This study examines collection development policies and practices at American undergraduate libraries, with particular emphasis on how these have been affected by recent trends in higher education and academic librarianship. Librarians from ten undergraduate libraries across the country were interviewed about collecting practices at their institutions as well as the role of their library and its collection in the university library system. The interview questions selected for this study focus on the ways in which collection development practices at undergraduate libraries relate to—and are impacted by—three areas of current interest to academic libraries: (1) changes in university curricula, (2) the expansion of information literacy programs, and (3) the proliferation of new information technologies and networked environments.

Headings:

College and University Libraries

Undergraduate Libraries

Collection Development
COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT IN AMERICAN UNDERGRADUATE LIBRARIES: POLICIES AND PRACTICES

by

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Approved by:

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Advisor
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INTRODUCTION

When Lamont Library, the nation’s first separately housed undergraduate library, opened its doors in 1949, Harvard librarian Keyes Metcalf wrote that undergraduates at large universities “will make more and better use of a library designed expressly for them” (Metcalf, Harvard Faces 187). Clearly, others in the library community agreed. In the years that followed, especially in the decade of the 1960s, library facilities designed specifically for undergraduates sprang up on university campuses across the nation. In 1972, at the peak of this movement, there were 24 separately housed undergraduate libraries and an additional 25 in-house facilities (Wingate 29).

One of the early distinguishing features of undergraduate libraries were their collections. Frequently, these consisted of a core collection of classic texts, arranged according to broad subject areas and selected with a focus on the curriculum. By design, undergraduate library collections differed in size and scope from those of university research libraries. One of the basic presuppositions behind the creation of undergraduate libraries was that undergraduates would be better served by a collection built around their specific needs and interests. While graduate students and faculty required large, specialized collections to accommodate their research needs, undergraduates—so it was argued—were looking for (1) resources that would help them to meet course requirements and (2) popular and general interest materials.

More recently, the perceived advantage of separate libraries and collections for undergraduates has come under debate. Commentators, such as Irene Hoadley, have
argued that many of the educational innovations of undergraduate libraries have been integrated into the services and collections of all libraries on campus, thus eliminating the need for a separate undergraduate facility (Person, *University Undergraduate Libraries* 6). Budget cuts, staff reductions, and technology favoring centralization have all contributed to an environment in which separate undergraduate collections are at risk. As a result of these developments, a number of undergraduate libraries have closed or been consolidated with other library collections on campus.

However, this is by no means a universal trend. If some university and library administrators have seen fit to eliminate their undergraduate facilities, others have taken steps to revitalize theirs. Newly renovated buildings, innovative instruction programs, and high-use collections point to strong institutional support at a number of today’s undergraduate libraries. These libraries appear to be “continuing examples of evolution” rather than dinosaurs marked for extinction (Person, *University Undergraduate Libraries* 1).

The varied history of undergraduate libraries points to the challenges associated with providing services and collections geared to undergraduates. Those undergraduate libraries that have survived have had to adapt to an academic environment that has changed dramatically during the last fifty years. Changes in the curriculum, advances in information technology, and new philosophies of teaching and learning have all had an impact on undergraduate libraries.

While the significance of these developments for research libraries has received a great deal of attention, there is a dearth of scholarly literature on how undergraduate libraries, and specifically their collections, have been affected by these trends. During
the heyday of undergraduate libraries, commentators dealt extensively with the undergraduate book collection. More recently, however, the small amount of literature on undergraduate libraries has focused mainly on library services to undergraduates (e.g. instruction) and on organizational restructuring. The context in which, and the activities by which, undergraduate collections are built and maintained has been largely overlooked.

In an effort to help fill this gap in the literature, this study examines collection development practices at American undergraduate libraries, focusing in particular on how these have been affected by recent trends in higher education and academic librarianship. Librarians from ten undergraduate libraries across the country were interviewed about collecting practices at their institutions as well as the role of their library and its collection in the university library system. The interview questions that were selected for this study (see Appendix A) focus on the ways in which collection development practices at undergraduate libraries relate to—and are impacted by—three areas of current interest to academic libraries: (1) changes in university curricula, (2) the expansion of information literacy programs, and (3) the proliferation of information technologies and networked environments.
DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The purpose of the undergraduate library is to take primary responsibility for meeting the library needs of undergraduate students in a large university environment. The designation of a separate library expressly for undergraduates is based on the premise that undergraduates deserve a full and fair share of the libraries' resources—materials, services, and staff time (ACRL Undergraduate Librarians Discussion Group Mission Statement).

The term “undergraduate library” has been understood in a number of different ways. In the loosest sense, an undergraduate library refers to a library that serves primarily undergraduates, wherever this may be found. In the early 1930’s, special book collections for undergraduates were established in the main research libraries of Columbia University and the University of Chicago and were referred to as undergraduate libraries (Wingate 29). In the decades following the opening of Lamont Library, a number of undergraduate book collections, in-house library facilities (i.e. inside main library buildings), and separately housed undergraduate libraries were established on university campuses. These various facilities and collections were also known as undergraduate libraries.

In order to avoid ambiguity, this study will adopt the following definition of “undergraduate library”, a definition put forward by John Haak and later restated by Roland Person (Haak 1578; Person, A New Path 7). According to Haak and Person, an undergraduate library is defined as:
1. a special library for undergraduate students
2. located in a university or other institution supporting graduate work to a significant degree
3. housed in either a separate building or in a self-contained section of a general building
4. consisting of a collection designed to support and supplement the undergraduate curriculum, and a staff and services to promote the integration of the library into the undergraduate teaching program of the university.

This definition emphasizes (as does this study) collections and services that are geared toward the undergraduate teaching mission of the university.

Another key construct employed in this study is that of “collection development”. Traditionally, “collection development” was understood to refer to those activities associated with materials acquisition, selection, and collection building. In the 1980s, Paul Mosher and others promoted the idea of “collection management”, which emphasizes a broader range of policy, planning, analysis, and cooperative activities (Branin 24).

This study employs the construct “collection development” to refer to the entire range of activities named above. Following Hill, Hannaford, and Epp’s definition, this study understands “collection development” to mean “the set of activities that results in the intentional and systematic building of a library collection” (vii). It involves the activities of “evaluation, budgeting, selection, weeding, storage, preservation, and management” (vii).
LITERATURE REVIEW

Compared to the amount of scholarly commentary that exists about other types of academic libraries, the literature on undergraduate libraries is neither current nor abundant. Much of what has been written about undergraduate libraries was published in the 1960s and 1970s, and to a lesser extent, in the 1980s. Current collecting practices have not received the kind of scrutiny that accompanied the opening of Lamont. Indeed, current literature of any kind on undergraduate libraries is scarce.

In order to provide a framework for this study of collection development practices in undergraduate libraries, this literature review will focus on (1) the history of undergraduate libraries in the United States, especially early conceptions of the role of undergraduate libraries and their collections and (2) scholarly literature concerning recent trends and developments in academic librarianship that have impacted (or that have the potential to impact) collecting practices at undergraduate libraries.

A Short History of American Undergraduate Libraries

Lamont Library: The Case for a Separate Facility for Undergraduates

Lamont Library was the brainchild of Harvard Librarian Keyes Metcalf, who lobbyed for the new facility and documented its early history. As Metcalf reported, a key impetus behind the construction of Lamont was the severe space shortage in the Harvard library
system. In “Harvard Faces Its Library Problems,” Metcalf outlined three premises that guided the planning for Lamont library:

1. that undergraduates will make more and better use of a library designed expressly for them;

2. that this was the best way to relieve the pressure in the Widener building [the research library] and make unnecessary a new central library building;

3. that if that pressure were relieved, the Widener Library building would become a more satisfactory research center than it has been in the past (187).

In the years following World War II, crowded research libraries and over-burdened staff were problems that were not unique to Harvard. Between the turn of the century and World War I, the student population on American university campuses doubled (Person, A New Path 3). Undergraduate enrollments continued to increase after World War II—and there was a corresponding expansion of library collections—with the result that university libraries simply lacked the space to accommodate the growing numbers of books and students. For university administrators at Harvard, the construction of Lamont Library was viewed as a cost-effective way to alleviate seating, shelf space, and staffing problems at Widener.

But protecting Widener’s research collections from hordes of undergraduates was not Metcalf’s only, or even chief, concern. His advocacy for a separate undergraduate library was grounded in his belief that such a facility would make it possible for undergraduates to receive “reasonably good library service”—service that he believed was then “available in few, if any, of our great university libraries…”(Metcalf, Duality of Demand 399).
Metcalf argued that the reason that undergraduates were not adequately served by the existing libraries on campus was that university libraries were attempting (unsuccessfully) to serve two distinct and competing constituencies: graduate students and faculty on the one hand and undergraduates on the other. According to Metcalf, when these two groups “compete for services in the same building, with the same collections and catalogs, the undergraduates are almost always the ones who suffer (Duality of Demand, 399).

In Metcalf’s time, American universities, following the German model, increasingly envisioned themselves as centers of research and emphasized the development of large research collections. While these library facilities were well equipped to support the information needs of faculty and graduate students, they were not, in Metcalf’s view, aligned with the general education needs of undergraduates. The typical undergraduate of this era (often the first in his or her family to attend college) was frequently overwhelmed by the complexities of the main university library.

To remedy this situation, Metcalf proposed a library building designed specifically for undergraduates:

What should good library service to undergraduates provide? Three things among others: a library as conveniently located as possible; centralized so that undergraduates who work, as most of them do, in different fields can find material under one roof in all subjects in which they are interested; a library easy to use, which involves simple catalog, classification, and charging systems, and rapid service. All this should be under attractive, you might say tempting conditions (Duality of Demand, 400).

In the view of many, Lamont Library more than realized the goals that Metcalf and others had set for it. As Billy Wilkinson, former librarian at Uris Library at Cornell,
reported: “Almost overnight Lamont became a beautiful legend. It was idealized. Many of us made pilgrimages to the shrine” (A Screaming Success, 1568).

Despite Lamont’s early success and the interest generated in special library services for undergraduates, it would be another nine years (1958) before the next undergraduate library was built at the University of Michigan. But, after Michigan, in the ten years that followed, the rush was on. Separate undergraduate libraries appeared at South Carolina, Texas, North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Stanford, Ohio State, Penn State, Tennessee, and Illinois. Additional libraries were planned or under construction at Wisconsin, California at Berkeley, Oklahoma, Washington, Maryland, and Massachusetts (Wilkinson, A Screaming Success 1568).

The 1950s and 1960s: New Philosophies of Library Service for Undergraduates

As with Lamont, practical considerations (e.g. physical space, fiscal considerations) often factored in the construction of the facilities named above; however, increasingly, librarians focused on the educational potential of undergraduate libraries. Journal articles devoted to the book collection, the teaching mission of the library, and the special library needs of undergraduates began to appear in the literature.

One widely cited commentator from this period was Irene Braden (later Hoadley), whose doctoral dissertation looked at the six undergraduate libraries that existed in 1965. In “The Separately Housed Undergraduate Library,” Braden identified six ways in which undergraduate libraries differed from traditional university libraries. She summarized these characteristics as follows:
1. By providing open access to the collection to avoid the difficulties of the closed stack system;

2. By centralizing and simplifying services to undergraduates;

3. By providing a collection of carefully selected books, containing the titles all undergraduates should be exposed to for their liberal education, as well as incorporating the reserved book collection;

4. By attempting to make the library an instructional tool by planning it as the center for instruction in library use, to prepare undergraduates for using larger collections, and by staffing it with librarians interested in teaching the undergraduate the resources of a library and the means of tapping these resources;

5. By providing services additional to those given by the research library;

6. By constructing a building with the undergraduate’s habits of use in mind (Braden, *Separately Housed* 282).

Dr. Braden’s article outlined what many at that time regarded as the distinctive and desirable features of undergraduate libraries. And, indeed, there are numerous similarities between Braden’s list and the present day mission statement of the Undergraduate Librarians Discussion Group.

