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12-2010

# Reflections on the Conversation: An Overview of Collection Development Literature from 2010

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## COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Reflections on the Conversation:
An Overview of Collection Development
Literature from 2010

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One of the things I continue to love about the practice of law librarianship is our genuine and almost universal enthusiasm and appreciation for collaboration. Sharing what we know, what we've learned, what we've collected and what we're imagining for our profession is something in which almost every librarian I know is in some way engaged. Part of what we do to foster that collaborative spirit is to become involved as individuals in the multifaceted dialogue of our profession. Even within the relatively narrow margins of collection development law librarianship there can be found an incredible array of discussions and conversations about the work we do, the underlying principles we rely on and the multiplicity of visions for the future of our profession.

My challenge to you in this brief column is to choose at least one of the articles I've listed below, then read it, think about it and talk to someone else about what you think of it. Perhaps one of these articles will encourage you to think about

current practices in your library and ask how they can be improved. Or perhaps you will be inspired to contribute to the conversation by publishing an article yourself. The articles I've chosen are from this past year. Each of them explores some aspect of collection development librarianship that is highly relevant to the work many of us are doing right now. I believe the articles here are some of the best of 2010 related to the scholarship of collection development and hope you find them useful for jumping into the conversation.

**Palfrey, John. "Cornerstones of Law Libraries for an Era of Digital-Plus."** *Law Library Journal* **102, no. 2 (2010): 171-190.**
Written more to be a vision of law librarianship than the specific art of collection development, Palfrey's article talks about issues at the core of our most critical collection development decisions. Whether discussing his vision of the "digital-plus" era of libraries or charting the rapid change in both the scope and practice of the law and legal scholarship, he is providing a thoughtful framework in which we in collection development can make the difficult decisions we continue to encounter. Bonus points go to Professor Palfrey for distributing this article under an Attribution-Share Alike Creative Commons license. See Steven Melamut's "Freeing Creativity" below.

**Melamut, Steven J. "Freeing Creativity: Understanding the Create Commons Licenses."** *AALL Spectrum* **14, no. 6 (April 2010): 20-23.**
As law library collections continue to grow and develop in digital directions, it is increasingly incumbent upon collection development librarians to keep apprised of changes in the kinds of licenses we are likely to see with born-digital creations. This brief article offers a fantastic five-minute introduction to Creative Commons (CC) licenses, providing an excellent starting point for understanding the ways in which CC licensed content can be used by our library staff and patrons. Knowing how the content of our collections can be used is yet another indispensable skill of great collection development librarians and Melamut gives us both a starting point and directions for finding additional information.

**Klinefelter, Anne. "First Amendment Limits on Library Collection Management."** *Law Library Journal* **102, no. 3 (2010): 343-374.**
Klinefelter's article from *Law Library Journal* should be of particular interest to those engaged in collection development in public law libraries. Her detailed analysis focuses primarily on the application of the First Amendment to publicly funded law libraries through the review and examination of three separate Supreme Court decisions involving other types of publicly funded libraries. These cases explore issues ranging from a civil-rights sit-in in a public library to school library book removal and the application of Internet filtering software. Klinefelter notes a lack of absolute discretion on the part of law librarians in making collection development decisions, accompanied by an uncertain set of boundaries and limitations on those decisions as expressed in case law. She calls for continuing thoughtfulness and attention to ethical principles among collection development librarians engaged in providing services in publicly funded libraries.

**Nixon, Judith et al. "Patron-Driven Acquisitions: An Introduction and Literature Review."** *Collection Management* **35, no. 3/4 (2010): 119-124.**
Part of a special two-issue release of *Collection Management*, this article provides a thorough introduction to the decade-long history of user-initiated acquisition, otherwise known as patron-driven acquisition. Nixon and her co-authors identify the origin of this model for library acquisitions and point to empirical data indicating that it may be an effective supplement to librarian-driven acquisition. They explore the development of the model over time and address the need for the special issue of *Collection Management* in light of the increased prevalence of this type of acquisition in our libraries. My recommendation is that any academic law librarian interested in this burgeoning area of collection development review the entire two-issue release.

