



Brief Tests of Collection Strength: A Methodology for All Types of Libraries (Contributions in Librarianship & Information Science)

Howard D. White

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For purposes of accreditation, resource sharing, and institutional mission, librarians need to assess the strengths of their collections in particular subject areas. This book describes and illustrates a brief test for determining a library's collection strength. Though such tests are most often employed in academic libraries, the methodology outlined by the author should be useful to all types of libraries in assessing the strength of their holdings.

In a time of increasing material and limited resources, libraries need to be particularly judicious in deciding which works to acquire. Oftentimes, a library seeks to develop strong holdings in one or more subject areas. Such an approach is especially useful for libraries that share their resources with other institutions. To plan their acquisitions carefully and to be of greatest use to other consortia members, a library needs to gauge the strength of its holdings accurately.

This volume describes and illustrates a relatively brief test to assign libraries a score for existing collection strength in a subject area. Drawing upon expert human judgment and holdings data available from OCLC, the test can assist librarians in setting and verifying collection levels on the RLG or WLN Conspectus scales. Collection strength is often verified in a labor-intensive fashion. The brief test presented by the author is an economical alternative to the more typical labor-intensive approach to collection analysis.

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