Of Braden’s six distinguishing characteristics of undergraduate libraries, two relate explicitly to the collection. At a time when closed stacks were the rule at university libraries, Braden advocated open, browsable stacks at undergraduate libraries. This design was intended to encourage the habit of reading: “By surrounding the student with books—not separating him from them—it was hoped that he would be encouraged to read more than assigned titles (*Separately Housed* 283).
The undergraduate collection was also to include materials that would meet the instructional needs and general reading interests of undergraduates. The books that were selected should be of high quality—“a carefully selected duplicate collection of books which would support the curriculum to provide a selection of the best writings of all times and all peoples” (Separately Housed 283).

The goal of the undergraduate library, as Braden articulated it, was to bring together under one roof all library services related to the undergraduate curriculum. Students were not to be subjected to the frustrations of a “treasure hunt” in which they would be sent from building to building in search of library materials (Separately Housed 283). Duplicate copies of classic works and other high-demand items, course materials placed on reserve by faculty, film and audio materials (then regarded as non-traditional by research libraries), and general interest reading were all to be assembled in one central location.

Braden argued that an appropriate collection for undergraduates should also be relatively small and “easily approachable.” “[T]here would not be so many books on any one subject that the student would become confused by the large array before him” (Separately Housed 283). The undergraduate library was envisioned as a “workshop in which the undergraduate could learn on a relatively small scale those library skills which could later be applied to larger and more complex collections” (Separately Housed 283).

For many of Braden’s contemporaries, the undergraduate library’s collection was its most important educational resource. Frederick Wagman, Director of Libraries at the University of Michigan, viewed the book collection as the heart of the undergraduate library’s teaching mission. In “The Case for the Separate Undergraduate Library,”
Wagman argued that courses taught at large universities had become overly dependent upon textbooks, lectures, and other “canned” material. This was not the kind of material, in his view, that genuinely engaged students and promoted critical thinking. Wagman believed that undergraduate libraries could help reverse this trend by providing a book collection that was integrated with the undergraduate curriculum. With the “right” books available in adequate numbers, faculty would be able to use more primary and secondary resources in their classes and assignments. Wagman hoped that the undergraduate library’s collection would inspire faculty to rethink their teaching methods and assignments.

In the years following Wagman’s manifesto, interest in the nature and scope of the undergraduate library collection continued to grow. Melvin Voigt, writing more than a dozen years after Wagman, referred to books as the “essential ingredient” of the library, and he pushed for a more clearly defined collection development policy. He noted that the more limited scope of the undergraduate library posed specific challenges: “The more inclusive a library, the easier the job of selection. The undergraduate library, by its special character, complicates the job of selection” (Voigt 259). This was a challenge that Voigt believed had to be met head on: “[T]he critical question in justifying the undergraduate library is whether there is a definable and viable book collection which will be of more value to undergraduate students in meeting the educational objectives of undergraduate education than does the large research library” (Voigt 247).

Voigt, along with Joseph Treyz, was involved in the New Campuses Program of the University of California, which sought to build three basic, identical, and self-contained libraries for three new California campuses at Irvine, Santa Cruz, and San Diego. As part
of the New Campuses Program, Voigt and Treyz promoted the idea of a core collection of classic texts. They compiled a list of 53,400 titles that appeared in 1967 as *Books for College Libraries* (Hardesty 363). Defending the premise of the core collection, Voigt and Treyz wrote: “The project was based on the premise that there is a body of knowledge—the classics, the important scholarly titles, and the definitive works on all subjects of interest in any undergraduate community—which should be in any college library” (vi). Many embraced the concept of a core collection, and *Books for College Libraries* (there were two subsequent editions in 1975 and 1988) was widely consulted by staff in undergraduate libraries, as were the *Lamont Catalogue*, the selections for the Michigan Undergraduate Library, and *Choice* (Voigt 254).

**The 1970s and 1980s: Decades of Reevaluation**

The 1960s had been a time of expansion for undergraduate libraries, a period in which their educational potential was widely hailed. The 1970s and 1980s proved to be very different kind of decades, marked by the closing or consolidation of a number of undergraduate facilities. In some instances, tight budgets were a factor, but declining circulation figures at Lamont (Braden, *Undergraduate Library* 25) and decreases in the number of reference questions at Michigan’s Undergraduate and Cornell’s Uris libraries (Wilkinson, *Screaming Success* 1570) had raised questions about the future of undergraduate libraries. How effective were these institutions in delivering library services to undergraduates? Had undergraduate libraries lived up to their potential?

One of the voices calling for a reevaluation of undergraduate library services was that of Billy R. Wilkinson, who headed Uris Library from 1962-1967. In “A Screaming
Success as Study Halls,” Wilkinson identified seven functions of undergraduate libraries: study hall, social center, reserve book dispenser, browsing collection, listening facility, visual materials center, and center for reference services (1569). Wilkinson argued that the success of the undergraduate library as a social center and study hall was beyond dispute but that other aspects of its services and collections were more problematic. His most pointed criticisms were reserved for reference services at undergraduate libraries. Wilkinson toured a number of undergraduate libraries (part of his research for his doctoral dissertation) and reported that reference interactions involving instruction in the use of the library and its resources were infrequent. Notably absent were any active attempts to stimulate the use of reference services. Apart from brief freshmen orientation sessions, librarians tended to sit behind their desks and wait for students to come to them (Wilkinson, Screaming Success 1570).

John Haak, undergraduate librarian at the University of California, San Diego, came to many of the same conclusions as Wilkinson. He divided Braden’s six characteristics of undergraduate libraries into two basic categories: a “self-service capacity” and an “active-service capacity” (Goal Determination 1576). According to Haak, undergraduate libraries had been extremely successful in the self-service area (i.e. facilities and collections) but were far less effective in active service areas in which the librarian functioned as educator. Haak called upon librarians to focus more of their energies on active service areas, noting that it was here that the library could forge a connection to the curriculum. It was time, he urged, to “begin to assess our libraries, not only on the basis of what they have [e.g. collections], but what we do” (Goal Determination 1576).
Many in the library community were receptive to the recommendations of Wilkinson, Haak, and others. In the 1970s and 1980s, bibliographic instruction became a defining focus at many undergraduate libraries. The effectiveness of these programs was widely documented and, increasingly, library instruction was incorporated into the services offered by research libraries and other departmental libraries on university campuses.

But, for advocates of undergraduate libraries, there was an unanticipated downside to this movement. Given the success of bibliographic instruction programs, university and library administrators began to question whether undergraduate libraries were still needed. It was argued that a strong program of instruction could address the specific educational needs of undergraduates, thereby rendering obsolete the need for a separate facility, staff, and collection. Ironically, Irene Braden Hoadley was one of the proponents of this point of view:

[I]f undergraduate libraries are really where bibliographic instruction started, it was this phenomenon which also contributed to their demise. What happened was that a new vehicle (bibliographic instruction) was found to accomplish the goal originally set for undergraduate libraries, at perhaps less cost. There was no need for the duplicate collections, staff, or facilities that a separate library required if the educational goal could be fulfilled in a single building with the addition of another service.

The separately housed undergraduate library did succeed, and it met a need, but that need has passed and so has the relevancy of the concept. In some situations, it continues to serve a useful function, but in others it could easily be phased out and never be missed. Its time has come and gone (Person, Undergraduate Libraries 6).

Another issue that emerged at this time concerned the alleged benefits of a separate library collection for undergraduates. G. A. Rudolph expressed his reservations that staff members at undergraduate libraries might be applying “a censoring effect albeit for
benevolent motives.” “Unlike our comments to the clientele of the chemistry library to whom we in effect say, ‘Here are the materials on chemistry,’ we say to undergraduates, ‘Here are the number of books which we think you should be using because you are an undergraduate’” (Person, *Undergraduate Libraries* 9). Frank Rodgers concurred with Rudolph, noting that:

> The undergraduate library may frequently serve to limit horizons and to inhibit the exploration of the full range of our resources. It runs the risk of creating the impression that the undergraduate library is the entire library…. Most institutions, with or without undergraduate libraries, have a reserve collection. Surely that is sufficient provision for those whose reading is closely directed and whose needs are presumed not to extend beyond those limits. For the others, we shall do better to concentrate on the provision of instruction in the full use of our libraries (Person, *Undergraduate Libraries* 12).

Harry Wingate, in “The Undergraduate Library: Is It Obsolete?” tackled many of the same issues as Rudolph and Rodgers. Wingate maintained that undergraduates have varying capabilities and needs, and he questioned the supposed advantage of a collection “easy” enough for undergraduate use. In addition, he argued that changes in university curricula challenged another key assumption of “the undergraduate concept”—namely, that it “is possible to assemble, from the millions of titles available, a 50,000 to 200,000 volume collection of ‘most important’ books that will adequately serve undergraduate needs” (Wingate 31). Given the increase in the number and variety of courses taught on campus and the shift in emphasis from textbooks to independent reading, Wingate argued that it was no longer possible for librarians to anticipate which books undergraduates would need.
The Undergraduate Library in the 21st Century: Recent Trends and Developments

Contrary to the predictions of Wingate and others, undergraduate libraries are not defunct. Today—as in years past—they are lively social and educational centers. However, they differ in significant respects from the undergraduate libraries that Wingate studied in the late 1970s, and they will doubtless continue to evolve as they adapt to meet the changing needs of undergraduates.

The amount of scholarly literature devoted to undergraduate libraries has diminished over the years, but recent publications identify trends and developments that are defining the environment of research universities and, by extension, undergraduate libraries and their collections.

Changing Curricula

Given the undergraduate library’s historic mission of supporting undergraduate education, changes in university curricula have the potential to significantly impact library collections. University curricula, in turn, are shaped by a host of factors—social, economic, cultural, and political.

One development that is profoundly altering the course of higher education today is changing demographics. For those working at universities, shifts in the nation’s population are reflected in a “decline of the traditional college-age population (i.e. 18-24 years old); a concomitant increase in older, part-time, and adult students; increased commitment to enrollment of minority students; and the influx of international students” (Wilson 18).
One way that these changes have been reflected in university curricula is through increased interest in ethnic and area studies. In “The Michigan Mandate,” a policy statement on undergraduate education, former University of Michigan president, James Duderstadt wrote:

In addition to the changing nature of American society, today’s undergraduates are faced with an internationalization of American life…. There is no longer a domestic economy. Every industry, every economic activity is part of a world marketplace…. This growing internationalization of America suggests that understanding cultures other than our own is critical, not only for personal enrichment and good citizenship but for our survival as a nation…. Higher education must prepare students by providing programs that reflect an international perspective and must provide students with an understanding of an increasingly interdependent world” (qtd. in Stoffle 48).

As courses that examine diverse cultures and ethnic groups are developed, undergraduate libraries will be expected to have “an answering commitment” to the changing curricula. There will be a growing demand for libraries to provide resources that address the broad range of cultural issues and perspectives that students are encountering both inside and outside of the classroom. As Carla Stoffle observes in “A New Library for the New Undergraduate”: “Undergraduate libraries have the potential for becoming the model of the multicultural, pluralistic environment that will be both the society and the campus in the near future” (Stoffle 47).

