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Collection Development Policy: where does it start and where will it end?

[**Versión catalana** | **Versión castellana**]

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The Collection Development Policy of the Library embodies its commitment to developing its collection. The policy statement aims to set up a coherent collection in accordance with the objectives set out in the library's mission strategy, all the while taking into account the information needs of its users. This document is essential as it not only prescribes the materials on offer at the library, it also describes the fundamental nature of the library, details the library's scope as well as the selection criteria for acquiring documents whether they be purchased, donated or traded. The library, or even the whole collective of library entities (system, network, or university campuses) must be willing to acquire or reject all manner of materials based on the adherence of said materials to the aims of each library's collection development policy.

The Collection Development Policy is an extremely useful tool which acts as a guide for library staff in charge of selecting and acquiring materials. Furthermore, it facilitates communication with library users, showing them which documents can be found in their local branch as well as those that can be accessed online. For this reason, upon drafting the Collection Development Policy, the following concerns will be taken into account: the collection's target audience; the methodology employed in the selection process; the guidelines, protocols and rules which underline the policy; the existing supply available on the market, the languages of the documents to be included; the formats and channels in and through which the policy will be obtainable; the geographical scope of the collection, and lastly, in face of current economic difficulties, it will also have to consider the budgetary constraints the policy will need to respect.

The electronic environment will impact the development of the collection

The channels for communicating and diffusing library content that have appeared over the past two decades have inevitably brought about a change to the kinds of formats on offer. They have also created a new paradigm for the strategy used to select and configure these new formats. The acquisition of materials designed for online access, as opposed to the physical consultation or borrowing by library users is steadily increasingly.

The proposal of unified collection policies, strategic partnerships inco-operative acquisition or subscription —in order to offer contents to library users— leads us to re-evaluate many aspects that have traditionally been fundamental in the development of the library's physical collection. The internet transcends borders and with regard to the availability of information and library content, we can broadly outline the different library building typologies that are emerging in response to this new technological landscape. No matter where they are, users can consult the entirety of the contents on offer. In this way the tools and protocols used to access information thus determine the basic configuration guidelines of a library's collection. The material preservation guidelines that a heritage library must abide by, as well as access to document collections have therefore become the new rules of the game.

Collection policies in national libraries

The cornerstone of the collection development policy of national libraries is the selection, safeguarding and diffusion of edited materials as well as those that are written in the languages of each library's geographical scope. The collection development policy of a national library is massively determined by the law on legal deposits. This law defines each library's geographical scope and the range of materials, formats and languages that must be selected, processed, safeguarded and diffused which ultimately serve to enrich the national bibliography.

The **Law 23/2011 (http://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2011/07/30/pdfs/BOE-A-2011-13114.pdf)** passed in Spain on 29th July, not only introduces unprecedented changes to the primary entity for submitting materials —now the publisher, not the printer— it also tries to visualize and to respond to the new electronic environment. It is novel in the fact that it calls for the collection of physical electronic material. Taking into account the exponential growth of the content industry and its diffusion on the Web, the law authorizes the gathering of information from the internet archive. It permits the selective searching of the internet through the use of search engine software and allows the gathering of information from web archives in specific areas of interest. This is a clear example of the new environment in which content selection finds itself and marks a turning point in the collection development policy of national and regional libraries. Other library typologies can make use of this deposited material provided that agreements on the management and use of the deposited collection are established and that copyrights are respected.

Catalunya has been a pioneering influence in Spain with the creation of its internet archive collection in 2005 as part of the **PADICAT (http://www.padicat.cat/es)** project led by the Biblioteca de Catalunya (Library of Catalonia). Following this model, the **Biblioteca Nacional de España (http://www.bne.es/en/Inicio/index.html)** set up the **Archivo de la Web Española (http://www.bne.es**

/en/LaBNE/ArchivoWeb/index.html) Project in 2009. It currently stores more than 1,700 million URLs under the **'.es' domain (http://www.dominios.es/dominios/)** and contains more than 85 terabytes of information. The volume of data obtained during the information gathering process has a huge influence on the BNE's Collection Development Policy as well as on the characteristics of the repository in which this electronic content can be stored.

