
**THE KOVACS GUIDE
TO ELECTRONIC LIBRARY
COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT
ESSENTIAL CORE SUBJECT COLLECTIONS,
SELECTION CRITERIA, AND GUIDELINES**

SECOND EDITION

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FOREWORD

Frankly, if you're reading this foreword I'm astonished, because the meat of this book is certainly in the content Diane has amassed and created and put at your fingertips in one convenient place. Since I get to write this foreword, though, let me say a few things about the tome before you:

1. I consider it a major service to the library profession, since librarians engaged in e-collection development are eager (anxious? desperate?) for the information and wisdom it contains.
2. Not only is it a service to the profession, but it's an accessible, and readable, book.
3. There are sections here every librarian in the twenty-first century should read, not just e-collections librarians (the parts on content management systems and licensing, to name just two).
4. The material here is authoritative and informed, coming from an expert source.

In an economy when resources for e-collections become rare and dear, this book can save you money, effort, time, and budget heartache. I strongly suspect that this is a labor of love. I know that it is a cornerstone publication in e-resources collecting literature, and I therefore recommend it for every library that subscribes to more than one e-resource (once an e-reviewer, always an e-reviewer).

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

In 2005, Online Computer Library Center conducted a survey of over 3,000 individuals and learned (to their apparent dismay) that most people think of books when they think of libraries. Though the survey respondents felt libraries are an excellent source of quality information, they were largely unaware of libraries' electronic resources. A year later, a survey of faculty in higher education found that scholars are increasingly dependent on electronic information, less dependent on libraries as a gateway, but increasingly reliant on libraries' budgets to purchase the information they count on.

Times are changing, libraries are changing, but perceptions of libraries haven't yet caught up. People tend to think of print culture and digital culture as distinct entities. Traditionalists, "people of the book," grow anxious about the restlessness of digital natives. They fret about the devaluation of printed texts and the risk of being left behind. Others are delighted by new technologies and can't wait for the new to triumph over the old. Even librarians continue to make distinctions between real and virtual libraries, while in fact virtually every library is really both. The scientist accessing an article from her office through Google Scholar may not realize the library provided it or may forget that the alert she receives to keep up with new research is generated by a library database, but she'd notice if this access disappeared. On the other hand, an English professor who bemoans the fact that kids today spend all of their time in their dorm rooms playing games and pirating music has likely not visited the physical library lately. Ours is full of students, and they like books, "real" books, as they call them. I recently asked a class if they would like to download books from Amazon or Google to their cell phones. They looked at me as if I'd gone mad. "Who would want to read a book on a cell phone?" one finally asked.

For decades now we've conceptualized the shifts in our information environment as if we're crossing a frontier; once we've sorted out our visas and finally cleared customs, we'll be netizens living in a fully digital world. Yet in fact we live, and will continue to live for a long, long time, in a borderland with its own distinctive culture. Scholars of postcolonial societies recognize that these borderlands are not evolving from one to another and don't require residents to declare citizenship in only one. They are hybrid cultures that are fluid, constantly under negotiation, and enriched by their multiple heritages. So, too, is today's library and today's library user.

Though libraries have accepted that information is information regardless of format and that we need to serve our communities inside and beyond the walls of the library, our ability to figure out how to manage the digital parts of our collections is still evolving. How do we adapt our collection development policies to deal with electronic resources? What acquisitions processes do we need to deal with new formats? How do we help our patrons recognize authority in a read/write culture? How do we reconceptualize our activism on behalf of equitable access, patron privacy, fair use, and intellectual freedom given the new realities of licenses, DRM, pay-per-view,

and business models that capture personal search behavior and turn it into a revenue-producing commodity?

Librarians, more than any other group, keep their finger on the pulse of changes in the information industries. This book will help librarians in any kind of library find the good stuff, match it to local needs, make it accessible, and develop processes to fold high-quality electronic resources into their traditional workflows. With examples taken from a variety of libraries around the world, in a format that is itself hybrid (the book is accompanied by a Web site that will be updated with new information), this resource will be a useful Baedeker's Guide to our rich and fluid information borderland.

Or, to cite another guidebook, don't panic.