Another component of the curriculum that has witnessed growth in recent years is interdisciplinary coursework. In part, this trend has been fueled by dissatisfaction with what Richard Lanham refers to as the “fatal disconnection of one course from another” (Lanham 155). New faculty members arriving on campus today are products of graduate programs that increasingly emphasize formal training in the methodologies of adjoining
disciplines. There is a greater acceptance of, even demand for, broader and more interconnected styles of inquiry (Manning 30).

Interestingly, new multimedia technologies may also have played a part in the increased interest in cross-disciplinary study. According to Lanham:

> The digitization of information changes fundamentally the relationship of the disciplines. To revert again to the world of arts and letters from which I come, having a common digital base for art, music, and literature and a common expressive mode—digital multimedia rather than the printed book—seems to mean that the disciplinary separations we are accustomed to and the departmental structure upon which they are based will dissolve. Consider the new digital-based art forms now emerging…. They all mix words, sounds, and images in new ways, and they don’t fit into current disciplinary and departmental structures (Lanham 163).

The proliferation of information resources in various formats has revolutionized the way in which scholarly research is being conducted. As Lawrence Dowler notes, “the definition of information has broadened over the past twenty or thirty years…” (Dowler 219). This has had an impact on libraries as well as university curricula. Now, in addition to books and periodicals, libraries house audiotapes, videotapes, maps, historical manuscripts, photographs, etc. The acquisition, preservation, and dissemination of these resources has challenged the primacy of the book and printed word. As Michael Engel observes: “The scholarly model of the past 500 years—the physical distribution of ideas and information stored and expressed in printed words on paper—is being joined to the future, to the era of hyperlink and multimedia documents stored in digital form and distributed almost instantaneously on a worldwide communications network” (Engle 369). As more and more scholarly resources are available in digital format, says Engle, “library holdings will inexorably shift toward the virtual environment” (Engle 376).
Information Literacy

What does it mean to be literate in the digital age? The rapid proliferation of information resources and technologies has radically altered the parameters in which this question is framed. Effectively navigating today’s digital environments requires an increasingly sophisticated set of competencies. In order to function effectively in an information-oriented society, students must be taught how to access needed information and how to critically evaluate information resources.

Numerous commentators have suggested that academic libraries have a significant role to play in this area. Arguably, undergraduate libraries are especially well suited to spearhead information literacy initiatives, given their historic mission to support undergraduate education.

In *Gateways to Knowledge: The Role of Academic Libraries in Teaching, Learning, and Research*, Peter Lyman outlines what is involved in promoting information literacy in our current age:

> No physical library collection can be more than a microcosm of the totality of knowledge in any field. In an age of expanding information and increasing specialization of knowledge, both the researcher and the learner face the same challenges—to find the right information or knowledge, to determine the quality of information, to understand the most efficient and cost-effective methodology for access to published knowledge, and to choose the technical format most appropriate to the content and use of a given kind of knowledge (137).

Instructing students about how to use library resources and helping them to find appropriate material for class assignments present a particular set of challenges. While students routinely surf the web, they often have no experience using library indexes and
databases. Likewise, although undergraduates are often computer literate in a technical sense, they frequently lack the skills needed to critically evaluate information sources. As Lyman notes: “Students have learned about digital technologies and multimedia in the commercial world of entertainment, in which images and information are to be enjoyed but not analyzed in any scholarly sense” (145).

Lizabeth Wilson takes the instructional role of the library a step farther. Wilson suggests that we view the undergraduate library as a “gateway” to information, with many of the characteristics of a classroom or laboratory (25). Rather than view the undergraduate library as an instructional “support service,” Wilson envisions it as a “testing ground” for new information technologies (25-6). In this capacity, the library functions as a kind of training ground for students, who will be entering workplaces in which virtual teams, communication in networked environments, and multimedia technologies are commonplace.

Advances in Information Technology

The innovations in information technology highlighted here have had a profound impact on libraries and scholarly research. The number and variety of information resources, as well as the emergence of networked environments, have radically altered how information is produced, organized, and disseminated.

In the library world, the rise of information technologies has also coincided with a period of fiscal constraint and soaring serial prices. These factors have contributed to a decline in the buying power of library materials budgets. As a result, the number of monographs and serials purchased by university library systems has significantly
decreased. Between 1986 and 1996, for example, ARL member institutions reduced their annual monograph purchases by 21% and their serial purchases by 7% (Branin 25).

This dynamic and challenging environment has added a new layer of complexity to collection development. Selectors must now weigh the relative merits—and costs—of print and electronic versions of information resources. Increasingly, librarians are canceling serial and print index subscriptions and adding networked versions of these resources. Rather than selecting items on a title-by-title basis, librarians are turning to “aggregators” who build collections at the “macro and integrated level” (Branin 28).

The requirements of computer networks have favored the coordination, and in some cases, centralization of collection management tasks. As Michael Engle reports, the concentration of capital that is required to subscribe to and mount networked services “has brought the centralization issue home” to those involved with collection development: “The high per-title cost of computer-based indexing and abstracting services requires either more extensive cooperation among selectors or the diversion of discretionary resources into a central pool for subscribing to networked titles” (382). Given this state of affairs, collection development—or collection management—has as much to do with “policy, planning, analysis, and cooperative activities” as it does with adding titles to the collection” (Branin 24).

Traditional collection development issues such as negotiating materials allocations and ensuring preservation of, and access to, back files of journals continue to be areas of concern in the digital age. Indeed the advent of electronic resources complicates these processes. These issues, along with the others considered here, call for careful strategic planning. According to Michael Engle: “Increased awareness of how individual libraries
are restructuring services and collections is necessary to maximize the effectiveness and minimize the damage inflicted by restructuring driven by financial pressures” (385).
METHODOLOGY

The collections of undergraduate libraries are not intended to be comprehensive or global. However, they are designed to meet the specific information needs of undergraduates—needs that may not be addressed as effectively by university research libraries. As Voigt has argued, the narrower focus of undergraduate collections adds to the complexity of the materials selection process.

While previous scholarly commentaries on undergraduate libraries have included extensive discussion and debate on the preferred features of undergraduate collections, this literature is quite dated. The context in which undergraduate collections are built and maintained has changed dramatically since the period between 1960-1985, when most of the published material on undergraduate libraries appeared. The goal of this study is to provide a contemporary treatment of collection development issues and concerns.

This research project does not, however, aspire to be an exhaustive treatment of every issue involved in collection development at undergraduate libraries. Instead, the paper is an exploratory study that looks at how selected staff members at undergraduate libraries (1) understand the function of their undergraduate collections and (2) describe the impact of recent trends in academic librarianship on their collecting policies and practices.

Research Population

The group of undergraduate libraries from which the participating institutions were drawn was identified from the directory of the ACRL Undergraduate Librarians (UGLi)
Discussion Group of the American Library Association (see Appendix C). Although not every institution on this list meets the definition of an undergraduate library as set forth in the Definitions section of this paper, each member institution was contacted. Since information regarding the characteristics of these institutions and their collections is neither abundant nor current, the researcher did not attempt to narrow this field in advance. In order to insure objectivity, the researcher’s home institution (R. B. House Undergraduate Library at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill) was not included in the study.

Of the twenty-two institutions that were contacted about participating in this study, seventeen responded to the researcher’s email solicitation. Of this number, three declined to participate. In two of these cases, librarians at these institutions indicated that the interview questions were not applicable to their situation. One stated that her facility does not have a collection; another explained that, while there is an undergraduate collection at her library, there is not a separate or self-contained undergraduate facility. A third librarian sent her regrets, citing time pressures.

Four other institutions that responded were also not included in the study for the following reasons. One library had been eliminated in the previous year; at another library, the researcher was provided with a referral, but attempts to contact that library staff member were unsuccessful; the librarian at another institution responded after the end of the data collection period; and one facility did not qualify as an undergraduate library according to the definition set forth by the study plan. (The latter facility was administered by one part-time librarian and consisted of a “general reading collection”
that has no formal connection with the undergraduate teaching program of the university.)

The remaining ten libraries that responded to the email invitation agreed to participate and also were facilities that qualified as undergraduate libraries according to the study definition. One librarian who was interviewed for the study indicated that approximately fifteen institutions that send representatives to the Undergraduate Librarians Discussion Group conform to the study’s definition of an undergraduate library. Given this figure, 75% of qualifying institutions were included in the study. Out of the total number of institutions from which the membership of the Undergraduate Librarians Discussion Group is drawn, 43.4% participated. The researcher believes that this relatively high level of participation, together with the qualitative data collection procedures outlined below, have yielded a sufficiently broad and varied set of data from which meaningful patterns and themes can be extracted.

Each of the ten librarians who agreed to be interviewed for this study is employed at a participating undergraduate library. In all but three (out of ten) cases, the participants were directors or managers of their undergraduate library. The remaining three participants were identified as staff members that could answer questions about collection development at their home institutions. (One participant was a former director of her university’s undergraduate library; the other two participants had collection development responsibilities at their libraries.)
Instrumentation

The standard semi-structured interview was selected as the method of data collection, with the expectation that this would provide the greatest amount of qualitative data in the time available for the study. Because undergraduate libraries are scattered across the country, interviews with study participants were conducted by phone, with one exception (see below). One of the advantages of the interview format was that it enabled the researcher to clarify interview questions and to probe interviewees for further information when appropriate. In addition, this data collection method seemed more suitable for busy professionals who might otherwise have been put off by the prospect of writing replies to open-ended questions.

In order to provide structure for the interviews (and to the data collected), a list of fifteen interview questions was generated (see Appendix A). The questions that were developed were based on a review of the scholarly literature and on conversations with University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill faculty and librarians. Interview questions were pre-tested with this group in order to check for readability and face validity.

Interview questions covered six major areas: (1) basic collecting policies and practices, (2) university curricula and undergraduate collections, (3) non-curricular collections, (4) the impact of information literacy programs, (5) collection development and information technologies, and (6) other issues identified by study participants.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher used the contact information provided on the Undergraduate Librarians Discussion Group Directory to identify undergraduate library directors or collection
development staff. These individuals were sent an email invitation to participate in the study. A list of the fifteen interview questions and a summary of the study procedures and guidelines were included as attachments to this email (See Appendixes A and B).

Librarians from the ten eligible institutions were contacted again by phone or email in order to set up an appointment for the interview. At this time, permission was sought to tape-record the interviews. One participant indicated that she preferred that the researcher/interviewer take notes; another participant preferred to supply written responses to the interview questions. Each of these preferences was honored. With the remaining eight participants, phone interviews were tape-recorded.

The phone interviews took place over a three-week period in May and June 2003. Interviews typically lasted between 40-50 minutes. The tape-recorded conversations were transcribed and the individual questions tagged to facilitate a comparison and analysis of responses. Participants were guaranteed anonymity, and references to their home institutions were removed from the transcribed material.

**Data Analysis Plan**

This is an exploratory study, which attempts to identify shared and divergent collection development policies and practices at American undergraduate libraries. Data analysis thus involved extracting existing policies/practices and developing useful categories in which to describe and think about these. The researcher compared responses to interview questions in order to identify collecting patterns and trends. Since the study focuses on the impact of recent developments in academic librarianship,
changes reported in collecting policies/practices as well as the participants’ identification of current issues and concerns were emphasized.
FINDINGS

Basic Collecting Policies and Practices

Effective collection management depends upon clearly articulated goals and priorities, carefully considered procedures for evaluating and selecting materials, and equitable distribution of library resources. In this study, interview questions related to these basic policies and practices focused on collection development policy statements, the materials selection process, and materials budget allocation.