**Voloch, Eugene. "The Future of Books Related to the Law?"** *Michigan Law Review* **108, no. 6 (April 2010): 823-846.**
Voloch's introduction to the annual *Michigan Law Review's* "Survey of Books Related to the Law" offers a bold vision of sweeping change in the future of legal publishing and distribution. His narrative begins with a clearly articulated list of reasons legal books will continue to move into digital formats and then examines the ways in which publishers and manufacturers of e-book readers can prepare themselves for the change. Voloch offers an analysis of the positive impact e-books have in lifting page limits imposed by traditional print publications, allowing the addition of more robust content and supplementary material. He then charts a possible course for the future development of e-books that emphasizes interactivity. Perhaps Voloch's boldest and most interesting assertion is that the current publication structure for print monographs and casebooks must be fundamentally reorganized. Though some of his predictions may remain unfulfilled, much of what he describes touches on the very real questions and concerns many collection development librarians have about legal publishing and distribution.

**Street, Leslie A. and Amanda M. Runyon. "Finding the Middle Ground in Collection Development: How Academic Law Libraries Can Shape Their Collections in Response to the Call for More Practice-Oriented Legal Education."** *Law Library Journal* **102, no. 3 (2010): 399-439.**

Street and Runyon chronicle an empirical study of academic and law firm library collection development decisions in the context of recent scholarly calls for an increase in practical legal education, focusing their recommendations on academic law library collections. The authors briefly review recent literature advocating for greater practical components in the law curriculum, specifically discussing the opportunities of clinical practice and scholarship. Street and Runyon recognize the increasing financial pressures impacting academic law libraries, and they recommend that cancellation decisions carefully take into account the kinds of law firm collections young attorneys are likely to encounter in practice. Results from surveys of 107 firm law librarians and 76 academic law librarians are presented and compared, followed by recommendations for bringing specific elements of academic collections more closely into alignment with the firm libraries their students are likely to encounter. Partnerships in clinical legal education figure prominently in this article, so this may serve as a platform for further discussion about the ways in which collection development librarians can contribute to practical legal education.

**Samuelson, Pamela. "An Academic Author's Perspective on the Google Book Settlement."** *Against the Grain* **22, no. 3 (June 2010): 24.**

Because of the incredible impact the Google Books digitization project could ultimately have on access to an ever-widening array of resources for libraries, no review of collection development discourse for the year would be complete without an article on the subject. In her brief but pithy piece covering the potential shortfalls of the existing Google Book Settlement, Samuelson gives voice to the academic authors whose works may be part of this unprecedented digitization effort. Samuelson, a member of the Berkeley Law School & School of Information faculty, focuses her work on the areas of digital copyright law and information policy and offers both a clear criticism of the existing settlement and ways in which the settlement could be improved. For those who have not yet entered the conversation about the Google Book Settlement, this work is situated within an issue of *Against the Grain* dedicated to the settlement that will help provide context for Samuelson's work. For those who have been engaged in the discourse for years, this article and its links to more of Samuelson's work showcase yet another critically important voice in the debate.

**Fong, Yem S. et al. "The Alliance Shared Purchase Plan: A New Experiment in Collaborative Collection Development."** *Technical Services Quarterly* **27, no. 1 (January 2010): 17-38.**

At a time when librarians are looking for new ways to stretch limited resources, Fong et al. offer an opportunity to examine and consider one consortium's experience in collaborative collection development. The authors trace the two-and-a-half year project of the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries in developing and implementing a shared purchase plan. The study focuses on the collection of monographs in four discreet subject areas with three fundamental goals: reduction of duplication, increased quality of the unified collection, and assistance for individual member libraries in dealing with the negative impacts of reduced financial resources. While the authors indicate that the project did not, in fact, produce all the desired results, the true value of this article lies in its analysis of the detailed plans implemented and the ways in which those plans fell short of the consortium's goals. It also reflects on some unexpected successes of the project and explores some of the possible directions the group will take in the future. This article is a must-read for librarians involved in or considering collaborative collection development projects, offering glimpses of both potential pitfalls and benefits for those exploring their options.