Criteria for Weeding Serials*


Major criteria for weeding periodicals are enumerated below (but not in a priority order). These criteria should normally be applied in combination with each other.

**Physical condition.** As with all formats, periodicals in deteriorating physical condition are good candidates for weeding.

**Completeness of holdings.** Short, scattered holdings are better candidates for weeding than long, complete runs.

**Use.** Unused or infrequently used periodical runs are obvious targets for weeding. Use in relation to shelf space occupied has also been suggested as a periodical weeding criterion.

**Age.** Older periodical runs have traditionally been considered prime targets for weeding. However, the critical variable is use rather than age per se. The concept of "literature obsolescence" relates use to age by demonstrating that older periodical holdings are less frequently used. As explained in chapter 5, obsolescence varies among disciplines.

**Current collecting priorities.** One of the most compelling reasons for weeding is a change in the library's collecting priorities.

**Availability elsewhere.** Periodical runs that are available in nearby libraries are clearly stronger candidates for weeding than holdings unique within the geographical area. Likewise, duplicate runs within the same library system may be prime weeding targets. Locally published periodicals should not be weeded to ensure their permanent archiving in at least one library.

**Cooperative agreements with other libraries and consortiums.** A periodical can be weeded with greater confidence if another library has agreed to maintain the specific title or a strong collection in its subject area.

**Indexing.** The conventional wisdom asserts that unindexed titles are excellent possibilities for weeding, and indexed ones should be maintained. However, it should be stressed that the critical factor is not current indexing but whether the runs under consideration for weeding were indexed.

**Core or recommended lists.** Most libraries are reluctant to weed titles on core or recommended lists. Some small libraries use a strict policy: Any title not on a recommended list should be weeded.

**Whether the library currently subscribes to the periodical under examination.** Lack of a current subscription can be a major factor in deciding to weed the backrun holdings, as they become more obsolete with each passing year.