Collection Development Policy Statements

The value of collection development policy statements as planning tools is strongly indicated by the study’s findings. Nine of the ten study participants reported that they have written collection development policies. Only one participant gave a negatively qualified answer, noting that her institution currently has no “detailed” collection policy but that she and her staff are in the process of developing one. This librarian stated that issues related to media, new technologies, and fiscal constraints are prompting a systematic review of collecting policies. Three other participants indicated that their collection policies are somewhat dated and in need of revision. In one of these cases, e-resources are an issue that needs to be addressed. At another library, a change in the focus of the collection and a drastic reduction in its size (from 125,000 volumes to
roughly 25,000 volumes) were cited as reasons why an updated collecting policy is needed.

When questioned about the function of their library and its collections, the participants responded that their libraries support undergraduate curricular and basic research needs. Each library has identified its target clientele and the programs of study that its collections support. To some extent, this varies from institution to institution. Seven out of ten participants reported that they collect for “lower division” undergraduates (i.e. mainly freshmen and sophomores); the remaining three libraries support all four years of undergraduate study. The majority of libraries have collections that primarily support academic programs in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.

Some participants highlighted features that they regard as defining characteristics of their undergraduate library’s collection. For example, four participants referred to their collections as “ready access”. The policies governing the use of these collections frequently include one or more of the following: shorter loan periods, limited renewals, no interlibrary loan, duplicate copies, and 24-hour access. The rationale behind ready access collections is that undergraduates frequently work under tight deadlines with respect to course assignments and need library materials that are readily available. Students cannot wait weeks or months for a checked-out item to be returned to the library. As one librarian put it: “Undergraduates are taking five classes a semester, they have five different sets of assignments. They can’t work that far ahead. Most of the time, they have more than one thing due in a class. To have something checked out is a barrier for most of the students that we work with.”
Several participants referred to their collections as “steady state”—that is, fixed at a predetermined size. In order for new books to be added to the collection, other titles (typically those that have not circulated recently) have to be withdrawn or transferred to other collections. In order to maintain a steady state collection, regular and systematic weeding programs are in place at these institutions. In some cases, limited space is a factor, but, more often, the goal is to maintain a collection that undergraduates can browse with ease.

Five participants referred to their collections as “high use,” driven by a “use it or lose it” philosophy. Frequently, duplication is permitted at these facilities if the item in question has been identified as a high-demand title that circulates frequently. One participant contrasted “high use” collections with the traditional concept of a self-contained “core collection”. As one librarian explained, “We collect a broad spectrum of subjects—anything that would be of current interest to undergraduates—but we do not collect in any way that would be considered comprehensive or balanced in terms of subject areas. Instead we focus on high use materials.”

In justifying this focus, the librarians noted that the research libraries on campus are responsible for building comprehensive or subject-intensive collections. As students progress in their studies and develop more sophisticated research skills, they are expected to move on to these research collections. It is the job of the undergraduate library to point the way. Far from attempting to keep students at their library, a number of participants characterized their institution as a “gateway” or “teaching” library, whose mission is to build a bridge to the research library by developing students’ research skills.
As one librarian noted: “I think a main part of our function is getting people used to using big research libraries.”

These definitions of the undergraduate library collection—as ready access, steady state, high use, gateway—help to articulate what is unique and valuable about a collection selected specifically for undergraduates. As Melvin Voigt argued (see Literature Review), this is critical for justifying the existence of undergraduate libraries. Clearly, participants regarded a well-defined collection policy statement as a useful instrument on campuses where various constituencies compete for limited funds. One librarian who, in the last decade, had presided over the opening of an undergraduate library at her university, noted that support for the undergraduate library on her campus had not been universal:

We encountered a good deal of resistance among the librarians in the other libraries [on campus]. They won’t admit it, but I can tell you firsthand that we experienced a great deal of resistance. Because they didn’t want to give up any scope; they didn’t want to give up any part of their collection. And they said: “Well, what exactly are you going to collect over there?” They have this culture of no duplication. So what we said was: “We’re going to go through the curriculum and look at the courses that are offered at the freshman and sophomore levels.” … Where everyone could finally agree was that the freshman and sophomore levels were safe for us to collect, and they [the research libraries] retained the right to build collections for upper level undergraduate and graduate study because there is a great deal of overlap there…. Politically, that’s about what we could accomplish without major warfare.

The Selection Process

Eight of the ten participants indicated that materials selection for the undergraduate library occurs on site. At one of the libraries that did not follow this practice, collection
development has recently become a centralized process that occurs at the library system level. In this system, materials selection is now the responsibility of a team of subject selectors who are responsible for disciplines that span library buildings. At another library, a coordinated collection development pilot project has recently been completed. Collection development responsibilities at this facility are now shared between undergraduate library staff and system-wide subject selectors.

At the eight libraries that do their own materials selection, collection development is typically a team effort involving multiple staff members. Selectors are often drawn from the reference department and occasionally the reserves department. Several participants commented on the benefits of involving staff that interact with students on a regular basis. As one noted: “We’re trying to have people do book selection that actually see students all the time rather than using a collection development officer…. We want to make sure that all reference staff and, in the case of reserves, our access services staff, is involved. They’re right there on the front line.” A common practice for sharing collecting responsibilities involved assigning specific disciplines or subject areas to each selector.

While study participants were not asked about approval plans, four reported that they use them; two stated that they do not. One participant said that staff at her library rely “heavily” on an approval plan; another stated that 70-80% of her library’s monographs are acquired using this tool. The two librarians who reported that they do not use approval plans gave the same reason for forgoing them: both libraries have collections with large numbers of “hot topic” or current situation books, and these can not be accommodated by an approval plan profile.
Another area in which practices at the various libraries tend to diverge concerns the extent to which staff and bibliographers from other libraries are consulted or involved in the selection process at the undergraduate library. Responses ranged from “not much” to “close collaboration”.

In undergraduate libraries where there is a minimum of consultation with outside groups, it was frequently noted that the different libraries on campus are aware of each other’s collecting policies. As one librarian put it: “We do our own selection, but it’s not out of context. We’re aware of what other fund managers are selecting, and they’re aware of what we’re selecting. We do get recommendations from other departmental libraries.” Undergraduate libraries that are permitted to be duplicate collections also appear to be less involved in negotiations with other libraries about which titles belong in the undergraduate collection.

Half of the participants said that they communicate regularly with selectors from other campus libraries. One librarian (whose book collection is not a duplicate collection) stated that she and her staff consult with other libraries “especially if we think there’s something they should have, or there’s something we should have, or it’s an expensive acquisition.” At another undergraduate facility, individual staff members are appointed as “subject liaisons” to the division libraries on campus and frequently receive recommendations on freshman and sophomore level texts that the division libraries do not support. One participant said that she talked to selectors at the main research library four to six times a month, noting that it is vital to “keep tuned in.”

Three participants indicated that the coordination of materials selection is a controversial issue on their campuses. In the case of the library system that has been
reorganized into centralized functional teams, librarians at the undergraduate library worry that selectors will “overlook buying books at the undergraduate level and put all the books back in the main research library.” The library that has developed a coordinated collection development plan did so in order to “include more discussion in the process” and to address a certain amount of “resentment” towards the undergraduate library that had built up over collection development issues.

In the latter case, the librarian described the challenge this way: “It used to be that the undergraduate library had an approval plan and the main [system] subject selectors had approval plans and those plans didn’t speak to each other.” To remedy this situation, the staff at the undergraduate library decided to invite subject specialists (whose materials were appropriate for undergraduates) to assume responsibility for collection development of monographs in their discipline in the undergraduate library. Liaisons from the undergraduate library were assigned to work with the subject specialists, who charged the undergraduate library’s monograph fund for those titles that were purchased for the undergraduate library.

While no formal evaluation of the pilot project has been performed, the librarian’s preliminary impressions of the program are positive: subject specialists have more of a say in the coordination of collection development in their area (and more funds to spend on their subject), unwanted duplication has been eliminated, and the project has enhanced collaboration and cooperation with respect to expensive items being considered for purchase. In this case, as in the previous one, system selectors have been encouraged to spend time with the undergraduate staff, collections, and users in order to get a feel for the nature of the undergraduate collection. Both librarians feel this exercise has been a
useful one. As one noted: “[V]ery few people outside of those working in undergraduate libraries really understand what literature is appropriate or will help…. Unless you’re actually doing it [i.e. working with undergraduates] it’s hard to visualize.”

Materials Budget Allocation

Questioned about their process for allocating funds for library materials, study participants indicated that they do not employ strict budget formulas. In large part, this response appeared to be a reflection of the complexity of the process, which, arguably, does not lend itself to neat formulas.

The most common approach mentioned is to start with reserves, the approval plan (if applicable), and serials expenditures and, calculating from those figures, determine the amount that remains to be spent on the general collection. A clear majority of participants stated that the allocation of funds for the general collection is curriculum driven.

One participant, who identified her collection as high use, based materials allocation on circulation figures and noted that social sciences are strongly represented in the collection. Another librarian stated: “Areas that are heavy in undergraduate courses are the areas where we buy—English in particular…. The sciences are less heavily represented because they are more textbook represented in the undergraduate years.”

One participant mentioned psychology, communications, American and British literature, education, and sociology as “big areas” in the collection. Yet another participant reported that roughly seventy percent of expenditures are spent on curricular material and thirty percent on extracurricular.
Two participants reported that they looked at course reserves when they consider how to allocate funds for the general collection. For one participant, this involves checking enrollment figures for courses with items on reserve in order to get “a sense of the ebbs and flows of what students are taking.” For the other, it is important to consider what subject areas are heavily represented in reserves because these titles eventually end up in the general collection. This librarian provided the following account of how she and her staff deliberate:

Many years ago we did a study of five years of buying. We studied acquisitions for [the library] in terms of subject area, and we gazed at the numbers. And we asked ourselves: “Does this feel right that we should be heavily buying in literature, history, politics and economics?” And we said: “Yes—that feels right.” “And does it feel right that we buy less in anthropology, psychology, and sociology?” And we said, “Yes, that feels right.” A lot of the intuition we were using corresponded with reserves use. We knew certain things in reserves were feeding the general collection [ie. end up in the general collection] and the rest we were responsible for. Those algorithms that we set up years ago are examined every year. We make annual adjustments to those Choice subject descriptors.

University Curricula and Undergraduate Collections

All study participants indicated that support for the undergraduate curriculum is a defining focus of their library’s collection. The libraries in this study provide coverage for a broad spectrum of subject areas (although mostly in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences). In addition, the majority of libraries (seven) have collections geared to freshman and sophomores. For this group of users, library staff seeks to collect “basic” and “introductory” texts. As some participants noted, defining an “undergraduate” text is not always clear-cut. Several librarians suggested that interacting
with students is the best way to develop a sense for the kinds of materials that are useful. Others mentioned that they look for texts that provide a general overview of a subject rather than narrow, specialized research.

When questioned about how their collection relates to the curriculum, almost all of the respondents mentioned that a significant portion of the collection is devoted to materials that directly relate to, or support, course assignments. The most commonly mentioned resources in this category are course reserves and resources on topics that students frequently choose for papers or speeches.

