

## **Collection Management at Bristol University Library**

Library Services at the University of Bristol are committed to preserving our heritage legacy collections and participating actively within an emerging national collection management framework. We also acknowledge the pressures on our library estate as we both respond flexibly to space requirements across the campus, and to further enhance the student experience.

This document explains the rationale used to inform how Library Services manage our print collections.

### **Background**

The relationship between library stock and the space it occupies is dynamic and requires careful management, both day to day and strategically. Student growth has led to significant pressure on library space and there is a need to redefine the nature of spaces within library buildings. As increasing space and financial demands are made on academic libraries, it is no longer practical, or economically possible, to adopt a policy of retaining the last copy of every title on the basis of possible future need.

At the national level academic research libraries are working towards the collective management of their low-use print collections. This important work has the potential to transform the definition of a 'research library', and to create a more open, reciprocal and cooperative community within Research Libraries UK (RLUK), of which Bristol is a member. Bristol is actively engaged in these discussions, which encompass potential service delivery models, data management models and tools, and working cooperatively to define a shared agenda across institutions.

### **Bristol and the UK Research Reserve (UKRR)**

Library Services are a member of UKRR. This membership allows us to benefit from participation in a distributed national research collection, and to withdraw lesser-used print journal runs when titles are already held in UKRR, secure in the knowledge that they remain available both locally and nationally. This is supported by the further benefit of expedited inter-library loan request fulfilment. Membership of UKRR also brings the professional responsibility of custodianship, and will require us to retain print journal holdings as appropriate.

### **Bristol and the national shared print strategy**

Library Services are engaged in the development of a national shared print strategy for research libraries. Through our membership of RLUK, we participated in a national collection management exercise in partnership with Online Computer Library Centre (OCLC). This enabled us and the peer institutions to gain insight into the RLUK aggregate collection; identifying material that is widely held, the material that is rare and, important, where that material is located. The report *Strength in Numbers*, published in 2016, revealed significant and, in some cases, challenging statistics to stimulate discussion in UK research libraries. The findings have given some context to make decisions about the development of shared print retention models. National consultation with Library Directors, including at Bristol, is helping to define the type of service model that would be most appropriate and desirable for the sector.

## **Bristol and the National Bibliographic Knowledgebase (NBK)**

In tandem with the shared print initiative, the development of a UK-wide digital infrastructure is being undertaken by Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) which will run on a platform supplied by OCLC. This will deliver a national bibliographic database that aggregates collections, availability data and usage data, with the potential to inform collection management decisions as well as other decision-making such as e-book version tracking, consortia purchasing and open access publishing.

Library Services are working with JISC to contribute our data to the pilot, and assist with thinking about the information architecture and data requirements of the NBK.

### **Categorising our Collections**

Library Services are actively evaluating, with a view to adopting, the University of Leeds collection categorisation in order to inform our retention policy.<sup>1</sup> This defines collections according to four categories:

**Heritage:** Collections of internationally or nationally significant depth and breadth which the library will continue to develop.

**Self-renewing:** Collections which do not have sufficient depth or breadth to be of national significance, but which are required to meet the needs of current research and teaching. Material will only be retained within these collections for as long as it is required.

**Legacy:** Collections which have historic strength. These may, in reflecting the output of a particular period or person, be of international or national significance, but they will have been developed to reflect current and recent research. Where these do not meet current research and teaching needs these will not be added to by using library funds.

**Finite:** These are collections which have neither historic strength, nor relevance to current teaching and research. These collections will be considered for withdrawal from the Library's collections.

### **University of Bristol library collections**

As national custodians of the distributed shared research collection and of print culture our responsibility is balanced with the urgent pressures facing us at institutional level. The benefits and security of a national scheme will help us with the challenging collection management decisions we face within our libraries.

We are committed to making these decisions in a responsible and sensitive manner. We have adopted national and international best-practice and advice, and are utilising current collection management tools available to us to perform national scarcity checking. We are making data-driven decisions to determine low-use items, whilst ensuring that copies are held nationally, including a copy in the British Library, and remain available to our researchers. When we find that this is not the case, we are retaining our copy at Bristol.

We are routinely withdrawing the print journals which are duplicated in our electronic journal collections where we are able to guarantee perpetual and secure access. Our membership of UKRR ensures that we conform to national guidelines to preserve and enhance the distributed national research collection.

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<sup>1</sup> Collections Strategy of Leeds University Library, 2013.

[https://library.leeds.ac.uk/.../file/859/collections\\_strategy\\_for\\_leeds\\_university\\_library](https://library.leeds.ac.uk/.../file/859/collections_strategy_for_leeds_university_library)

The national landscape around collection management is rapidly evolving as the momentum grows to make our HE library community more open and co-operative. Bristol is committed to being at the centre of this movement and is developing a content strategy that will reflect this.