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P R E F A C E

In practical terms, library services must be offered where and when our library users will use them. If library services are not present at the point in time and space where our library users and potential library users are seeking information, they will turn elsewhere for information mediation services. (Kovacs and Robinson, 2004)

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Defining the mission of our libraries, defining what our purpose is and role in societal and technical contexts, is ongoing. Over the centuries we've redefined our roles, our physical structures, and even our reasons for existing. We promote and enhance education, support and enable information literacy, and try to deploy our services where the people we wish to serve are looking for information support. Balancing the value of the physical location and archiving of print and microform materials with the enhanced access of electronic resources (e-resources) and a library presence in Web 2.0 occupies us nearly a decade into this new century. Balance and growth, budget and quality, change and preservation are themes that have emerged in the past few years as e-library collections have matured in the context of the technologies we use. Are we book repositories or information service centers? Which should we focus on: information architecture or our physical buildings? Can we do both? Should we?

As did the first edition, this second edition of *The Kovacs Guide to Electronic Library Collection Development: Essential Core Subject Collections, Selection Criteria, and Guidelines* explores strategies, tools, and concepts for electronic library (e-library) collection planning. It explores how to build, expand, improve, and maintain an e-library collection.

Creating an e-library is an ambitious project for any library, because the process attempts to re-create the library collection and library services in virtual space. In its simplest form, an e-library is a collection of e-resources—e-resources from a variety of sources, including freely available Web sites and fee-based Web-accessible databases. Essentially, an e-library is a Web-published collection of e-resources. The e-library concept encompasses both the digital library and the virtual library. An e-library may include a digital library collection—a collection of electronic texts, images, multimedia files, etc., scanned, copied or transcribed from print or holographic primary documents or artifacts—and may include documents that were published originally in electronic format—born digital—or published in multiple formats. It may also offer library services, such as reference, the library catalog, circulation, and other document delivery services through the library Web site.

E-libraries manifest as Web pages published on a Web server, through content management systems (CMS), electronic resource management systems (ERMS), or the library catalog (ILS), and combinations of those options. Most e-libraries are accessible to users through Web browsers connected to the public Web, but some are accessible only through private company or organizational Intranets.

This second edition of *The Kovacs Guide to Electronic Library Collection Development: Essential Core Subject Collections, Selection Criteria, and Guidelines* again uses e-library case studies—success stories—to illustrate the diversity of e-libraries and provide practical information about how real life e-libraries are planned, created, managed, and grown. Learning from peer libraries who have developed strategies for collecting e-resources and constructing e-libraries is a recurring theme throughout this book.

The specific e-resources that are selected and how they are organized and made accessible will be unique for each library, but we can learn from sharing experiences. This second edition expands on and updates all of the core strategies, essential tools, and concepts introduced in the first edition. It also addresses the shifting environment in which e-libraries are created and managed today. Major changes include: integration of the library catalog including the cataloging of e-resources; integration of library services, such as virtual reference (real-time as well as e-mail or forms-based reference services), and document delivery; greater variety and scope of Web accessible fee-based databases, including full-text resource aggregators; and greater variety and scope of electronic journals (e-journals) and electronic books (e-books). The virtual reference topic discussed in Chapter 2 of the first edition, was developed into a completely new book, *The Virtual Reference Handbook: Interview and Information Delivery Techniques for the Chat and E-Mail Environment* (Neal Schuman, 2007). In the present text, virtual reference is discussed only as it relates to its impact on e-library collection decisions.

The Kovacs Guide to Electronic Library Collection Development: Essential Core Subject Collections, Selection Criteria, and Guidelines, Second Edition, is designed for any librarian who wants to develop, expand, or improve an e-library. The author has shaped *The Kovacs Guide* as a one-step resource that serves three distinct functions of electronic collection policies: to guide collection planning; to steer collection management; and to identify subject collection, criteria, and core e-resources.

The first function provides librarians with a collection-planning guide specifically written for collecting, evaluating, and selecting e-resources. A collection development plan is even more essential for high-quality e-library collection development than it is for building a collection of print or other formats. Every collection plan must consider library users' information needs and information-seeking behaviors (and expectations), and establish other library-appropriate selection criteria.

Collection management guidance, the second function of *The Kovacs Guide*, addresses issues including integration of the e-library collection and the library catalog, library services integration, e-resource management choices, and database licensing issues. It attempts to answer several essential e-library collection management questions: How much will it cost? How will it be paid for? Who will have access? How will access be managed/limited/monitored? How will the information be archived or otherwise safeguarded for the future? How will the e-library be made accessible, usable, and searchable?