At one library, course reserves account for 40-45% of acquisitions. During the 1998-99 academic year, the reserves program at this institution served 617 courses and 47 summer school courses (some of these courses were graduate level but the single largest departmental user was the Core Curriculum). As the librarian at this facility noted: “Reserves are a big thing for us…. [We] have very large and very heavily used and very valued reserve collections. That just continues to be the way that … faculty want to bring together study materials for their courses. We see a lot of changes [in the curriculum] reflected first in the kinds of reserves requests we get.…”

At another undergraduate library, the reserves department, the largest on campus, supports 400 courses per quarter. In addition to 2000 books on reserve, there is also a large electronic reserves component. (Six other libraries mentioned that they offer e-reserves.)

Two other participants mentioned large reserves departments. Interestingly, although faculty do not appear to be actively involved in the materials selection process at undergraduate libraries, they do have an indirect influence on the collection (at least on
these campuses), since items purchased for reserves often end up in the permanent collection.

Providing resources for students who are writing papers or giving speeches for English or Communications courses is also a major area in which undergraduate libraries provide support for student coursework. A number of the “high use” titles mentioned earlier are “hot topic” or current events resources that students frequently consult for short paper assignments.

Needless to say, there are ebbs and flows in what are considered hot topics, and the librarians surveyed strive to stay abreast of these changes. For example, one librarian reported that during the early years of the Clinton administration, when health care reform was the leading news story, the library collected material on that topic, even though public health is generally not an area in which the library collects heavily. Current hot issues, she said, include Islam and the Middle East. (Bio-terrorism, global warming, endangered species, genetic research, and Eastern Europe are some of the other areas of current interest that were mentioned by participants.)

Full text electronic journal articles are always popular with students, and a number of librarians mentioned purchasing electronic products that are suitable for lower division communication and composition courses. For example, resources that consider controversial issues from multiple points of view are popular. One participant reported that she kept the print collection of *Opposing Viewpoints* for this purpose. “Any kind of point/counterpoint [resource] we buy,” she said.

A question about changes observed in the subject areas and kinds of materials that undergraduate libraries are collecting produced an interesting mix of responses. Two
libraries participating in the study have been in existence for less than ten years and were
born high tech and cutting edge; neither of these facilities reported dramatic changes in
their collection. Likewise, participants from two other libraries have not observed huge
shifts in the subject areas they are collecting, apart from the usual ebb and flow of current
event topics. However, the majority of librarians surveyed did report significant changes
in the make-up of their collections over the last ten years.

Three librarians reported that the growing interdisciplinarity of the curriculum at their
universities is having an impact on their collections. One described a new teaching
initiative at her university in which general education courses are taught by senior faculty
teaching across disciplines. As one might expect, her library has been very actively
involved in supporting these courses. One of the other librarians described the changes at
her institution as follows:

[T]he kind of materials that [are appearing in reserves] might
formerly have been considered almost out of scope [for the
undergraduate library]. There is a growing interdisciplinarity.
[The university] has developed five inter-faculty initiatives: the
study of the child, environmental health, and several others.
There has been concerted effort to extend those inter-faculty
initiatives … down into the undergraduate level. We are being
asked to do reserve support for heavily interdisciplinary fields
like environmental sciences and public policy. When I started in
library work twenty-five years ago, you just didn’t see that stuff
coming up on reading lists at all….

We have a program at [the university] called the Core
Curriculum. It is rife with interdisciplinary study. The core was
designed to teach students how to study the disciplines but, as the
disciplines have become more interdisciplinary, that’s the way
the core courses go as well.

Four participants reported a noticeable increase in the use of multimedia across the
 curriculum. Materials that were mentioned include film, video, DVD, interactive CD,
and large data sets distributed in CD-ROM format. One librarian described this trend as follows:

I really think multi-media is the area of growth. It used to be that you had media or cinema studies … that was driving the collection of media, but now just about every discipline will have a media component. And so we’ve had an interesting process of being able to expand our collection…. If a faculty member wants to buy an art video, then we will go back to the art selector and ask that they purchase it out of their funds in addition to what we’re able to buy out of the media center funds.

We also collect CDs if there’s a music element that’s important…. Students may be creating their own video or tape and they need background [music].

As another participant observed: “It’s not just subject materials that we’re being asked to provide. We are also being asked to support lots of different media representations of that material.”

Another subject receiving a great deal of attention is area and ethnic studies. Four participants mentioned this as an area of growth in their libraries. Two librarians reported an increased interest in politics and current events. Several mentioned that they were purchasing more computer guides. One participant said that her library was acquiring more books on Internet culture, relationships and interpersonal communication, film, performing arts, and music.

**Non-curricular Collections**

While undergraduate libraries exist primarily to support the curriculum, many of the institutions participating in this study maintain significant collections of non-curricular materials. Historically, this has been the practice at many undergraduate libraries. Early proponents argued that one of the functions of undergraduate libraries was to promote the
habit of reading. Creating a “tempting” environment for students, in which books and magazines of general interest were available, was seen as one way to further this aim.

A number of study participants shared their own thoughts on the value of their non-curricular collections. One librarian summed up her philosophy this way: “I’m a big believer that we have an obligation to support more than coursework. We’re a residential campus, and our students have needs beyond coursework.”

Arguably, this is truer today than it ever was, given the increasing numbers of older, part-time students on university campuses. One librarian described the impact of changing demographics on her library’s collecting practices in this way:

Our students are typical non-traditional students. The average age of students at [the university] is 28 years old. There are relatively few nineteen-year-old students coming right from high school…. Most of our students commute, and virtually all students work. High proportions of students are married and have families, and so school is a part time responsibility for them. They have to juggle many, many things. Many of them are the first in their families to go to college, so they’re bucking that cultural thing as well. For all these reasons, we bought books on [topics such as] coping with divorce, being a single mom, handling depression, etc. We wanted them to have resources that related to their lives as a whole—as opposed to “How do I survive chemistry?”

Reflecting on the mission of her undergraduate library, this participant stated: “The undergraduate library exists in order to help our students succeed. We don’t just want to help them succeed in their coursework. We want to help them succeed in life.” Given this aim, this participant’s library has strong collections in career planning and personal computing in addition to the books on personal coping skills mentioned above.

Resources on personal growth and professional development are a strong component of many non-curricular collections. Of the ten libraries participating in the study, five
reported having strong career collections. Self-help books, especially those targeting college age students, were also frequently mentioned.

One of the considerations guiding the development of these collections is the availability of resources at campus career and counseling centers. In some cases, for example, libraries collect only basic reference texts on careers because campus career centers have extensive holdings.

One participant reported that her library has cultivated programmatic partnerships with both the campus career-counseling center as well as the psychological counseling program. One impetus for these collaborative ventures was the recognized benefit of providing access to these materials outside of standard office hours. Two separate collections were created in the library: a self-help information center and a self-service career center. The self-help information center has roughly 200 titles on topics such as time management, coping with stress, safe sex, dating, etc. and features a comfortable lounge area. The career center provides materials for students who are pursuing graduate or professional programs of study or who are looking for a job. Career guides, graduate and undergraduate college profiles, as well as resources on interviewing, writing resumés, preparing for graduate entrance exams, and applying for financial aid are available here.

Some non-curricular collections at undergraduate libraries also include general interest or recreational materials. These include materials such as popular fiction, travel guides, cookbooks, entertainment videos, and books and magazines on various leisure time sports and hobbies. All study participants collect at least some of these materials, although two libraries indicated that budget cuts are likely to affect significantly the composition of these collections.
In the area of popular and contemporary fiction, three libraries reported that they have leased collections (two with McNaughton) that are set up as separate browsing collections. Two additional libraries have recreational reading collections that are also separate browsing collections, one supported through donor gifts and one an endowed reading room.

Several participants indicated that they interpret recreational reading broadly and collect titles that are experimental or a “slight cut above” standard popular fiction. For example, one collected acclaimed first time novelists, in an effort to “draw students into exploring literature.” Another librarian is in the process of building up her collection in terms of “fine literature and biography—things that we grew up with that today’s students may not be familiar with.” Yet another participant used gift funds to purchase experimental “graphic novels” (these were described as anything from comic books bound together to illustrated novels). The flexibility built into the collecting policies of these non-curricular collections permits librarians to purchase materials that may be generating buzz but whose curricular value has not yet been established.

More than one participant observed that non-curricular collections are a good way to attract students to the library. A good deal of time and effort is put in to increasing the visibility of these collections. Clever signage (e.g. a cookbook display labeled “Beyond Pizza”), comfortable seating, and the creation of separate browsing collections are some common promotional tactics. Two librarians mentioned browsable video collections that enjoy heavy circulation.

Two participants stated that their libraries now have on-site cafes. One participant reported that her library has moved the recreational collection into the newly opened cafe
area. This collection includes books arranged into subject areas (e.g. science fiction, mysteries, sports and fitness, hobbies, etc.), a number of current newspapers (“like airport stuff—we don’t worry when they disappear”), and a newly expanded collection of videos and DVDs arranged in bins for browsing. The student union runs a counter serving coffee and light snacks, and there are booths and tables scattered throughout the area. Computers with flat screen monitors are available for those who want to enjoy a cup of coffee while they surf the web. “What we’ve tried to do is create a Borders-like atmosphere in there,” this participant observed. Not surprisingly, the café and recreational collection are “very, very popular” with students. (Gift funds support the recreational collection.)

Another interview question bearing on non-curricular collections asked about preservation issues related to the popular culture materials that are often a component of non-curricular collections. In the past, academic libraries have not collected these materials; however, in recent years, popular culture has become an object of scholarly inquiry. The question posed to study participants was this: Have trends in scholarly research affected the way that the undergraduate library or the university library system handles these (formerly ephemeral) popular culture materials?

The responses of participants to this question were markedly similar. Regarding the undergraduate library’s own collecting and retention practices, the librarians, for the most part, observed few changes. The majority of participants noted that the undergraduate collection is not an archival or research collection and that, with some few exceptions, these items are regularly weeded. This librarian’s response was a typical one:

We are a use collection; we are not a preservation collection although most of the other libraries on campus deal with the
preservation issue more than we do. We do keep women’s magazines because we understand that students use these for research purposes. We either bind them or replace them with microfiche, but we’ve always done that—that’s not anything new. Most of the recreational serials titles that might be considered popular culture we only keep a year or two…. We are not really an archival collection. We don’t retain materials on the chance that someone might use them as popular culture materials at some point. The other libraries on campus may do that but we don’t.

Several participants confirmed that research libraries at their universities do, as a rule, archive unique titles (including titles related to popular culture) that have been weeded and withdrawn from the undergraduate library. One participant noted that this process was “very systematized” at her university: “When we do our weeding, we set aside materials for the bibliographers at [the main research library] to look at. Because so much of the [main research library’s] collection is in the [university] depository, I’m sure they keep anything we have that’s unique.”

The Impact of Information Literacy Programs

As many study participants emphasized, a primary mission of undergraduate libraries is to instruct students in the use of library materials and in the fundamentals of research. Since the 1970s and 1980s, bibliographic instruction (or research instruction) programs have been a service focus of undergraduate libraries. More recently, some library systems have instituted broader, more systematic, information literacy initiatives (often with close ties to the undergraduate library).

