



EDITOR'S NOTE

YOU'VE GOTTA LOVE A GOOD COLLECTION

According to librarian G. Edward Evans, 'library collection development is the process of meeting the information needs of the people (a service population) in a timely and economical manner using information resources locally held, as well as from other organisations'. Ho-hum! As we all know, it's much more exciting than that. Library collections are the stuff of life: books, historical documents, journals, maps, pictures, photos, letters, posters, invitations, scrapbooks, artwork, sheet music and sound recordings, theatre programs, audio books, television programs, archived websites, memorabilia and ... the list goes on.

By their very nature, libraries collect. From the smallest public library, academic and government library, to huge bustling state libraries and, of course, the NLA, collections can develop over time by acquiring material as it is published, based on a range of criteria. But they can also grow out of their community's needs. And that is not always to do with books. In 1991, after a local disaster, a library in the US responded by creating a tool-lending library when tools for rebuilding were needed by the community. There are many other examples of practical collections – these include fishing rods, bike locks and cake pans! Which just goes to show not only how flexible libraries can be, but also how effectively they can serve their communities. Each library needs to be able to react autonomously and so their collections are unique.

Adding to all that, in recent years libraries have had to include digital collections in their acquisitions. From purchasing subscriptions to magazines, ebooks, databases, websites and other digital resources, a whole new field of collecting has opened up. One of the biggest challenges is to make digital collections easily accessible and discoverable for their members. Libraries need to market those collections effectively so their members know what resources are available and can make use of them.

Collections are always changing. The need to respond and be innovative is one of the more challenging aspects for libraries, but surely one of the most exciting.

No matter what type of library you work in, I'd love to hear about what you have that is unique or about the challenges you face in developing it. Drop me a line and we'll share with all the readers of *INCITE*.

Here's to fossicking in collections.

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