The third function, as a collection development tool, is purely practical. What available resources support good e-library collection evaluation, selection, and collection (acquisition)? Which e-resources are core or essential in any given subject area?

ORGANIZATION

The Kovacs Guide to Electronic Library Collection Development, Second Edition, is arranged in two parts. Part I, “General Collection Planning Recommendations,” explores all of the wide-ranging concerns of e-libraries. Part II details recommended planning, evaluation, and selection criteria; core collections; and collection tools for major subject areas to create or improve an e-library collection.

In Part I, Chapter 1, “General Collection Development Principles for E-Resources,” reviews the e-library collection development literature and then presents a framework within which librarians can create a flexible working collection plan for creating and maintaining e-libraries. It explores the questions that must be answered to create a usable e-library collection plan. Part I, Chapter 1 recommends specific strategies for collecting, evaluating, and selecting e-resources, including a checklist/interview for preliminary planning and organization as well as a checklist/interview for creating a good e-library collection development plan individualized for each library’s needs.

Part I, Chapter 2, “Bringing It All Together: Some General Considerations for Building, Organizing, Managing, and Maintaining E-Libraries,” reviews the most critical e-library collection management and maintenance issues. The use of collection analysis (aka assessment or evaluation) tools to grow and maintain high-quality e-library collections is discussed. Collection management options (CMS, ERMS, etc.), including the creation of MARC records for e-resources and other forms of e-resource cataloging, are described.

Part I, Chapter 3, “E-Resources Licensing Basics,” describes some of the various arrangements made and provides guidance on issues involved in licensing or purchasing Web-accessible databases.

In Part II, “Recommended Planning, Evaluation, and Selection Criteria: Core Collections and Collection Tools for Major Subject Areas,” eleven chapters are each devoted to the collection development process and core e-resources collections for specific subject areas. These subject areas embrace the following broad subject areas: ready-reference, government documents, genealogy, jobs and employment, business, legal information, medical information, biological sciences, engineering, chemistry, physics, astronomy, mathematics, earth sciences, social sciences, education, the arts, and the humanities. Each chapter identifies subject-specific selection, evaluation, and organization criteria and recommends collection development tools within the subject area of focus. A core Web reference collection for each subject area is published on the companion Web site at www.kovacs.com/ns/essentialguide.html. The core collection development tools described in each area have been expanded to include e-docs (federal, state, and international) tools, and Web 2.0 related services such as peer-to-peer reviewing, and more.

E-Library Success Stories in each chapter illustrate the diversity and creativity of e-library builders and provide specific examples of e-libraries. Thomas Dowlings’ LibWeb (<http://lists.webjunction.org/libweb/>) includes nearly 8,000 library Web sites worldwide and is updated daily. Michael Sauers’ World Wide Web Library Directory (<http://travelinlibrarian.info/libdir/>) lists nearly 9,000 library Web sites in 130 countries. The LibDex site (www.libdex.com/) lists more than 18,000 library home pages, OPACS, and other library-related Web sites. These case study libraries represent different types of libraries, including public, academic, and special libraries, as well as library organizations. The coverage of the stories is international, but mainly limited to English language sites or those with an English language description.

The sites and e-resources discussed in each chapter, as well as the core reference e-resources for each subject, are maintained on the companion Web site at www.kovacs.com/ns/essentialguide.html. This password-protected site is exclusively for readers of *The Kovacs Guide to Electronic*

Library Collection Development, Second Edition. The login name and password are: coldev kovacs09. Readers are encouraged to bookmark the companion Web site. It will be updated frequently as the sites identified in these print pages move or expire and new, or even better, sites become available. Readers are also encouraged to send feedback on the sites chosen for inclusion in the core collection and suggestions for expanding it to diane@kovacs.com.

Librarians who create and maintain e-libraries are applying the best principles of traditional library collection development to e-resources. *The Kovacs Guide to Electronic Library Collection Development: Essential Core Subject Collections, Selection Criteria, and Guidelines*, Second Edition, serves as a resource for clarifying how the collection development process translates to the Web environment, as a guide for planning collection management, as a guide for developing selection criteria for specific subject areas, and as a collection of carefully selected resources for starting or expanding an e-library collection.

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