Of the ten libraries participating in this study, six reported that they participate in campus information literacy programs. Two of these programs are new initiatives developed within the last year (one involved the hire of a Coordinator of Information
Literacy). At one university, students are required to take a one-credit information literacy course; on another campus, students have to complete an online library research tutorial and attend a follow-up classroom session at the library. The remaining four libraries offer on-demand bibliographic instruction classes.

While dedicated staff is key to the success of the undergraduate library’s teaching mission, the collection, too, can be an instructional resource. One question directed to study participants had to do with the characteristics of an undergraduate “teaching” collection. Study participants were asked: Has the current emphasis on information literacy had any impact on the kinds of materials that you are acquiring for your undergraduate library’s collection?

The most common response to this question was that undergraduate libraries are purchasing materials that are used as resources in bibliographic instruction classes. Since these classes are frequently requested by the introductory level composition and communication classes discussed earlier, librarians find that they are purchasing a significant number of titles related to current events and controversial issues (many of these resources are available in electronic format as aggregated serials and databases).

One participant felt that information literacy programs have enhanced her library’s collection of reference resources. However, she went on to add that, as with serials, a good deal of their reference collection is going digital:

To the extent that our collection in reference supports these kinds of inquiries [i.e. information literacy related assignments] and to the extent that students need to use journal articles, I think our collection has been impacted…. For information literacy, many of the peer reviewed journals and the important sources for periodicals we’re assuming they’re getting online and that we all [in the library system] share in the cost of that. But for reference sources, depending on what it is, information literacy programs
have I think, enhanced use of what’s in our collection. But—I don’t know—I would say that, even there, so much of our collection is becoming digitized that I’m not sure that it [i.e. the information literacy program] is directly influencing what we’re buying for the collection.

Asked whether emphasis on the use of scholarly resources in information literacy programs has resulted in the purchase of more scholarly materials for the undergraduate library, this group of librarians indicated that a collection of high quality scholarly resources has always been a priority at their libraries. One participant responded this way:

In the years I’m aware of, we’ve been doing research instruction. I’d say that the impact on collections is embedded. I don’t know a time when it wasn’t. We are continually trying to gauge the usefulness of material, both in published and bound form and otherwise, in terms of how critical it is to the classroom related instruction that we do and that many of our … colleagues do. We want students to be able to come here and find things that have been taught to them as key resources whether it’s our staff that’s doing the teaching or not. We are continually in negotiation with our research instruction colleagues at [the main research library] in terms of what’s appropriate, what should get funded, what should be made available here at [the undergraduate library]….

Another librarian indicated that her library’s collection, while not a research collection in the ARL sense, is 75-80% scholarly (these figures appear to be roughly in line with those of other undergraduate libraries in the study). She, too, noted that the collection supports the instructional mission of the library:

The undergraduate library we see as serving as the gateway and introduction … to both the research process and the research library and how to use it. Everything we do is focused on that introduction, and the collection is part of that. So we see ourselves in stark contrast to libraries with research collections. Our collection is not a research collection. We view our collection as a high use collection that we have for the purposes
of that introduction and as a resource for us to use in teaching students how to do research and use libraries at this level.

Melvin Voigt suggests that a “teaching” collection might be conceived in two ways: (1) as intentionally designed to help bridge the gap between the undergraduate library and the research library (i.e. the gateway model) and (2) designed to provide as much as possible for the undergraduate students’ needs, with a selection of high quality reference works, general works, and more specific, recommended texts—the combination leading the user “into the collection rather than out of it” (253-4).

These strategies are not mutually exclusive and, to some extent, the libraries in this study pursue both. However, for most of the participating libraries, the gateway model has priority (as evidenced by the majority of libraries defining their collection for lower division undergraduate use). It is perhaps not surprising, then, that collecting practices with respect to scholarly materials have not changed significantly in response to information literacy initiatives (at least among this group). Collections at gateway libraries are not intended to be complete or comprehensive, or to meet the more sophisticated research requirements of upper division undergraduates. In addition, the increased use of electronic resources (particularly serials) is also affecting the decisions that librarians make about what needs to be in their collection. With so many scholarly resources available online, librarians are no longer limited to the materials that reside within their four walls.
Collection Development and Information Technologies

E-Resources

Asked how their collections have been affected by new information technologies, study participants indicated that electronic journals, indexes, and aggregations of journals have had a significant impact on their collections. While two libraries reported no dramatic changes in their collections (these were the libraries that had opened in the last ten years), the majority of libraries in the study are reassessing their serial collections in response to the growing number of periodical titles now available online.

With the exception of one of the newer libraries, all study participants reported that they are canceling subscriptions to significant numbers of print journals, especially when electronic versions of these journals are available through library system portals. One participant stated that her library cut serials by $55,000 in the previous biennium and that they are now spending about $75,000 per biennium on serials. Her library now maintains what she referred to as a “browsable” serials collection—a collection of popular titles that students like to browse and read, “not necessarily for research purposes.” Two other participants mentioned that they are moving toward this kind of browsable print collection, given students’ preference for accessing scholarly journals through full-text databases. One described the changes being made at her library this way:

[One] main area where new technologies have impacted us is in journals. We used to have 400 journals in print that we collected so that we would have journals for students who are writing papers. With the databases now—when students are writing papers—they’re going to use the full text journals. So we’ve reassessed the journal collection completely. Now we have approximately 100 titles, and they’re all browsing titles. The idea is for students to be able to come in and browse current journals including People magazine, news magazines like Newsweek, and sports and fitness magazines, etc…. We have
them all arranged in a horseshoe area with comfortable seating to try to encourage students to browse print because, otherwise, we feel they won’t realize there is a print world.

Another librarian—whose university library system ranks among the top in the country in terms of the percentage of its serials budget spent on electronic resources—indicated that she is comfortable with the switch to electronic versions of journals because of the abundance of scholarly electronic resources available to students. “Many, if not all, undergraduates, depending on their topic, can find good information from electronic materials in this library,” she said.

Archival practices related to journals have also been affected by the electronic revolution. While undergraduate libraries do not “collect for the ages,” a number maintain back issues of select journals, either in the form of bound volumes or microfilm, for students’ basic research needs. With database aggregators now offering extensive back files of journals, some libraries are reconsidering these policies. One library in the study has discontinued binding journals. Two participants mentioned canceling subscriptions to microfilm, which are considered duplicate subscriptions. As one librarian noted: “We would never have done that [i.e. canceled microfilm subscriptions] if there hadn’t been some way to get to the back files electronically.” (At this library, existing microfilm collections were sent to the main research library, as were the undergraduate library’s unique periodical titles.)

E-books are also generating a lot of interest among study participants. Some have adopted a “wait and see” attitude to e-books, while others have actively embraced them. One librarian with only a small collection of e-books stated:

We bought some net-Library books to get our feet wet and to be able to offer things to students that might be in a format they
would like to experiment with. But we haven’t invested heavily in these yet. We think these have got a little development yet to go before they’re really easy for our users to use."

Our big interest in e-books would have been if we could have gotten reserve materials on e-books because that would have been a wonderful way to regulate the two-hour loan period. But—a lot of the materials that we need—they just don’t make available [i.e. these are not available as e-books]. Also, we needed to be able to have multiple users at the same time, so there are still some things to work out with that."

A lot of [reserves items] are textbooks, and, if we could get those on e-books, if those were the current books we needed, and we didn’t have to keep them forever, and we could get the current editions when they came out—that would be great, but so far they haven’t come up with those yet.

Two other participants mentioned the advantages (admittedly not fully realized) of e-books as reserves items. Other categories of e-books that received favorable mention are computer manuals and reference books. As one librarian explained:”[In addition to reserves] the other people who are very interested in e-books are the natural sciences folks because they love the idea of being able to lease updated versions of manuals and handbooks and various technology titles and then simply replace them with updated editions.” Reference books that are accessible twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week are also of interest to these librarians.

Even the enthusiastic supporters of e-books feel that libraries need to exercise care in selecting titles that students will actually use. Indeed, how e-books will be used in the future is an open question of particular interest to this group. One of the participants, whose undergraduate library had taken the lead on campus in buying and paying for e-books (an initiative made possible in part by a large corporate gift for the development of the undergraduate library collection), described their selection process as follows:

"We went very heavy into e-books, and I think they’ve been a great success. People use them a lot, and we have a different
model for selecting our e-books called the Patron Driven Access model and—how it works is—we loaded the bibliographic records (the MARC records) for the entire academic collection of netLibrary (at the time we did it I think there were about 16,000 records that we loaded) [into the university online catalog]. We [the university library system] had a deposit account of $100,000 [with net-Library] and on the second click [i.e. when a user opens a netLibrary book], the [purchase] amount of the book is subtracted from that deposit account. So we actually let patrons select the books rather than us trying to anticipate what they would want. And I think that is a fabulous success.

**Multimedia Facilities**

In addition to the variety of electronic resources that can be accessed on library portals, some undergraduate libraries now offer students and faculty access to sophisticated computing and multimedia software and equipment. As one participant observed, a little over five years ago, multimedia labs offered PowerPoint and basic scanning equipment. Today, users may find digital still cameras, digital video cameras, plotters, electronic whiteboards, digital audio and video editing equipment, CD recording stations, and multimedia authoring and editing software at their undergraduate library. Campus and library initiatives to promote integration of information technology into the curriculum are frequently what drive these acquisitions.

Administration and management of these facilities varies from library to library. The most common model appears to be computer or media labs that are managed by campus technology centers. Seven participants mentioned that their undergraduate library houses at least one facility of this kind. One library reported that its computer media center is administered and managed by undergraduate library staff but equipped with computers and software that are purchased by the campus information technology division.
The attitude of participants toward these arrangements varies. Some librarians are quite happy to have these services administered by a centralized technology group. As one noted: “This saves undergraduate library staff from having to develop a whole ancillary area of expertise.” However, two participants expressed concern that their libraries did not own and control more computers and multimedia resources. One worried that despite the “embarrassment of riches” on her campus, students do not always know where to go. “Students will be very happy when they can come to the library, which is a place that’s so familiar to them already and which they use continuously throughout the academic year. We have space and the expert staff to give them lots of learning experiences and actual work experiences.”

The existence of these multimedia facilities in undergraduate libraries is one indication that the boundaries between research and computing are beginning to blur. One participant reported that her library houses a 356-seat computer lab (managed by a campus computing group) with a combined reference and technical assistance desk that is co-administered by undergraduate library staff and the computing group. Behind this desk is a 2000 volume print reference collection.

Another librarian suggested that computer labs draw users into the library—users who may then find it convenient to consult with library staff about research. This librarian described a computer area with twenty to thirty terminals in the undergraduate library reference room:

The idea is that [students] are right there with the reference desk, so if they’re having a problem, they can get to us directly…. We’ll go right to where they’re sitting to help them do their research or help them get them started—or whatever it takes. Traditionally we had not had Microsoft Word or any of those kinds of software but, just in the last year or so, we put on the
whole suite of Microsoft Office software. So they can sit and write their papers in our [undergraduate library] lab as well…. That’s new. It used to be: “No, we don’t have Word—you have to go upstairs [to the other computer lab]. We had gotten so many requests, and it didn’t seem unreasonable to offer that…. We feel this adds functionality to the area; it gives [students] another option, another place where they can do their work.

As this participant’s description makes clear, writing and research today often involve a keyboard. It seems likely, then, that merged computing and reference areas will become increasingly common (and perhaps, also, combined help desks such as the one described above). It will be interesting to observe what impact these convergences may have on library collections (perhaps especially reference collections). At the moment, the most frequently mentioned additions in these areas are computer manuals and texts with accompanying CD-ROMs.

