

Weeding for Success

Course

AV & Media [7:23]

https://players.brightcove.net/2566261579001/HyuWsfFhb_default/index.html?videoId=4435460505001

About

In this lesson, we will discuss how to weed audio visual materials and media.

Transcript

Audio visual materials and media in a library can range from the typical stuff like audio books and DVDs to globes, computer software or even tools or other objects. There are two main criteria that will govern the major weeding of media items. First, are you weeding because of space considerations or are you weeding because the majority of your patrons no longer have the technology needed to utilize the media? If you're running out of space, the primary consideration in deciding what to discard will be circulation. If the patrons are not using the material, don't keep it regardless of its conditions or currency. Choose a date—I don't know—two years and pull items that have not circulated since then. Of course, in schools, you must keep in mind that there may be subjects that may rotate into the curriculum every couple of years. For example, presidential elections or the Olympics. A DVD on the Electoral College process may only be used during election years, and you'll want to keep that.

In other cases you will be weeding based on format. Now that hardly any school has a film projector, do you really need to keep housing film strips? Few libraries still retain 16 millimeter film unless they are an archival facility. Almost no new cars come with audio cassette players, but they may still be the primary way that teachers share audio books in their classes and so you'll want to keep those. There's no hard and fast rule about when to scrap a format. You have to decide based on your community. What technology do your classroom teachers regularly use? Are families a stepper to back on the technology spectrum? Do the computers your students have access to still play the computer software that's in your collection? Having said that, the decision may actually be made for you as media items are discarded due to wear and cannot be replaced in the same format. The company may be called Books on Tape, but you will no longer find any tapes in their catalogue. Once your collection of audio cassettes is too small to be of much use, you may decide to clear the shelf space.

For ongoing routine weeding of media, condition will be more important than copyright especially in your fiction sections. There are not really guidelines for how long a DVD should last or how many plays you can get out of the video tape. It used to be thought that CDs and DVDs would last forever. While technically they could, the laser doesn't cause wear of the surface like needles did for vinyl records, human interactions such as holding the material or leaving it in the sun affects the condition. Tapes are fragile, they stretch and tear. Way back when we used to try to repair broken audio cassettes, there really is not worth the time and effort and the machines that clean and repair DVDs and CDs are expensive and, again, it's often not worth the time that's required for you to fix items that have heavy use. Disks and vinyl record sets may also be missing pieces and that happens also with things like educational puzzles and science kits. Depending on the vendor you bought the audio or videos from, you may be able to replace a disk or two for a reasonable price, but from a practical standpoint, items with missing parts will often be discarded.

Copyright will be a factor for non-fiction DVDs and other video formats. Use the CREW formulas for due areas. Remember that the physical format here will be less important than the currency and usefulness of the information presented. It is less common for non-fiction films to be directly based on books, so you may need to look back at reviews to help you decide on the items' relevancy and authority.

For fiction and entertainment media your selection decision was probably based on reviews of the print version that the movie or audio book is based on. Copyright won't be important but heavy use may make the item shabby quickly. Audio books also have an added criteria in that some narrators are better or more favorite than others. Given a choice, you may decide to keep something narrated by the wonderful Jim Dale or Scott Brick for a little bit longer.

Newer formats like the play-away self-contained units relieve some of the pressure of losing parts of CD and DVD sets and damage, but still should be reviewed for usage and condition. Don't assume that condition and missing pieces means you don't have to intentionally weed the AV collection. People may not report that the DVD kept pixelating and therefore it stays in collection long past its useful life. Weed also for access coverage. You may have accumulated too many travel videos or extra copies of audio books for once popular titles.

Many libraries consider their magazines and newspapers in with media. Few school and public libraries are maintaining collections of bound periodicals any longer. They

just are not used and most of the articles someone may want are available through the online databases. Take a look at the dust and you can rapidly see that few back issues are used. It's true that it is harder to browse for photographs and illustrations in online periodicals, but consider carefully if that need exists and many of the photos may be available elsewhere online.

Subscriptions to physical copies of magazines should be reviewed annually to see what is no longer being used. Drop those subscriptions and replace them with something else or use the funds elsewhere. You can survey teachers and students asking them if they use certain magazines and how frequently. Also remember that you probably don't want to keep more than about three years of unbound magazines. They will be falling apart and the older they are the less likely they will be used.

CREW added an addendum on e-books in 2012. You might wonder about the need to weed electronic materials. After all, they don't take up shelf space and they don't get worn out. Remember our old friend Ranganathan. Too many outdated e-books can clog up the search results wasting the time of the user who must scan through a long list of results to find what they want. Electronic records also do take up space on your server. MUSTIE factors like misleading, superseded, trivial and irrelevant will apply to e-books, although ugly and elsewhere available, won't be factors.

Similarly don't assume that because you have something in electronic format, you automatically don't need the physical copy. While having some of the lesser read classics as part of Project Gutenberg may mean you can discard that rarely used book. You will want to have heavily used titles in multiple formats. Unfortunately weeding e-books can be a challenge. Most libraries receive electronic materials for downloading through subscription services. You may not have a lot of control over what is added or withdrawn from that collection, but check with your vendor to see if titles that are no longer use to your patrons can be hidden in your integrated library system and use caution when adding free e-book records so that you're not adding hundreds of records without consideration for their value to the collection.

Activities

Weed Your eBooks

Context:

Two main criteria are used for weeding audiovisual and media materials: space for storage and format. Decisions based on space are drawn from statistics on the circulation of an item and/or its in-library use. Weeding according to format pertains to availability of technology devices for use. Condition is a related factor, as materials wear with time and may not be replaceable in the same format, such as a CD. As with all weeding "rules," exceptions exist, such as evaluating nonfiction materials for currency and accuracy not just format. eBooks are a relatively new area for weeding, with their own set of considerations because physical space is not a concern.

Instructions:

Read the CREW Manual section, "CREWing E-books," on pages 49–54. Follow the suggestion to learn about and run reports of your eBooks using your online catalog system. What information can you access independently, and what may require vendor support? How does the available data align with the MUSTIE factors for weeding?

Resources:

Larson, Jeanette. *CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries*. Texas State Library and Archives Commission, 2012. <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/ld/pubs/crew/>

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Bibliography.](#)

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