322 times in the first 12 months accounting for 59% of online guide usage.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The project was developed in the effort to better serve the faculty and students of the College of Education who frequently need access to juvenile literature for assignments or projects, especially the books that have won notable awards, medals, or honors. Acquiring titles from a selected list of awards can save time for selecting librarians and library acquisitions personnel and it appeared to be a logical means to highlight the juvenile collection and to expand liaison services to the College of Education. Therefore the opportunity was taken to develop a plan to promote the approval plan and the entire juvenile collection by combining efforts in the areas of professional collaboration with teaching faculty, projects to improve the visibility of the new books and the juvenile collection, and projects improving the findability of these items on the libraries website and in the online catalog.

The collaboration with faculty in the College of Education was a key part of the promotion of the approval plan. Essentially all the projects involved in the overall promotional project involved some level of liaison work and/or professional collaboration. Including input from the professors into selections for the profile helped to foster interest in the project and created the opportunity to discuss other potential collaborative work with the librarian in the future. Although the faculty were already aware of the collection and its holdings, they expressed much appreciation for the librarian's collaborative efforts and for the implementation of the

approval plan. Their interest was evidenced by their decision to schedule the library instruction sessions and to encourage their students to attend the event for the juvenile award books.

Increasing the visibility of the juvenile collection, especially the newly acquired books, was essential to promoting the approval plan. The use of the book display and the event highlighting the juvenile award books was similar to projects described by Hirsch and by Charnigo and Suther. In addition to featuring the new award winners, it was a key effort in making the juvenile collection more accessible. Holding the event next to the juvenile collection encouraged attendees to explore and find additional titles. Many of the attendees expressed gratitude to the library for having the event and for making them aware of the collection as well as the libraries print and electronic resources for juvenile literature and teacher education.

Finally, the enhancements to the catalog records and the development and design of the online subject guide for juvenile literature helped to improve the online findability of the approval plan books and other juvenile books. The usage statistics from the online guide, especially the lists of approval plan awards books, indicated a marked increase in use of the guide to locate the award winners. The increase in patron usage of the subject guide coincided with the arrival of the approval plan books and the start of library instruction classes where the librarian explained how to use the enhancements to the catalog records along with the resources presented in the guide. The increase in usage combined with the increase in books circulation for the primary award winning titles indicated some success in improving the findability of the approval plan books in particular.

The combination of all the projects to promote the approval plan appears to be a key part of making the promotion more effective. Faculty involvement and appreciation for the plan can be a most effective tool for promoting library collections to students. Projects such as book



displays, special events, catalog enhancements, and providing online resources may not only help to promote interest among the students, but they may also help to demonstrate more clearly the libraries' commitment to service and support for the academic programs. Further assessment is needed to learn more about how each effort or project within the plan can be improved or even replaced with newer and more effective projects. In any case, increased usage is a logical goal and desirable outcome for any collection manager. Careful collection curation benefits the library as well as its relationship with and support of users and academic units across campus.

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