

Efficient Deselection and Other Stories

A Fellowship at UNC Charlotte

S. G. Krueger

Context and Background

The Library

The J. Murrey Atkins Library at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNC Charlotte) serves over 21,000 undergraduates and over 4,000 graduate students. Apart from the sole branch library (Arts & Architecture), all of the resources are housed in the main building. This includes those for the College of Health & Human Services, which were the focus of this project.

The Fellowship

During the summer of 2016, the Atkins Library offered six eleven-week full-time fellowships for graduate LIS students. One of these projects focused on assessment of the Health & Human Services resources. A library-wide rightsizing project was being planned, and this project acted as a pilot for developing an organized deselection procedure. It also included recommendations of electronic resources. The overall priority was improved currency of the collection, which is especially important in the health sciences. The fellow worked with the collection development librarian and the Health & Human Services librarian to develop a process that could then be applied to other subjects.

Side Project: Collection Development Policies

To establish a long-term philosophy of consistency and transparency, policies were drafted. These would ultimately go on the library's website as public documents as well as providing guidelines for purchasing and weeding decisions.

General Collection Development Policy

-Based on library and university mission statements

-Outlined general procedure

-Covered workflow, preferred formats, general selection criteria

-Linked to existing policies such as Donations and Weeding

Subject Policy Templates

-Addressed specifics without repeating general policy

-Designed for easy adoption by other subject librarians

-Ensured consistency in content and format

Main Project: Deselection

At the time of the fellowship, the Atkins Library was planning a large-scale deselection project that would ultimately incorporate the whole collection. The fellow developed a process for efficient deselection of the more obvious candidates. The Library of Congress call number range R was used as a pilot, as this covered most of the health sciences resources that had been the focus of the fellowship. Most of the filtering and sorting was done with Microsoft Excel, though other programs would also be effective.

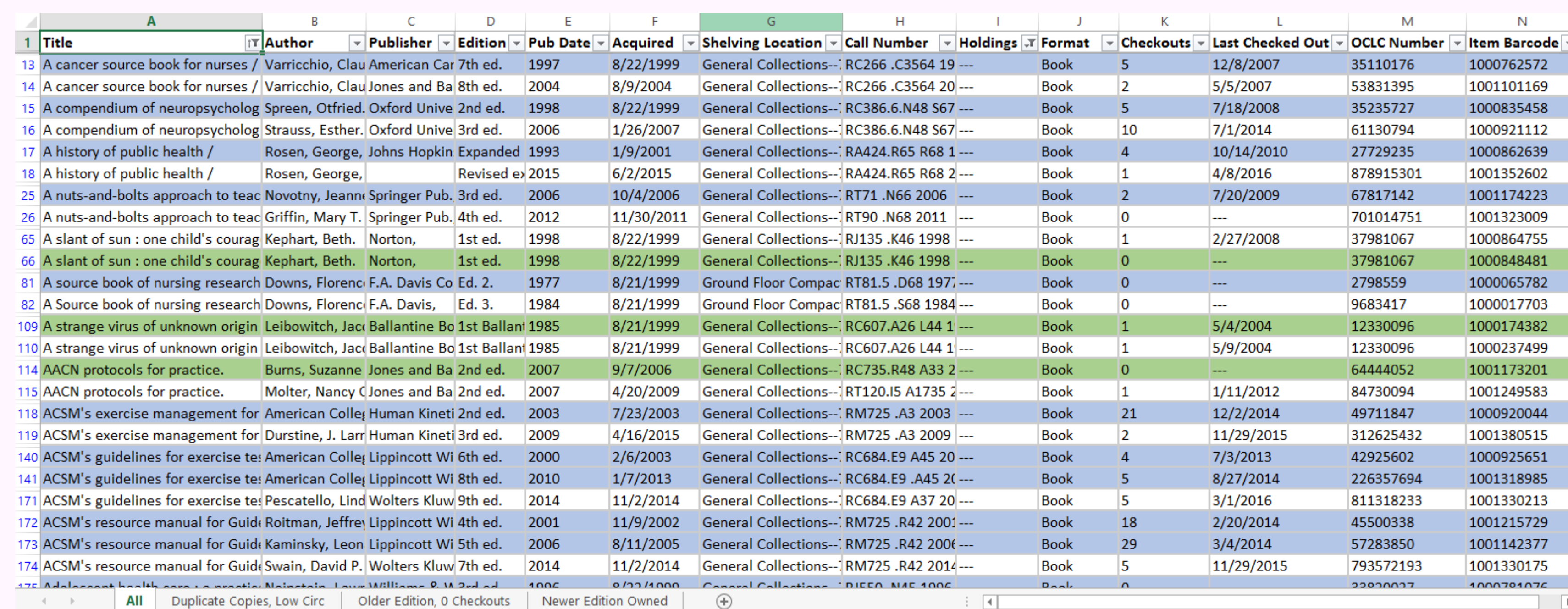
Reasons for Deselection Project

- Remove obsolete titles and declutter collection
- Make room for new materials
- Free up space for study areas and offices