*Purchasing Electronic Resources*

While the undergraduate libraries in this study maintain separate facilities and collections, certain key library functions associated with electronic resources and information technologies require centralized coordination. One such function is managing funds required to subscribe to and mount the networked services described above. Each of the participants in this study indicated that a central electronic resources group handles acquisitions of electronic resources at the library system level. Funds are pooled to pay for this group’s purchases.

Several interview questions addressed the mechanics of this process. Specifically, participants were asked whether their library paid for access to electronic resources that
were geared to undergraduates. There were also questions about the impact of e-resources on undergraduate library budgets and purchasing practices.

All study participants indicated that their library contributes funds towards the purchase of electronic resources; however, the size of these contributions varies. Responses about contribution size ranged from “significant” to “manageable but noticeable” to “not a lot”. Typically, the way that subscriptions are handled is a “mixed” or “hybrid” picture, in which individual departmental libraries, the university library system, and sometimes state consortia contribute funds (either individually or as a group). Undergraduate libraries are sometimes assessed an amount that goes into a central pool of funds. A number of libraries in the study group are exempt from paying for electronic resources that are considered of general interest to the campus community.

Some aggregated databases favored by undergraduate libraries, such as *CQ Researcher*, Gale’s *Literature Resource Center*, *CollegeSource Online*, and *Expanded Academic ASAP*, were sometimes funded by the central group and sometimes paid for by the undergraduate library itself (or by both entities). Other undergraduate classics, such as Gale’s *Discovering* series, *Opposing Viewpoints*, *CQ Public Affairs*, *MagillOnLiterature*, and netLibrary’s *Cliff Notes*, were at a level of “undergraduateness” that was often judged to be below the attention of the graduate school. Typically, undergraduate libraries paid for these resources out of their own funds.

The majority of participants indicated that expenditures for e-resources are not a large percentage of their undergraduate library’s budget. The lion’s share of expenditures for electronic resources is still paid by a central purchasing group at the library system level or by state consortia. While a number of libraries are canceling subscriptions to print
serials, indexes, and reference sources if these are available electronically, this is
generally not perceived as a hardship measure. As one participant observed: “We’re
pretty liberal here in letting electronic replace print when it’s demonstrated that that’s the
preference of the users. We worry a lot less about having to maintain print than maybe
other places do.” Some librarians stated that e-resources were actually saving them
money (at least after cancellations of print subscriptions were factored into the equation).
For these librarians, the costs incurred by the undergraduate library were far outweighed
by the benefits of e-resources.

One participant in the study did report that purchases of e-resources are having a
significant impact on her library’s budget buying power. In large part, this appeared to
be due to the way that purchases of electronic resources are handled at her university:

We’ve had a process here of cooperative purchases…. What
generally happens is that my share [i.e. her contribution to the
purchase of an electronic resource] is transferred from my serials
budget to a central pool, reducing my serials budget. And when
it comes time to reallocate for next fiscal year, chances are pretty
slim that I’m going to get that [money] back. I’m going to get
some percentage increase. So, consistently over the years, my
budget has decreased—in some cases significantly…. We’re to
the point where I can’t contribute anymore…. The way that we
do it here has impacted the amount of money that’s available in
the undergraduate library fund.

While no participants reported that e-resources had directly impacted their ability to
purchase monographs, there were some that presented a more sobering account of the
costs of e-resources and of serials in general. For example, one librarian noted: “We
have not been affected with our budget here in the undergraduate library as far as being
able to buy fewer monographs. Our serials are not the high cost serials; if you were to
speak with a science librarian or some of the social science librarians, they would
probably say that they have been able to buy far fewer monographs because their serials budgets are so high.” Another participant noted that, although expenditures for e-resources are a small percentage of her library’s overall budget, “the general cost of journals, whether print or electronic, has affected our ability to purchase other materials because [the cost of serials] is so much higher.”

Other issues in Collection Development

At the end of each interview, study participants were asked if there were any other issues in collection development that confront their library. As expected, this question elicited a broad range of responses. The reply heard most often was “the budget” (mentioned as a concern by five study participants).

Three librarians alluded to the varying levels of support for different undergraduate libraries, and each pointed to the significance of institutional context. One participant, whose library is housed in the same building as the main research library, feels that a major renovation project is encroaching on the undergraduate library’s space. She reported that some library staff members are questioning the need for a separate collection for undergraduates:

I think there’s an issue of relevance [for the undergraduate collection]. I think, here, the fact that I’ve reduced the collection to the size that it is [from 125,000 to 25,000 volumes]—I worry that the next step will be eliminating it. But I think there is a need for this type of collection. I’m being asked: “Could it be put in with other materials?” The problem then is, it’s lost within other materials. I think there’s value in a collection that only circulates for two weeks and that doesn’t go out on interlibrary loan.

Another librarian in the study finds herself in a very different situation:
There have been so many undergraduate libraries that have disappeared over the last 15 years. Many universities don’t have undergraduate libraries anymore. So we are lucky—we have a lot of support, and we also have a really fabulous building that no one is going to get rid of anytime soon…. There are 13 libraries on campus [and] 40% of the gate count is my library…. Most of the time, we don’t have an empty seat in the building…. We are lucky that they took the lowest people on the campus food chain and gave them the best place for their library.

Given how enthralled students are with the Internet, one librarian feels undergraduate libraries must do a better job of marketing their collections.

In the Google and Amazon environment, where students can get access to so much stuff online, they tend to go in that direction. They think of libraries as hard and Google as easy. We are trying to think of ways to promote our collections and make students more aware of what we have…. [Students] don’t realize the range of stuff we have and how fast we can get it for them if we don’t have it…. We definitely feel that promotion of our collections is a key goal…. We’re trying to promote the library … with more displays and posters to entice their interest…. We’re pushing the collections more, making them more visible.

Two librarians noted that cooperative resource sharing programs are changing the way that staff members think about undergraduate collections. One librarian described how these programs are expanding traditional notions of the undergraduate library’s collection and clientele.

Our traditional clientele have been the undergraduates who come to [the undergraduate library], and our collections will now be more heavily used by a broader base of people—faculty sitting at the other end of campus are requesting our books, faculty and students sitting [in other cities] are requesting our books…. Because we’re a high use collection, we’re getting a lot of use because we’ve got all the popular stuff, and it’s going to impact how we look at our collection…. On the other hand, when our copy is checked out, we can get rapid turnaround time from other places for other copies [that we need]…. 
The second librarian reflected on the ways that cross campus collaborations and library consortia are affecting librarians’ deliberations about what should be in the undergraduate library:

There is a definite tension on campus, particularly now as we [the university library system] look at cutting back more and more…. To what extent should our [i.e. the undergraduate library] budget not be affected as dramatically as others in the sciences have been? To what extent is it important to support [as the undergraduate library does] the non-majors for materials that are not unique? To what extent is that to be balanced with still providing a research collection? So there is that tension. We [at the undergraduate library] are always advocating: “Well, let’s look at the circulation records” [her library’s circulation figures are number two in the university library system]. But then you can have another argument that, “Well, if this work is readily available, even if it’s heavily used, if it is readily available in other locations….” We’re also part of a large state consortium … so you’re able to borrow in three days any work from the [other participating libraries]…. I can see the nature of this conversation continuing to change. One of the things about undergraduate research is that oftentimes they [undergraduates] are not working on a research project over multiple [months]. As you know, they need it NOW. They need it yesterday. Even waiting three days for [an item] perhaps will not help them do that particular work…. So, we feel very strongly that we have to have an up-to-date, vital, topical (if needed) collection to support students’ work. But it’s not without tension, I think. And how do you continue to buy the unique materials [for the research libraries] as well?

One of the things that have also happened is that we’ve introduced the ability to circulate material on campus. In other words, I can be in the art library and say, “Would you send this book over to the undergraduate library?” Now I guess we’re less territorial … in that we’re more willing to share our materials as long as it’s readily accessible somewhere on campus….

One participant observed that the undergraduate library’s traditional role of supporting the curriculum is growing increasingly complex. Intellectual property rights are a particularly thorny issue.
I think the most serious issue for us in collection development is … that, in the curriculum design that we have now, faculty … are expected to teach methodologies, and they’re expected to provide guideposts to the disciplines. And, very often, they need extremely arcane materials published many years ago, long since gone out of stock with publishers. And publishers usually don’t have electronic rights for these things, so they’re not coming into major e-book aggregated collections. That means that we need to more aggressively begin to create electronic versions of the archival print copies of these titles that are owned by [the main research library] and the other research collections.

This is just one pathway into what I think is really one of the most serious issues for collection building, and that is the management of intellectual property rights. Because, as the ability to manipulate formats and to reformat becomes technically more and more feasible, the intellectual issues of the material, and the authenticity of the material, and how stable the library can keep the collection, and what constitutes real stewardship of the intellectual heritage, I think really become quite big issues….

I’m also kind of the middle manager for our electronic reserves program—its not very big. And we’re doing absolutely rigorous intellectual ownership management in our e-reserves program. And it is costly, and it is time consuming, and nobody appreciates it. But if we don’t do it, faculty are going to do it themselves, and we know very well what that means as far as incurring liability for the university. So my situation about intellectual property is pretty grim. It’s very hard work!

There are other collection management issues that arise for undergraduate libraries that maintain reserves collections (as most do). One issue concerns the disposition of items when they are no longer needed as reserve items. One librarian reported that this was a problem at her library:

We … have some issues with reserve items…. Since we are the main reserves library for all of the campus, we end up purchasing things that are not undergraduate-student appropriate. Then, since we purchased the item, should we house it or give it to an appropriate subject-specific library? This is a dilemma.

Another librarian had questions about the reference collection at her library:
I’m … interested in the reference collection. I’m interested in doing some … assessments about how we’re using our print collection and whether we’re using our print collection in the same way as we had in the past. I’ve been in this institution for eight years, and the second year I was here was when we moved to web-based PCs in all the libraries.

So in these seven years, we have moved from a basically print reference collection to the web. I don’t know if we’ve actually changed a lot in a thoughtful way about the way we collect for reference based on things that have happened in these seven years…. [This includes] reference materials that we don’t acquire but reference materials that are just there—how well we use them and how well we help our users use them.

One library-related field that is rapidly evolving is the publishing industry. One participant described how recent publishing trends are affecting collection development practices at her library:

One thing I’ve noticed that’s happened in the last ten years [has to do] with the publishing industry. It’s harder to get things. If you don’t get something in the first six months it’s published, it’s going to be trickier to get a copy. Is it worth it for us to search out-of-print vendors and that kind of thing? … This happens more in a research collection where you’ve got to have this one book. For us, we can say “Okay, we missed getting that one book, but here’s a new one on that same topic that looks like it’s about as good … so we’ll get that instead.” But sometimes there’s no way around it—we really want that book…. Publishing houses [have] started not printing as big a run of a title, and sending them out to be remaindered a whole lot faster than they used to.

Leased book collections and e-books, which are two kinds of resources that are receiving a lot of attention lately, were not universally embraced. One librarian indicated that she was “not a big fan of e-books.” Not everyone has access to these kinds of materials or knows how to use them, she noted. For this librarian, the book collection was the “heart of the library”. As for leased books, one librarian expressed her reservations this way:
Another thing that undergraduate librarians have done is to lease collections—lease collections of current publications, and I’ve looked at a couple of those. I’ve not been persuaded quite yet that that’s a move we should make…. I guess I’d have to know a lot more about it and the funding issues there. For example … I’ve gone online and looked at [another undergraduate library’s] works that are up, and many of them seem very popular and would not be [suitable for our collection].

