
Book Reviews

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Guide to Ethics in Acquisitions. By Wyoma vanDuinkerken, Wendi Arant Kaspar, and Jeanne Harrell. Chicago: Association for Library Collections & Technical Services, 2015. 96 pages. \$35.00 softbound (ISBN: 978-0-8389-8701-8). ALCTS Acquisitions Guides.

As is true of the other books that are a part of the ALCTS Acquisitions Guides Series, the *Guide to Ethics in Acquisitions* continues and summarizes current conversations regarding an important part of acquisitions librarianship. The *Guide to Ethics in Acquisitions* by Wyoma vanDuinkerken, Wendi Arant Kaspar, and Jeanne Harrell covers the previous and current aspects of ethical acquisitions practices in an academic library. As acquisitions librarians, we are tasked with various responsibilities including budgeting, adjusting, and adhering to a variety of payment workflows, reporting expenditure data to institutional stakeholders, and collection development, all of which require us to be ethical stewards of library funding and resources. This guide not only clarifies some of the reasoning for previous acquisitions practices, largely because of lack of specific ethical guidelines for librarians, but also provides information on some of the newer situations that librarians encounter because of the changing nature of research and information today.

The guide begins with touching on the importance of ethics and what helps frame what we consider ethical treatment of a given situation. As the authors point out, we are all shaped by a different set of morals and values that are taught by our families or imparted by our cultures. Without a firm understanding of the difference between personal ethics and professional ethics, those that we hold in common as members of the American Library Association (ALA), it is very difficult for us as librarians to act in an ethical manner. The authors also touch on legal ethics, which are different from professional ethics because they are tied to written law. Legal ethics encompass those ethical guidelines or procedures that we follow not because of personal feeling or professional obligation but because they are dictated by law either on the state or federal level.

The aspect of the guide that I found most helpful as an acquisitions librarian was the discussion of the evolution and history of the ALA's Code of Ethics. Since ALA's creation in 1876, librarians have discussed and revised the Code of Ethics several times. As the guide discusses, it became apparent that acquisitions librarians needed more specific and clearer ethical guidelines than were provided by the ALA's Code of Ethics. The Association for Library Collections & Technical

Services (ALCTS) decided to create and put forth a set of supplemental guidelines to ALA's Code of Ethics to direct acquisitions librarians through the various situations that they find themselves in and help them make decisions in the most ethical manner possible.

Knowledge of the guidelines provided by ALCTS is essential to any acquisitions librarian regardless of library type. The authors also touch on the importance of reviewing your vendor choices and updating your acquisitions processes regularly to make sure that you are keeping in line with these guidelines and the ALA's Code of Ethics. They also review each of the twelve statements created for all acquisitions transactions to provide further information on the meaning and practice of fulfilling each of the statements. You can also find a copy of the "Code of Ethics of the American Library Association" and the "Guidelines for ALCTS Members to Supplement the American Library Association Code of Ethics, 1994" in the appendix of this book to ensure that acquisitions librarians have the guides at their finger tips.

The largest part of the guide deals with issues involving collection development. Though acquisitions is concerned with the acquiring and licensing of a particular item or subscription for the use of library patrons, the authors point out that making the best decisions with funding involves more than just purchasing an item and making sure it comes in. Acquisitions librarians need to think about collection development policies, scope of content, security of materials, checks and balances, cost of preservation, storage of materials, and collection access. Since we have to justify every purchase and ensure that all materials we purchase are available and accessible, additional ethical issues that used to only affect other areas within the library have become issues that acquisitions librarians have to contend with as well. Ethical issues concerning patron privacy and confidentiality because of patron requests and use of electronic resources now means that acquisitions librarians need to be making statements about how they are safe guarding patron information and about the openness of personal information that is kept for auditing purposes.