Information Used

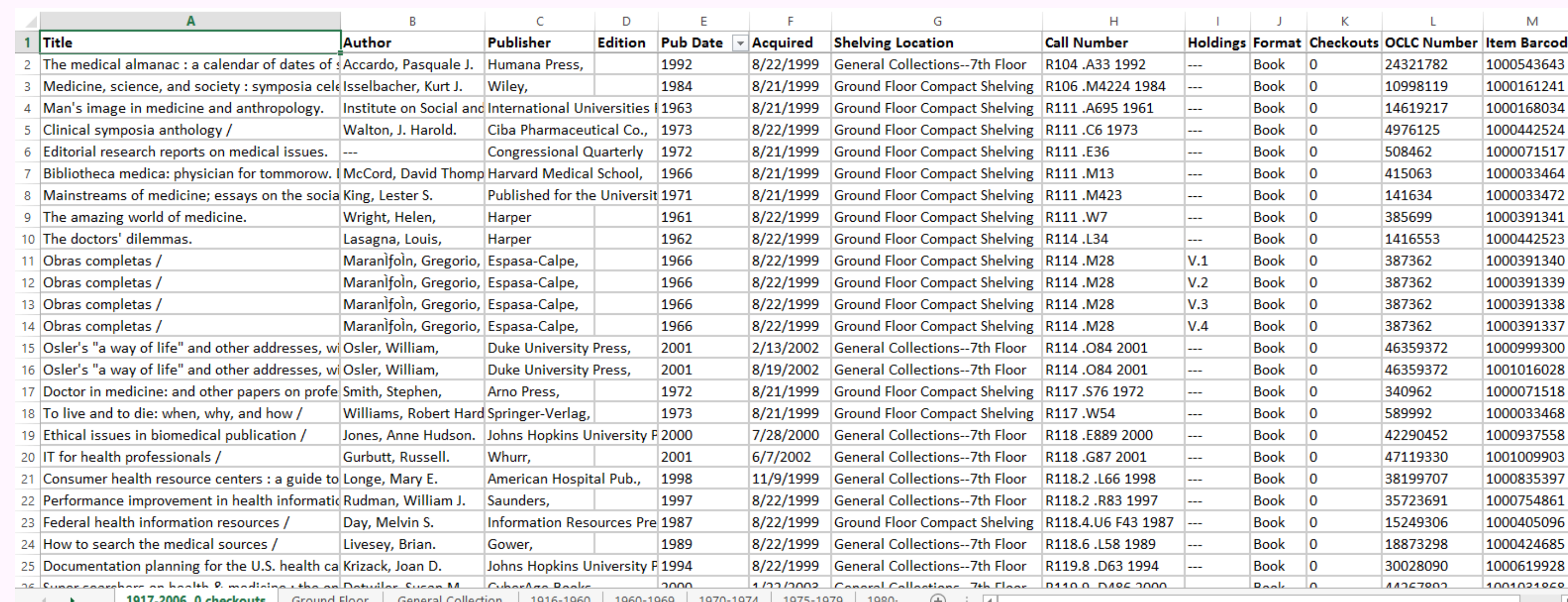
Each record includes title, author, publisher, edition, publication date, acquisition date, shelving location, genre, call number, holdings, format, number of checkouts, last checkout, OCLC number, and barcode. Future projects might consider adding genre, if that information is available, to allow for further filtering options.

Figure 1: Spreadsheet of Duplicate titles



This list was filtered and color-coded to show redundant titles. If a record is highlighted in blue, the library owns a more current edition of. If a record is highlighted in green, the library owns multiple copies that do not circulate often.

Figure 2: Spreadsheet of Old and Unused Titles



This list was filtered to show only titles with no circulation and publication dates before 2007.

Side Project: Health Sciences Electronic Resources Surveys

Two surveys were designed to learn more about what databases and other electronic resources were being used by the UNC Charlotte patrons and by other programs. Some of the questions are summarized below.

Survey 1: Health sciences librarians at peer institutions

-What resources do patrons use the most?

-What resources would the librarians like to own in future?

-What would librarians recommend to other libraries with similar programs?

Survey 2: UNC Charlotte Health & Human Services faculty

-What resources do faculty and their students use the most?

-How do faculty promote electronic resources to students?

-What resources would faculty like the library to purchase?

Next Steps

-Consider deselection candidates from spreadsheets. Withdraw titles as appropriate.

-Apply procedure to other areas (with adjustments by subject librarians as necessary).

-Disperse electronic resources survey to faculty.

-Complete subject collection development policies.

-Establish ongoing deselection procedure, based on lessons learned from the large one-time project.

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to thank Liz Siler, Mendy Ozan, and the rest of the Atkins Library staff for their excellent guidance throughout this project.