Another area in which new technologies are influencing collecting practices is materials selection. Increasingly, book vendor databases and book reviews are available online. One participant described how these innovations are streamlining the materials selection process at her library:

[There is] one thing that we’ve just started doing with Blackwell [with whom her library has an approval plan]. I mentioned the … books [that come] for physical examination on a weekly basis. And then the other part of the profile gets us information slips, and Blackwell has just started making those available to us on the web—so there’s a website you go to, and you get your list of material that you would have seen as a paper information slip, and that has streamlined the operation, as far as acquiring those books, quite a bit. I know that Choice is also now making their reviews available online. We subscribe to the Choice cards right now, so we’re still paper-based there, but I’m hoping that we’ll have other electronic options for some of the other title-by-title selections that we make because that is a very time intensive process. People like doing it and are committed to doing it, but it is very time intensive.
CONCLUSION

Despite their common mission—to meet the library needs of undergraduates—the ten undergraduate libraries in this study each have their own distinct identity. As one study participant noted, undergraduate libraries confront many of the same issues, but they handle them in different ways, depending upon the institutional context in which they are embedded. Historical precedents, personalities, the organizational structure of the university and the library system all play a role in determining the challenges and opportunities that confront each of these libraries. Increasingly, there are even wider contexts to consider. Cooperative collection management programs span institutional and even state boundaries.

Although this research study uncovered numerous individual differences among the participating libraries, there are also a number of shared approaches to collection development. There are, for example, a number of similarities in how the undergraduate collection is envisioned. Collections labeled “high use” or “ready access” suggest a user-centered, service-oriented approach to collection development. The traditional conception of an undergraduate core collection—a self-sufficient or self-contained collection of definitive works—is no longer regarded as feasible. Rather than attempt to assemble a collection of “most important” books for undergraduates (see Literature Review for critiques of this approach), study participants are building collections that are closely aligned with, and adapted to, course offerings and assignments. The concept of the
undergraduate library as gateway to the universe of materials located in the university’s research libraries is widely embraced.

While study participants emphasized lean, curriculum-focused collections, the majority expressed strong commitment to their non-curricular collections. Addressing the specific information needs of undergraduates—a mandate that has traditionally been interpreted broadly by undergraduate libraries—is still very much a priority at most of these libraries. Non-curricular materials appear to be another area in which undergraduate libraries have carved out a niche for their collections.

Not surprisingly, the proliferation of e-resources has significantly impacted the collecting practices of all the libraries surveyed. Whether participants were discussing the reference collection, resources for student papers and speeches, instructional tools, or the reserves collection, e-resources figured prominently in the conversation. While there are differences in the extent to which (or if) the various libraries have invested in e-books or electronic reserves programs, this is a gap that seems likely to narrow, judging by the general interest expressed in these materials.

There is less agreement among libraries in how computing and multimedia equipment and facilities are integrated into library services and collections. In some cases, computing/multimedia labs and media collections are administered and managed by the undergraduate library; in other cases, they are not. In those libraries where there are initiatives to integrate computing and research, the impact of these programs and services on the collection would be an interesting area for future research. This is an issue that was only touched upon in this study.
A major area that did not receive sustained treatment in this study is the impact of resource sharing systems on undergraduate library collections. Several librarians raised this issue, noting that library consortia and cross-campus collaborations are changing the way that staff members are thinking about collections. Rapid access to library materials through these programs encourages academic libraries to be less territorial. Book retrieval programs are also having an effect on the base of users that undergraduate libraries are serving. Increasingly, the cooperative arrangements that undergraduate libraries have with other academic libraries may prove to be as important as their individual collections.

The future of undergraduate libraries is likely to be as varied as the past has been. While university library systems need to provide services that address how undergraduates use libraries and library resources, the optimal way to deliver these services will likely vary from institution to institution. As the Undergraduate Librarians Discussion Groups’ mission statement concludes, undergraduate libraries must be innovative, experimental, non-traditional, and alert to changing undergraduate needs.
APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**Basic Collecting Policies and Practices**

1) In a sentence or two, how would you describe the function of your library and its collection?

2) Does your library have a written policy statement for collection development?

3) Is materials selection for the undergraduate library a centralized process, occurring at the library system level? How is staff at your library involved in collection development? Do you consult with staff from other departmental libraries? Faculty?

4) Within the undergraduate library, how do you allocate funds for library materials?

**University Curricula and Undergraduate Collections**

5) How does your collection development policy (or practice) relate to the curriculum?

6) There are a wide variety of courses taught on college campuses today. In the last ten years or so, have you observed any changes in the subject areas or kinds of materials (e.g. film, audio, multi-media) that you are collecting?

**Non-curricular Collections**

7) In addition to resources that support the curriculum, some undergraduate libraries collect general or personal interest materials related to recreation, popular culture, health, career, etc. Does your library collect these kinds of materials? If so, how would you describe your collection policies in these areas?

8) Popular culture materials are now objects of scholarly research. Has this affected collection maintenance policies for these materials at your library? Are you aware of any preservation issues for these formerly ephemeral resources?
The Impact of Information Literacy Programs

(9) Many colleges and universities have information literacy programs that focus on developing students’ research skills. These programs typically emphasize the use of scholarly resources. Has your collection been impacted by programs of this kind? If so, how?

Collection Development and Information Technologies

(10) Innovations in information technology have had a significant impact on libraries. In the last five years, what new technologies (e.g. audio-visuals, scanners, multi-media production and design software) have been introduced at your library?

(11) Has the introduction of new technologies affected your library’s collection and collecting practices? If so, how?

(12) Electronic resources are extremely popular with undergraduates and also quite expensive. How would you describe changes to your budget in relation to e-resources?

(13) Does the undergraduate library pay for access to electronic serials or other e-resources that are geared to the undergraduate (e.g. *CQ Researcher*, *Issues and Controversies*, *MagillOnLiterature*, *Infotrac*, etc.), or are these resources funded by the university library system or state consortia?

(14) How have e-resources affected your ability to purchase other library materials?

Other Issues in Collection Development

(15) Are there other issues in collection development that confront your library?
APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER TO STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Dear [Participant’s name],

My name is Juliet Rumble, and I am a graduate student at the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. I am writing to ask if you would be willing to participate in a survey that I am conducting about collection development practices at undergraduate libraries. I will be writing a master’s paper on this subject later on this summer.

The survey consists of 15 questions, which I’ve included as an attachment to this email; also attached is an outline of the AA-IRB (Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board) approved procedures that will be followed in this study.

My plan is to conduct telephone interviews with study participants. Since a majority of the interview questions are open-ended, I am assuming that participants will find it more convenient to provide oral rather than written answers to the questions. Participants may, of course, provide written answers if they prefer. I estimate that the interview will take between 30-45 minutes to complete.

If you would be willing to be included in this study, I will be happy to contact you by phone to arrange an interview time and to answer any questions that you may have about the study. Your participation would be greatly appreciated! Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,
Juliet Rumble

INFORMATION REGARDING THE STUDY

Principal Investigator: Juliet T. Rumble (Graduate Student, School of Information and Library Science)

Project Title: Collection Development in American Undergraduate Libraries: Policies and Practices

Introduction to the Study:
- You are invited to be in a research study of collection development policies and practices at American undergraduate libraries.
• Juliet Rumble, a graduate student in the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is conducting this study.

**Purpose of the Study:**
- The purpose of this study is to examine collecting policies and practices in American undergraduate libraries and to explore the influence of recent trends in academic librarianship on collection development at these institutions.
- The researcher hopes that information gathered from this study will be useful to librarians who are reassessing their collecting policies in response to changing academic environments.

**What Will Happen During the Study:**
This is what will happen during the study:

1. If you are willing to participate in this study, you will be contacted in order to arrange a time for a phone interview. The interview should take no longer than 30-45 minutes. Approximately ten librarians, each responsible for collection development at their respective institutions, are expected to participate in this study.
2. Prior to the phone interview, you will be provided with a list of 15 interview questions.
3. With your permission, the phone interview will be tape-recorded and your replies to the interview questions transcribed.
4. Information gathered from this study will be incorporated into the researcher’s master’s paper. This paper will be available in print version at the researcher’s home institution (UNC-CH) and will also be available online at the School of Information and Library Science’s website.
5. If you have any questions or concerns about being in this study, you may contact Juliet Rumble (at 919-928-0956 or rumbj@email.unc.edu) or her faculty advisor, Dr. Barbara Moran (at 919-962-8067 or moran@ils.unc.edu).

**Your Privacy is Important:**
Every effort to protect your privacy will be made. Your name will not be used in any of the information obtained from this study or in any of the research reports.

**Risks and Discomforts:**
The researcher is not aware of any personal risk or discomfort you will have from participating in this study.

**Your Rights:**
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you decide to be in the study, you will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. You are free to refuse to answer any question that is asked of you.
Institutional Review Board Approval:
The Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board (AA-IRB) at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has approved this study.
If you have any concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the AA-IRB at (919) 962-7761 or at aa-irb@unc.edu.
APPENDIX C

UNDERGRADUATE LIBRARY DIRECTORY

Columbia University, New York, NY
   Philip L. Milstein Family College Library
   http://www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/indiv/under/

Cornell University Ithaca, NY
   Uris Library
   http://campusgw.library.cornell.edu/library/libraries/urislib.html

George Mason University, Fairfax, VA
   Johnson Center Library
   http://library.gmu.edu/libinfo/jcl.html

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
   Lamont, Harvard College Library
   http://hcl.harvard.edu/lamont/

Indiana University-Bloomington, Bloomington, IN
   Undergraduate Library Services
   http://www.indiana.edu/~libugls/

Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN
   John W. Hicks Undergraduate Library
   http://www.lib.purdue.edu/ugrl/

Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Carbondale, IL
   Undergraduate Library Division (in Morris)
   http://www.lib.siu.edu/hp/divisions/ug/

Stanford University, Stanford, CA
   Meyer Library
   http://www-sul.stanford.edu/depts/meyer/

State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY
   Oscar A. Silverman Undergraduate Library
   http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/units/ugl/

University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
   Integrated Learning Center
   http://www.library.arizona.edu/
University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
Moffitt Undergraduate Library
http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MOFF/

University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
College Library
http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/college/

University of California at San Diego, San Diego, CA
Center for Library and Instructional Computing Services (CLICS)
http://clics.ucsd.edu/

University of Chicago, Chicago, IL
Harper Library
http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/harper/

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, IL
Undergraduate Library
http://www.library.uiuc.edu/ugl/

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
Shapiro Undergraduate Library
http://www.lib.umich.edu/ugl/

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC
R. B. House Undergraduate Library
http://www.lib.unc.edu/house/

University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA
Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Library
http://www.usc.edu/isd/locations/undergrad/leavey/

University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX
Undergraduate Library
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/UGL/

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA
Clemons Library
http://www.lib.virginia.edu/clemons/home.html

University of Washington, Seattle, WA
Odegaard Undergraduate Library
http://www.lib.washington.edu/Ougl/
University of Wisconsin – Madison, Madison, WI
Helen C. White College Library
http://college.library.wisc.edu/

Wayne State University Detroit, MI
David Adamany Undergraduate Library
http://www.lib.wayne.edu/ugl/
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