Guide to Ethics in Acquisitions provides a comprehensive look at ethical issues in acquisitions within an academic setting. However, I believe that as time goes on further discussion and updates to current ethical guidelines for acquisitions needs to occur in all libraries. This guide, as the authors were very clear in explaining, is meant largely for academic acquisitions librarians, with only general acquisitions ethical

practices being applicable to public and school libraries. I suspect that additional guides can be created for acquisitions librarians in public and school library settings. Ethical practice in school and public libraries seem to be a much more difficult environment to contend with given issues like requests to ban material by a student's parents or the school board and instances in which parents do not want children viewing certain materials that are accessible but purchased largely for adult patron use. My hope is that additional guides or future revisions will be provided to incorporate more information for public and school librarians dealing with ethical issues in acquisitions. The guide is very helpful and provides a good framework for reviewing and discussing current issues in ethics and acquisitions.—*Kristina M. Edwards (kedwards@ccsu.edu), Central Connecticut State University, New Britain, Connecticut*

Rightsizing the Academic Library Collection. By Suzanne M. Ward. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2015. 168 pages. \$60.00 softcover (ISBN: 978-0-8389-1298-0).

The author, the current head of collection management at Purdue University Libraries (West Lafayette, Indiana) and a long-time proponent of meeting user information needs with innovative collection development practices as reflected by her extensive record of scholarship, has written a provocative work that can serve as both a wake-up call and catalyst to action for academic librarians who manage collections. Ward introduces readers to the concept of “rightsizing,” a term adapted from the corporate world that can be used to encapsulate activities done to increase a library's overall floor space by reducing space devoted to storing physical collections. Effectively organized into five chapters, *Rightsizing the Academic Library Collection* provides a brief historical account of the state of affairs for academic library collections today, argues for the uncluttering and routine culling of physical collections based on current user needs, shows how to use a variety of data to make informed decisions, gives examples of actual rightsizing projects that can be duplicated, shows best practice workflows, and gives a glimpse into workable solutions that can be applied to make a library more relevant to its users. And, according to Ward, it is the user's needs (scholarly or otherwise) and positive library experiences that should provide the impetus for librarians to “rightsizing” (as opposed to supersize or wrongsize) their resource collections (viii).

Chapter 1 sets the tone by explaining how a large portion of academic libraries arrived in the twenty-first century with bloated physical collections with declining or, at best, static use by campus constituents. In all, the author did an impressive job constructing a literature review of the major research involving use studies of library collections and their relevant findings. The only drawback was the lack of inclusion of e-book use findings, which is steadily growing despite

the lack of a matured format.¹ Ward suggests wholesale adoption of electronic resource formats to distill physical collections to only those items that have demonstrated use to current users. Rightsizing is akin to adjusting a food recipe by mixing the right ingredients to get the desired results depending on the diner's taste expectations. In the library's case, librarians come up with the correct mix of resources in terms of formats, plus provide the necessary services to access information on the basis of predetermined rules and procedures. Whenever possible, libraries engaging in rightsizing practices must involve other nearby, system, consortial, regional, and potentially national libraries to ensure that the preservation of discarded items is done.

Chapter 2 focuses on how past practices of collection building, such as repeatedly purchasing resources on the basis of “just in case” notions or via large approval plans, have put academic libraries at odds with current users. Most libraries have run out of space even when able to add more space or relocate physical items to other storage facilities. Collections contain many resources that receive little or no use for a variety of reasons. Ward wants librarians to move from the old paradigm to a new one that morphs to “just in time,” another concept borrowed from the corporate world. This requires reducing print collections except in the case of major research institutions where comprehensiveness in collections is desired.

Chapter 3 takes librarians through the rightsizing process, from start to conclusion. Emphasizing the development of a goal or plan, already having a weeding plan in place, and transparent communication, Ward gives readers several approaches to making withdrawals of their physical collections. Exploiting technological innovations, such as multifaceted report generation, can more efficiently assist in the rightsizing process. Information on costs associated with undertaking similar projects was purposely not given, as each library is unique in terms of their situations. Instead, readers might benefit at this point from detailed instructions on how to calculate such expenses using staff salaries, hours of involvement, square footage needs, annual costs of physical item storage, or even if local regulations allow for the disposal of printed material in landfills. Other formats like VHS or microform disposal may incur additional costs as well, as they can be hazardous to the environment. In the end, Ward importantly emphasizes that there are costs, possibly more severe that can affect the usability of a library's collection, by not engaging in a rightsizing project.

Chapter 4 is devoted to how best to manage the overall rightsizing project. Proper care must be exercised to select and task one person with the authority and responsibility to oversee the rightsizing project from start to conclusion. The author importantly outlines the many eco-friendly ways of disposing a library's withdrawn items. Libraries should carefully consider any additional time spent on these activities