In order to reach this ambitious objective, in December 2012 the BNE signed a convention with the public entity **Red.es (http://www.red.es/redes/en/quienes-somos.html)** to build and maintain the Repositorio Nacional (National Archives). The project was presented to the **Conferencia Sectorial de Cultura (http://www.mcu.es/cooperacion/CE/CooperacionCCAA/ConferenciaSectorial /InformacionGeneral.html)** (Cultural Sector Conference) held on 3rd December 2012 in Mérida, which comprised of the Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport) and the autonomous communities. The Project was also previously presented in the framework of the **Consejo de Cooperación Bibliotecaria (http://www.mcu.es/bibliotecas/MC/ConsejoCB /Presentacion.html)** (Library Cooperation Council) held on 14th February 2013 in Madrid.

The National Archives project aims to respond to the requirements that have been identified after an exhaustive needs analysis conducted after the **Law 23/2011 (http://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2011/07/30/pdfs/BOE-A-2011-13114.pdf)** was passed in June 2012.

A cross-departmental work group of experts in library collection management, staff from the legal deposit service and information technology department of the BNE and Red.es were in charge of carrying out the analysis.

The National Archives of the BNE aim to provide for three emerging needs:

- to store 'big data' from the registers and digital archives of the **Biblioteca Digital Hispánica (http://www.bne.es/es/Catalogos /BibliotecaDigitalHispanica/Inicio/index.html)** (Hispanic Digital Library) and the **Hemeroteca Digital (http://hemerotecadigital.bne.es/index.vm?lang=ca)** (Digital Periodical Library) of the BNE.
- To store the physical electronic reserves acquired through the legal deposit —electronic books for example— in all offices housing the legal deposit all over Spain.
- To store files of the obtained resources in the internet archive collection under the '.es' domain. This has been referred to within the library as 'the BNE time machine'.

The challenge

The collection development policy of a library or a library collective in an electronic environment can end up seeming almost impossible to define due to the difficulties involved in identifying what areas of access each library entity, web or system is responsible for and what development commitments can be met from this new access to the contents offered by national or regional heritage libraries, that is to say, the BNE and the head libraries of the autonomous communities.The lack of a concrete policy definition can lead to chaos if the objectives linked to the development responsibilities are not clearly identified at each library level.

This is precisely the challenge. With the necessary transparent political backing the future **regulatory law of the BNE (http://www.bne.es/es/AreaPrensa/noticias2012/NuevaLeyReguladora.html)** —announced in February 2012— may be able to clarify the terms of the gathering and diffusion of the contents preserved by the BNE. This law must give absolute priority to borrowing services in the Spanish library network and more specifically, decide the limits of where its role in the diffusion of contents on a national scale. In this way, with the aim of avoiding duplications, the libraries of the Spanish network will each be able to complement the development of the resources the BNE does not facilitate. These resources must be identified in the collection development policy of each library within the network.

Leading the way

Finally, we must view the Spanish legal deposit law as leading the way for collection development policies in other national libraries around the world. A clear example of this is the contribution it has made to collection development policies in Iberoamerican national libraries. The unanimous agreement of the XXIII General Assembly of the **ABINIA (http://www.abinia.org/)** (Association of Iberoamerican States for the Development of National Libraries) held in September 2012 in Madrid establishes the creation of a document which reflects the current situation of the national libraries of ABINIA regarding the development of their collections. The BNE is responsible for drawing up the document which will include guidelines and recommendations for balanced and rational collection development. It will also draw attention to the need to approve legal deposit laws which are able to establish collection development policy agreements in the current context.

Català   Español

Keywords

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