

Deselection vs. Weeding: A Systematic Approach to Collection Management

TERRIE WILSON • Art Librarian and Head, Fine Arts Library • wilso398@msu.edu



The Michigan State University Libraries (MSUL) is embarking on a major weeding project to alleviate significant overcrowding in the stacks. Although new remote storage space is available, monographs with little or no use are being considered for deselection rather than transfer to the new facility.

MSUL enlisted the services of Sustainable Collection Services™ (SCS) to run GreenGlass™ reports to assist in identifying items that could be removed from the collection. In addition to circulation and acquisitions data from the MSUL OPAC, the reports provide information on regional and national holdings for each title, providing subject librarians with a comprehensive set of data and allowing a more systematic approach to deselection vs. usage-only based weeding.

The reports used the following criteria

- Zero circulation since 1989
- Publication date before 1995
- Added to collection before 2005
- Excluded items with local protection (collections of distinction and Special Collection)
- More than 8 copies of the same edition in the US (per OCLC)
- More than 1 copy held in Michigan; more than 1 copy in the CIC (Committee for Institutional Cooperation)

Reports also included volume numbers (if applicable), barcode, a link to local catalog and WorldCat records, and HathiTrust public domain holdings.

Display Call Number	Title	Author	Publication Year	Edition	Series	US Holdings —Same Edition	US Holdings —Any Edition	Michigan Holdings —Any Edition	All Comparator Library Holdings —Any Edition	CIC—Same Edition	HathiTrust Public Domain
N6530.T4 S74	Art for History's Sake: The Texas Collection of the Witte Museum	Witte Memorial Museum	1993	1st ed.		200	200	5	20	7	No
N6530.W6 B3	Rural Artists of Wisconsin.	Barton, John Rector, 1897–	1948			200	200	6	22	11	No
N6535.B7 B75	Back Bay Boston: The City as a Work of Art. With Essays by Lewis Mumford & Walter Muir Whitehill.	Museum of Fine Arts, Boston	1969			181	185	4	21	9	No
N6535.C5 M8	Abstract Art in Chicago: March 6 to April 25, 1976, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Illinois.	Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago, Ill.)	1976			66	68	3	10	7	No
N6535.C67 C5	A Circle of Friends: Art Colonies of Cornish and Dublin.		1985			113	116	4	17	9	No
N6535.N5 F7	School of New York: Some Younger Artists.	Friedman, B. H. (Bernard Harper), 1926–2011	1959		Gallery book, no. 12.	191	194	8	24	10	No
N6535.N5 H5 1983	The Expressionist Vision: a Central Theme in New York in the 1940s: Ben-Zion... [et al.] / guest curator, Piri Halasz.	Hillwood Art Gallery.	1983			101	102	2	10	6	No

Factors considered outside of report data

- Old policies limited circulation of certain materials prior to 2000; special loans were often given, but each item on the report had to be checked for due-date stamps, as this data wasn't recorded consistently in the circulation system.
- Items with gift plates cannot be withdrawn
- Publication dates prior to 1900 checked for "medium rare" status
- Individual volumes were not removed from sets
- Areas of special interest to faculty research/curriculum retained

Looking Ahead

GreenGlass™ reports can generate other data; high and low use item reports will be used as decisions are made on what goes to remote (low use) and what areas are emphasized in future collection decisions (high use). Other potential uses for the report data are endless!

